

SABBATH THOUGHT 2024-10-05—WHAT WILL REMAIN WHEN WHAT YOU KNOW VANISHES?

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

These well-known verses have been rightly expounded for decades—Jesus never kept or eliminated the Law of God for anyone:

MATTHEW 5:17-18 “Do not think that I [*Jesus Christ*] came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but **to fulfill**. 18 “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is **fulfilled**.

Protestants seem to gloss over what Jesus meant by coming to “fulfill” (verse 17) the Law of God. The word simply means He added a key element that was missing. If asked what that is, some might say the missing element is the Holy Spirit and they would be right to a certain extent. The real missing key element, however, is agape love. That might sound trivial but it is vitally important to distinguish between fulfilling the Law of God in a spiritual sense versus with agape love. True, the Law of God cannot be understood much less fulfilled without the Holy Spirit:

EZEKIEL 36:26-27 “I [*the Lord GOD*] will give you a new heart and put **a new spirit** within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 “**I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes**, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

Does strictly keeping the God’s statutes guarantee salvation? No, because it is impossible to truly *fulfill* the Law of God without agape love:

MATTHEW 5:19-20 “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments [*NONE perfectly keep the commandments!*], and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 “For I say to you, that **unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven**.

Righteousness is perfectly keeping the Law of God<sup>1</sup>. Can anyone today claim they know and understand the laws, statutes, precepts, and testimonies better than the scribes and Pharisees? It was their culture, language, history, and education for generations. They understood and kept the Law of God better than most today. But for them, fulfilling the Law of God meant adding more of their own laws on top of it in an effort to force people to keep the Law. Obviously, they did not understand the PURPOSE of the Law of God:

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

What did Jesus mean when He said that nothing will pass from the Law until all is fulfilled?

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 119:172.

MATTHEW 5:18 “For assuredly, I say to you, **till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled [comes into being].**

It seems obvious that when “all is fulfilled” (literally, *come into being*) and the First Heaven and First Earth pass away, then some parts of the Law of God will disappear while others will remain. What will ‘come into being’ (be fulfilled)? What will NEVER pass away?

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8 **[Agape] love never fails [lit., drop away].** ...

This is profoundly important. First Corinthians chapter 13 is referred to as the Love Chapter and it has to be one of the most read in the Bible. However, there are signs that too many do not truly understand it. Agape love fulfills the Law of God AND agape love covers all sins<sup>2</sup>. It is one thing that will *never* pass away! This was not addressed to pagans or the unconverted—Paul was writing to those with the Holy Spirit in Corinth. Obviously, not all had agape love when he said:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3 Though I [*Paul*] speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but **have not [agape] love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.** 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but **have not [agape] love, I am nothing.** 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, **but have not [agape] love, it profits me nothing.**

Having the Holy Spirit does *not* guarantee a person is growing in agape love. Having biblical knowledge or understanding of prophecies are not substitutes for agape love. Having an in-depth grasp of Hebrew or Greek is not a substitute for agape love. Memorizing dozens of scriptures is not a substitute for agape love.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-10, 12-13 ... **But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.** 9 For we know **in part** and we prophesy **in part**. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then **that which is in part will be done away [lit. rendered idle].** ... 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I **know in part**, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, [*agape*] love, these three; but **the greatest of these is [agape] love.**

Trumpets is the beginning of the end of this age when the “part” of prophecies and knowledge that is understood by anyone will be “**done away.**” The events portrayed by the Feast of Ingathering are finished when “all is fulfilled” and the First Heaven and First Earth are dissolved<sup>3</sup>:

2 PETER 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which **the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.** 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which **the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?**

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<sup>2</sup> Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8.

<sup>3</sup> Also Ps. 75:2-3; Isa. 34:4; 51:6.

Let that sink in. Everything you and I understand about biblical prophecies and knowledge will be “done away.” Elsewhere in the Bible this same word is translated make void, without effect, destroyed, abolished, cease, released, delivered from, come to nothing, fail, vanish, put down, etc. Get the picture? Peter said that everything will vanish and asks, “What manner of persons **ought you to be** in holy conduct and godliness?” (v. 11). What is godliness? A state or quality of being like God! What is the most defining characteristic of God? “**God is [agape] love.**”<sup>4</sup> Having biblical knowledge, understanding prophecies, and keeping the Law of God serve no purpose unless they are part of a journey to perfection of agape love. Knowledge is part of that path but it is misplaced at best unless the result is agape love:

2 PETER 1:5-7 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your **faith** virtue, to **virtue** knowledge, 6 to **knowledge** self-control, to **self-control** perseverance, to **perseverance** godliness, 7 to **godliness** brotherly kindness, and to **brotherly kindness [agape] love.**

Of the eight stages to agape love, knowledge is only the third one. There are FIVE stages of growth that follow. Growth ends with agape love because the result is a BOND between people and God:

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. 14 **But above all these things put on [agape] love, which is the bond of perfection.**

*Bond* is from a word that refers to the ligament that connects two parts of a joint. Agape love creates a **perfect bond**. It is the only thing that establishes peace. It is the only thing that binds us with God the Father and Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup>:

JOHN 17:23 “I [*Jesus Christ*] in them, and You [*God the Father*] in Me; that **they [the saints] may be made perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

NOWHERE in the Bible does it say that biblical knowledge or understanding prophecies perfect us and bind us to God. Only agape love. Those who fail to grasp this could wind up in this sad state:

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5, 7 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ... 7 [*these people are*] **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

How do I know they do not grasp their condition? Because conversations abound that focus on prophecies and knowledge. It is evident by how some respond to those who disagree with them. It is particularly obvious when my articles on agape love have the

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<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4:8, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Also 1 John 4:16-17.

least number of views and very few, if any, comments. What topics have the most? Prophecies and knowledge—those things that will vanish. The conclusion seems obvious ...

On the other hand, some do not comment because they fear they will be castigated or criticized (by me or someone else). Let me assure you that I will *never* do that nor will I allow it from others. The fact that this fear exists at all is a very sad indictment of the *ekklesia*. Knowledge and understanding are things to seek after, but without agape love, they are NOTHING:

COLOSSIANS 2:2-3 that their hearts may be encouraged, being **knit together in [agape] love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God,** both of the Father and of Christ, 3 **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

No one will ever have anything except a small part of the knowledge and understanding of God or the Bible. In fact, much of it is hidden from us. However, these are things to be shared in agape love for the purpose of edifying (building up) the Body of Christ INTO agape love:

EPHESIANS 4:11-16 And He [*Jesus Christ*] Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;** 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, **speaking the truth in [agape] love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in [agape] love.**

Every individual has a part in supplying the needs of the Body of Christ. Every individual has a responsibility to edify and build up the Body of Christ. But if it is not done in agape love, the result is destructive. “Speaking the truth in [agape] love” is a commandment, not a request because this is how the whole Body grows up into Christ, the Head of the Body.

Knowledge and understanding without agape love are NOTHING. They are not even fruits of the Spirit! Those who are becoming agape love are well-pleasing to God because the Kingdom of God will be filled with “little children”<sup>6</sup> whose greatest attribute is agape love. So, what will remain when your knowledge and understanding vanishes?

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>6</sup> Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16.