

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

As shocking as it may sound, salvation does not come from a Bible. The Bible is the singular repository certain knowledge imperatives of God for eternal life, but everything required for salvation came by word-of-mouth to many who never had one. It is indeed unthinkable for many today to even consider not having a Bible. However, I wonder how many would be better off without one. Bet you never considered *that*. While a Bible is a great blessing, especially in these Laodicean times when there is so much heresy (false teaching); consider for a moment the possibility that the Bible can be a *distraction*. In what way? By emphasizing reading, studying, learning, pondering, and memorizing the Bible over LIVING and DOING those things it says are necessary for salvation. Simply put, salvation is not through knowledge alone:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:2 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 love, I am nothing.

Here, *all* understanding and knowledge encompasses everything. Nothing is excluded so understanding of biblical prophecies, mysteries, and knowledge are equivalent to God's. But this says there is no salvation without agape love even if someone knows everything that God knows. Without it, a person is *nothing* (Gk. *oudeis*), meaning the *complete absence of*. Let that sink in: no matter how much knowledge and understanding a person has, without agape love there is no existence. Confusing biblical knowledge with salvation is common. This is also true with the Olivet Prophecy. Many think it is a directive to watch world events rather than preparing spiritually for Christ's return:

MATTHEW 24:36, 38-39, 42-44 “But **of that day and hour [of the return of Jesus Christ] no one knows,** not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ... 38 “For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 “and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ... 42 “**Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.** 43 “But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 “Therefore you also **be ready, for the Son of Man is coming** at an hour you do not expect.

Think about it. How can watching world geopolitical and meteorological events prepare anyone for Christ's return? It is absurd in any rational sense to think that Jesus commanded people to watch for precursors of prophetic events. But many do so even though **no one has ever produced an accurate roadmap of world events in the fulfillment of prophecy!** End-time prophecy is too nonspecific to define according to real world events. Even if there were actual world events that portend the coming Day of the Lord, what would you do with that information? Pray and study more? The point Jesus is making is to draw close to God **now**—“be ready”—because the Day of the Lord is CERTAIN even though no one knows when. The warning is to watch YOURSELVES, not world events. Scripture says to “**stir up**

**love and good works [this says *NOTHING* about watching world events], ... and so much more as you see the day coming near” (Heb. 10:24-25). Luke recorded it this way:**

LUKE 21:34-36 “But **take heed to yourselves**, lest your **hearts** be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day [*of the Lord*] come on you unexpectedly. 35 “For **it [that Day] will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.** 36 “**Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.**”

This is a warning of the SNARE (trap) that will spring without warning upon the “**all** those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.” What is the snare? The Day of the Lord, when Christ returns and executes vengeance. Why is it a snare? Because no one knows when the Day of the Lord will come. So, watching world events has nothing to do with salvation.

Jesus likened the Day of the Lord to The Flood in Noah’s time because it came upon the whole world, even those in the ark. All who were on the ark were SAVED while everyone else died. Likewise, when the Day of the Lord comes the whole world will again be affected, including the *ekklesia*. This time, however, those who are saved from death will be on a cloud<sup>1</sup> instead of an ark. This is a not a message of how to *escape* the Day of the Lord, it is a warning to be found worthy of being SAVED when it comes. The Day of the Lord is also when the “house of God” is judged<sup>2</sup> and being “worthy to escape” means “**stand[ing]** before the Son of Man” in the resurrection. Watching world events saves no one nor does it prepare anyone for anything.

So what does it mean to “be ready” or “be counted worthy?” It means to “**walk** in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4)—LIVING a new Way<sup>3</sup>. Salvation certainly requires knowledge<sup>4</sup> but knowledge in and of itself is insufficient. Salvation requires also LIVING a life *according* to that knowledge. It is also critical to understand that not all biblical knowledge leads to salvation. Putting it another way:

HEBREWS 6:1-2 Therefore, **advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection [LIVING according to knowledge of salvation]**; not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works, and *of* faith in God, 2 *Of the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of *the* resurrection of *the* dead, and of eternal judgment.

Doctrines of repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, and eternal judgment do not bring salvation. These are “*elementary principles*” required for BAPTISM, which produces “a **new creation**.”<sup>5</sup> After baptism, a person must leave behind the elementary principles of these doctrines and GO ON—move ahead, advance—to PERFECTION. Another way of saying it is to “**work out** your own

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 4:17.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 22:16; John 14:6.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 1:77.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.

salvation"<sup>6</sup> by living a "new and living way"<sup>7</sup>. What is that? If I asked to explain what is required for salvation after baptism in one sentence, could you? In short:

Salvation requires BECOMING agape love and DOING Good Works.

Some think baptism and salvation are one and the same. They are certainly linked but baptism is only the beginning. Salvation requires growing in agape love to become like God IS<sup>8</sup> and doing Good Works, which is the Service of Giving and Receiving<sup>9</sup> unto all, especially of the household of faith<sup>10</sup>. Being baptized but not having agape love and doing Good Works<sup>11</sup> does NOT lead to salvation.

God "searches the hearts"<sup>12</sup> of those who "love Him and are called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:27-28). Frankly, God does not care how many Bible verses someone memorizes, the depth of someone's biblical knowledge, how much prophecy they understand, or how many sermons they listen to each week. He is searching hearts to see who is LIVING a life that bears fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control<sup>13</sup>. These fruits benefit OTHERS and, unless there is someone to receive these fruits, they serve little purpose.

I think many believe agape love is secondary to the Law but no one can sincerely keep or understand the Law without it. YOU CANNOT FULFILL THE LAW UNTIL YOU BECOME AGAPE LOVE:

ROMANS 13:8, 10 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ... 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Agape love is the motive for Good Works and Good Works are the proof of agape love in a person:

[TS2009] 2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-13 And He [*God*] who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, shall supply and increase the seed you have sown and increase the fruit of your righteousness, 11 being enriched in every way for all simplicity, which works out thanksgiving to [God] through us. 12 Because the rendering of this service [of Good Works] not only supplies the needs of the [saints], but also is overflowing through many thanksgivings to [God]. 13 Through the proof of this service [of Good Works], they [glorify God for] the [obedience] of your confession to the [gospel] of [Christ], and generosity in sharing with them and all men,

It IS that simple—become agape love and do Good Works and you will receive salvation. This is why salvation is not knowledge alone. Salvation is about the

---

<sup>6</sup> Phil. 2:12.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. 10:20.

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

<sup>9</sup> 2 Cor. 9:10-13.

<sup>10</sup> Gal. 6:10.

<sup>11</sup> Eph. 2:10.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 8:27.

<sup>13</sup> Gal. 5:22-23.

heart, not the mind. The Kingdom will not be filled with children who can recite the entire Bible but are not loving and serving.

How many members of a COG know someone with needs but believe it is the sole responsibility of their church organization to help out? What prevents the member from helping directly? Maybe the fact that they send their money to the same organization that is *not* helping the needy. Perhaps they should reconsider where they send their money so THEY can do Good Works. Just saying. Who thinks God will forgive any of the goats in the parable in Matthew 25: 31-46 who failed to help others with the excuse that they relied upon an organization to do Good Works on their behalf? Paul said "**faith work[s] through love**"<sup>14</sup> and James said "**faith without works is dead;**"<sup>15</sup> therefore, love without works is also DEAD<sup>16</sup>.

Spending a lifetime reading, studying, learning, pondering, and memorizing the Bible without agape love and Good Works is pointless. The best thing would be to toss the Bible aside and start living according to the knowledge of The Way of salvation! Salvation does not come from knowledge of Scripture, long prayers, being a member of a church, following a preacher, giving money to an organization, or connecting world events to prophecy. James said those who are not living a life of agape love and Good Works are DECEIVED about salvation:

JAMES 1:22 But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**

There is no Scripture that equates perfection with baptism. It is after baptism that the work of becoming agape love and doing Good Works begins. While knowing the Word of God is enormously inspiring and beneficial, agape love and Good Works are far more important. Only they make one worthy of salvation. Set aside time from the Bible and LIVE according to all that knowledge. Use the time remaining in your life to grow in and show agape love to God, Jesus Christ, brethren, neighbors, and even enemies. Seek opportunities to help the needy—whether or not they are believers. When there are times of need, allow others the opportunity to help. Doing these things then makes studying the Bible worthwhile and beneficial:

COLOSSIANS 1:9-10 [We] do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be **filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and **spiritual understanding;** 10 that you may **walk worthy of the Lord,** fully pleasing *Him*, **being fruitful in every good work** and **increasing in the knowledge of God;**

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>  
[sabbathreflections@gmail.com](mailto:sabbathreflections@gmail.com)

---

<sup>14</sup> Gal. 5:6.

<sup>15</sup> Jas. 2:17, 20, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Lest someone accuse me of twisting Scripture, this conclusion is based upon the (mostly) mathematical Transitive Property of Equality (a=b, b=c; therefore, a=c) of Deductive Reasoning. It is legitimate, rational, and reasonable.