

Heaven and Earth Shall Pass Away

Many Christians today are at a disadvantage because they are not well grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures. Other than a few famous Bible stories that are taught in early Sunday school classes, most Christians do not realize just how important the Old Testament is in gaining a clear Biblical perspective of the New Testament, especially the imagery used by Jesus and used in the Book of Revelation.

This is because we have been taught for many generations that we are under the New Covenant of Christ. This leads many to assume that the Old Covenant is no longer relevant.

Nothing could be further from the Truth.

In reality, the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. The New Testament is actually the Old Testament fulfilled. Despite this all- important fact, most Christians rely only upon the words of the New Testament without reading and understanding their origins found in the Old Testament.

This lack of understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures prevents many from fully understanding the completed prophecy revealed in the New Testament.

For example, the lack of knowledge of the Old Testament use of figurative language prevents many Christians from understanding this same figurative language when it is used in the New Testament Scriptures.

This means that we have to go back to the Old Testament to get the full meaning of what Jesus and the Apostles said in the first century in the New Testament.

In **Matthew 24:35**, the Bible says this. Now, let's look at the phrase **"heaven and earth"** as it was originally used in the Old Testament. Our first example can be found in **Leviticus 26:18-20**.

Leviticus 26:18-20, 18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. **19** And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make **your heaven** as iron, and **your earth** as brass: **20** and your strength shall be spent in vain: for **your land** shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

Here the Lord is telling Israel the outcomes of disobeying His commandments. Let's read it now.

Notice the word **"your"** in front of the word **"heaven"** and **"earth"**.

Remember, God is speaking to the tribes of Israel; therefore, **the "their heaven and earth"** used here is figurative for **their land** not for the cosmic heavens and the physical planet earth.

Let's examine another reference to **"heaven and earth"** used by Moses when he spoke to the children of Israel while still in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 4:26 I call **heaven and earth** to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it but shall utterly be destroyed.

This verse warns the Israelites about the consequence of disobedience. Here Moses uses the phrase **"I call heaven and earth to witness against you...."** In using this figurative expression of **"heaven and earth"**, Moses is reminding the children of Israel of the covenant God has made with them at Mt. Sinai and he is reasoning with them to keep that covenant.

What is the witness against the children of Israel? It is the Covenant God made with them. The Commandments are what convicted them of their wrongs and would testify or witness against them.

Deuteronomy 4:23 Take heed unto yourselves, **lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God**, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee.

Moses admonishes them not to forget the covenant that the Lord had made with them.

Deuteronomy 31:24-26, 24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made **an end of writing the words of this law in a book**, until they were finished, **25** that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, **26 Take this book of the law**, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, **that it may be there for a witness against thee**.

Moses commanded the Levites to place the Book of the Law at the side of the Ark of the Covenant under the Mercy Seat in the Holiest of All, **“that it may be there for a witness against thee”**.

Here, God said that the Book of the Law or God’s Covenant with Israel would **“witness against them”**. In **Deuteronomy 4:26**, it said that **“heaven and earth”** would witness against them.

In **Deuteronomy 31:24-26**, it said that the book of the Law would witness against them. Therefore, we can say that the Mosaic Covenant was also called **“heaven and earth”**.

Again, we see Judah and Jerusalem being addressed as **“heavens”** and **“earth”** in Isaiah 1:1-2.

Isaiah 1:1-2, 1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning **Judah** and **Jerusalem** in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. **2** Hear, **O heavens**, and give ear, **O earth**: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

It is clear that in this passage, the **“heaven and earth”** being addressed is the nation of Israel.

This same figurative use of the terms **“heaven and earth”** can be seen when the prophet Isaiah is speaking to Babylon. **Isaiah 13:1** establishes that the prophet is speaking to Babylon. Remember, when a prophet speaks, he is going to use some figurative language which cannot be taken literally.

We read in **Isaiah 13:5**, **“They come from a far country, from the end of heaven....to destroy the whole land.”**

In this verse, we can clearly see that **“heaven”** is used to reference a **“far country or land”**.

Notice the figurative language used in **Isaiah 13:10**.

Isaiah 13:10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof **shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened** in his going forth, **and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.**

The stars will not give their light, the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light. Does that sound familiar?

This is exactly the same theology of **Futurism** that is promoted today. This prophetic figurative language is used many times throughout the Old Testament.

This prophetic language of **“sun”**, **“moon”**, and **“stars”** represent rulers, kings, and princes. Rulers rule over countries and nations, so when they don't give their light, they are no longer ruling. God has taken away their power and their light does not shine anymore over the nations.

Isaiah 13:13 says, **“Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place....”**

Again, this is prophetic Biblical figurative language. The physical planet Earth was not removed, but the Kingdom of Babylon was completely destroyed by the Medes in 539 BC.

This is just one example of the prophetic figurative language that the Jews were very familiar with.

When Solomon built his Glorious Temple, the Lord told him that He put His Name there forever, but if His people turned away from following Him and turn to serve other gods, the Lord said that He would cut them off and cast away the temple. **(1 Kings 9:3-7)** Because of their disobedience, this prophecy was fulfilled when the Temple was destroyed in AD 70 of the first century.

1 Kings 9:3-7, 3 And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, **to put my name there forever**; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. **4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:**

5 then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

6 But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: **7 then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:**

Exodus 25:22 says that the Lord will meet with His people and would commune with them from above the mercy seat behind the veil in the Holiest of All through the High Priest.

Exodus 25:22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

God declared to them that Jerusalem was His city, the temple was His residence, and that very special place behind the veil known as the Holiest of all where the Ark of the Covenant rested, was where He could be found and His voice could be heard. The Jews took this to heart and even when long distances away, they would turn their faces in the direction of Jerusalem when they prayed.

Now that we have established what **“the heavens and earth”** were in **Matthew 24:35**, let us turn to the second part of this verse: **“... but my words shall never pass away.”**

The truth of the matter is: Old Covenant Israel was never God's ultimate goal. It has always been God's eternal goal to replace the Old Covenant Nation of Israel with its temple and its cultus with something far better. (**Galatians 3:16, Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 8:1-2, 10:1**)

The Apostle Paul preached that the ends of the world had come.

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, **upon whom the ends of the world are come.**

A closer look at the Greek text reveals that Paul is proclaiming that the goal or the aim of all previous ages had arrived and was about to be perfected or made complete.

Paul preached that salvation was in Christ and in the obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All the prophets had pointed to this moment, the moment of the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus stated that **“my words shall not pass away”**, He was proclaiming that the Gospel will never be inoperable; the Gospel would never be rendered void.

This means, of course, that animal sacrifices will never be in operation again or ever mean anything in the eyes of God again.

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**: and **the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind**.

This is because Jesus was the sacrifice to end all sacrifices. Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God. **(John 1:29, Hebrews 9:12, 1 Peter 1:19)**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ established a spiritual temple to replace the physical edifice of the Temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost** which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

The Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant was replaced by the priesthood of Jesus. We become a part of this royal priesthood when we obey the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. **(1 Peter 2:8)**

Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God. We are born into the Kingdom of God when we obey the Gospel that Jesus brought us. **(Acts 2:37-39)**

This is how we become a part of the New Covenant. This is how we become covenant-connected. This Gospel is everlasting.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having **the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth**, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

The Word of the Lord that endureth forever is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:25 but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And **this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.**

This Gospel will never pass away. The Old Covenant was removed, shaken, taken out of the way, and replaced with a New Covenant that would not be shaken.

Hebrews 12:26-29, 26 whose voice then **shook the earth**: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more **I shake not the earth only**, but **also heaven**. **27** And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. **28** Wherefore we receiving **a kingdom which cannot be moved**, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

The figurative language used here is the same that was used throughout the Old Testament. The shaking of the earth and of the heaven must be understood as the destruction of a nation and the change in God's agreement with them.

Hebrews 12:27 speaks of a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. This never-ending, everlasting spiritual Kingdom is the New Covenant bought by the blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: **therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

Conclusion

Jesus said in **Matthew 5:17-18** that He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil. **"For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."**

Most people would agree that we are not still under the law of the Old Covenant today. This means that if you believe that the **"heaven and earth"** of **Matthew 5:18**, and **Matthew 24:35** mean the literal physical cosmos, then you must also believe that the Old Covenant, the Law, is still in place including animal sacrifices.

The **“heaven and earth”** of **Matthew 24:35** and **Matthew 5:18** was the Old Covenant God had established with the Nation of Israel.

Their **“heaven and earth”** were destroyed or passed away when the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in AD 70. We are now under the New Covenant.

The New Heavens and the New Earth are the New Covenant. When we are born again by obeying this everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ, we become a part of the New Heaven and the New Earth which is the New Jerusalem.

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