

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-05-13—THE END OF THE LAW

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

In the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians we find some of the most beautiful words ever written about agape love. It is the one thing not naturally possessed by humans that, in God's eyes, changes us from nothing into His children:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:2-3 If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, **I am nothing**. 3 And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, **I have gained nothing**.

The Greek word for *all* means everything in existence. *Nothing* is from a strong Greek negative and has the sense of nonexistence. Paul says having all the knowledge of God, having all faith that can move mountains, giving all to the poor¹, or dying for God is nothingness if agape love is not in us.

Paul concludes by saying, “And now, these three **remain**: faith, hope *and [agape] love*; but the greatest of these *is [agape] love*.” (1 Cor. 13:13). Paul said that only faith, hope, and agape love will “remain” and of those three things, agape love is the greatest. The Greek word for *remain* means to abide, continue, or endure in the sense of existing forever. What does it mean that they remain forever? Other things that Paul mentioned will not remain forever including prophecy, multiple languages, and knowledge (Gk. *gnosis*). In fact, Paul says they will cease to exist². But would that include the Law of God—will it cease or will it remain forever? Notice what Jesus said:

MATTHEW 5:18 For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled [Gk. *ginomai* = come to pass]**.

Jesus seems to indicate that the Law of God will be around forever except that we KNOW that the heavens and earth WILL pass away:

ISAIAH 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for **the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die** in like manner: ...

Isaiah prophesies that the heavens and earth of this age WILL vanish and he adds that all flesh and blood upon the earth at that time will also perish. When does this occur?

¹ Matt. 19:21.

² 1 Cor. 13:8.

REVELATION 21:1, 5-6 Then I saw **a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away**, and there was no more sea. ... 5 And He Who sits on the throne said, “Behold, **I make all things new**.” Then He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.” 6 And He said to me, “**It is done [Gk. ginomai = come to pass]**. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. ...

AFTER the first heaven and first earth pass away and AFTER making “**all** things **new**” does God proclaim that all things are completed (the Greek word for *done* is the same as *fulfilled* in Matthew 5:18.) Because the heavens and earth WILL “pass away,” is it possible that the Law WILL cease as Jesus Christ seemed to imply in Matthew 5:18? Will there be **no** Law in the Kingdom of God for all eternity after the new heavens and new earth and new Jerusalem come into being? Is that believable? That is an astounding thought. But to answer that question, we need to understand what happens at the resurrection and the true purpose of the Law.

Jesus said, “... the third day I shall be **perfected [Gk. teleios = complete]**” (Luke 13:32), which refers to the third day after His crucifixion when He was resurrected. What does it mean to be perfected? The use of *perfected* is somewhat misleading because the Greek means *complete* or *finish*. Obviously, flesh and blood is not the final stage of life, even for Jesus Christ when He was a man. Perfection and completion can only occur when flesh becomes spirit. While this was said of Himself, we know that it also applies to all flesh because we, too, will be made “perfect” and *completed*:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:9-12 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 But **when that which is perfect [Gk. teleios = complete] has come, then that which is in part shall be set aside**. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child. 12 For now we see through a glass darkly, but then **we shall see face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known**.

The word *perfect* is the same Greek word used in Luke 13:32 about Christ’s resurrection. With the resurrection from flesh to spirit is a perfection and completion! Notice also these Scriptures:

MATTHEW 5:48 Therefore, **you shall be perfect [Gk. teleios = complete], even as your Father Who is in heaven is perfect**.”

EPHESIANS 4:13 Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto **a perfect [Gk. teleios = complete] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**;

But what exactly is perfection and completeness?

COLOSSIANS 3:14 And above all these things **put on [agape] love, which is the bond of perfection [Gk. teleiotes = completeness]**.

Being changed to spirit is the completion of a fleshly existence—it is the perfection of us. Agape love, is the BOND of that perfection; it is what binds us together as ONE with God the Father and Jesus Christ:

JOHN 17:23 **I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected [Gk. teleioo = to complete] into one**; and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

TO BE FINISHED OR COMPLETE MEANS BEING RESURRECTED TO SPIRIT AND BEING BONDED AS ONE WITH GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS CHRIST THROUGH PERFECT AGAPE LOVE!

Notice:

1 JOHN 2:5 On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one **the love of God is being perfected [Gk. teleioo = to complete]**. By this *means* we know that we are in Him.

1 JOHN 4:12 No one has seen God at any time. Yet, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and **His [God the Father's] own love is perfected [Gk. teleioo = to complete]** in us.

This is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that the greatest of ALL things that will “remain” FOREVER is agape love! But what about the the Law of God given to mankind, commonly called the Law and the prophets³ in the Bible? Will it “remain” along with agape love when all things are proclaimed by God to be “done”? To answer that question, begin by noticing the limitations of the Law of God:

HEBREWS 7:19 Because **the law brought nothing to perfection [Gk. teleioo = to complete]**; rather, *perfection* is brought about by a superior hope, through which we draw near to God.

Do you grasp the importance of that amazing statement? The Law of God does NOT bring us to perfection. Then WHY the Law?

ROMANS 3:20 Therefore, by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him; for **through the law is the knowledge of sin**.

GALATIANS 3:19 **Why then the law? It was placed alongside the promises for the purpose of defining transgressions, until the Seed should come** to whom *the* promise was made, having been ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator.

³ Matt. 5:17.

Paul also said that he “had **not known sin, except through the law.**” (Rom. 7:7). The Law of God REVEALS sin; in other words, we would not know what sin IS without the Law. But there is another purpose for the Law:

1 TIMOTHY 1:5 Now **the purpose of the commandment is [agape] love** out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and genuine faith;

The Law exists so that we know what sin is (and be forgiven by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ). But the opposite is also true: we would not KNOW **agape love** unless we also know the Law (and have the Holy Spirit). Therefore, the Law does two things: it teaches what sin is and obedience to it produces agape love.

What is perfection and completeness? Those who are perfected in agape love of God the Father. So, when that perfection happens at the final resurrection, will there be any need for the Law—the “thou shall nots”? Will those perfected and completed in agape love—those who ARE agape love—ever be able to steal, lie, or covet? Can SIN of any kind exist when agape love is perfected and completed in us? NO!

1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53 Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed [*resurrected to spirit eternal life*], 52 In an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and the dead **shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** 53 **For this corruptible must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal must put on immortality.**

Incorruptible in the Greek means “unending and immutable pureness.” In simple terms, if all flesh was pure and righteous before God, there would be NO need for the Law! Notice:

1 TIMOTHY 1:9-10 Understanding this: that **law is not enacted for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient,** for *the* ungodly and sinful, for *the* unholy and profane, for slayers of fathers and slayers of mothers, for murderers, 10 For fornicators, for homosexuals, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and **for any other thing that is opposed to sound doctrine;**

SINLESSNESS is PERFECTION and COMPLETION of the righteousness of God in us! That is PERFECTION and COMPLETION of God’s agape love in us! When the end of all things comes, there will be no more need for a Law to show us sin because there will be no more sin. At the final resurrection and after all things have come to pass, the Law and the prophets will cease and we will be complete! FOREVER one with God the Father and Jesus Christ in the bond of perfect agape love!

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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