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**Heaven And Earth
Had To Pass Away
Before The Law
Could Be Fulfilled**



By Dan Maines

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Could Be Fulfilled**

Introduction

† A lot of people don't know what Heaven and Earth are, so we must let the Bible tell us its definition, not a 21st century dictionary.

† Heaven and Earth had to pass away before the law could be fulfilled, and Scripture must interpret Scripture.

† If we misunderstand Heaven and Earth, we will

misunderstand prophecy, and if we misunderstand prophecy, we'll live in unnecessary fear.

† Knowing what Heaven and Earth are eliminates all the scary, so called, end times teachings.

Matthew 5:17

Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

† Jesus said He came to fulfill the law and the prophets, not to destroy them.

† The fulfillment of the law is directly connected to the passing of heaven and earth in the very next verse.

† This proves He was speaking about covenant completion, not planetary destruction.

Matthew 5:18

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!

† Jesus said the law would not pass until heaven and earth passed, and until all things were accomplished, that connects the passing of heaven and earth with the fulfillment of the law.

† If heaven and earth are still standing in the same covenantal sense Jesus meant, then the law would still be standing, but Hebrews tells us it was ready to vanish away.

† Christ fulfilled the law, and the covenantal heaven and earth that upheld that law had to pass with it, Matthew 5:17-18.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

† Jesus was speaking to first century Jews about their temple, their city, and their generation, Matthew 24:34.

† To them, heaven and earth was not planets exploding, it was

their covenant world centered in the temple system.

† When that temple fell in AD 70, their heaven and earth passed, just as He said.

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear. He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and aw

† The writer explains that heaven and earth would be shaken and removed.

† This shaking refers to covenant removal, not cosmic collapse.

† The unshakable kingdom remains, proving a covenant transition.

If you want to know what a term means in the New Testament in relation to prophecy, you need to go back to the Old Testament and see what it meant there. If it was used a certain way in the Old Testament, it makes sense that the New Testament writers would use those expressions in the same way. We must get our understanding of heaven and earth from the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 32:1

"Listen, you heavens, and I will speak;
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth!

† God was speaking to Israel through Moses, not to literal sky and soil, Deuteronomy 31:30.

† He calls Israel heavens and earth, proving the phrase can refer to covenant people.

† Scripture defines its own symbolic language.

Isaiah 1:2

Listen, heavens, and hear, earth;
For the LORD has spoken:
"Sons I have raised and brought up,
But they have revolted against Me.

† God was speaking to Judah and Jerusalem, yet He addressed them as heavens and earth.

† In biblical apocalyptic language, heavens often refer to rulers and governing authorities, earth refers to the covenant people.

† This is consistent Old Testament language.

Isaiah 51:15-16

For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar (the LORD of armies is His name). And I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.'"

† God says He planted the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth when He formed Zion.

† This is covenant creation language applied to Israel.

† This proves heaven and earth can refer to the establishment of a covenant people.

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be discovered.

† Peter was writing to first century believers about a coming day in their lifetime, 2 Peter 3:1-2.

† The language matches Old Testament covenant judgment imagery, Isaiah 13:10; Isaiah 34:4.

† The destruction of the earth by fire was fulfilled in the destruction of Israel during the Jewish War.

† The word elements refers to stoicheia, the elementary principles of the old covenant system, Galatians 4:3; Colossians 2:8, 20.

To the first century Jew, heaven and earth was the temple and the whole Judaic system of sacrifices. The Old Testament connects heaven and earth with Israel and the temple system.

Josephus confirms this understanding.

† In Antiquities of the Jews, Book 3, Chapter 7, Josephus explains that the tabernacle represented land, sea, and heaven.

† The holy of holies represented heaven where God dwells.

† The outer court was associated with the sea, and the inner court with the earth.

Revelation 21:1

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

† The first heaven and first earth to first century Jews was their temple centered covenant world.

† There is no more sea, meaning no more outer court, no more sacrificial system.

† The new heaven and new earth is the new covenant order.

Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

† The tabernacle of God is now with men, not confined to a physical structure.

† This fulfills the promise of God's dwelling among His people.

† The temple reality is now fulfilled in Christ and His body.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

† The dwelling place of God is no longer in stone buildings but in His people.

† The old temple fell, the new temple stands forever.

† We are the tabernacle of God among men.

We are now in a new covenant, with a new Adam, Jesus Christ. We are the bride, the Lamb's wife. We are the new Jerusalem, the church of the firstborn. We are the temple of the living God.

Literal heaven and earth are not going anywhere. The covenantal heaven and earth passed in the first century, and the law has been completely fulfilled.

Historical References

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 3, Chapter 7, describes the tabernacle as symbolic of heaven, earth, and sea.

† Eusebius records the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy concerning that generation.

† Tacitus, Histories 5.13, documents the burning of the temple and city.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We do not need to fear the end of the world, because the covenant world Jesus spoke of has already passed.

† We are the dwelling place of God, and He desires to be at rest in us.

† Our focus is not on escaping earth, but living as the new covenant temple of the living God.

† Heaven has invaded earth in Christ, and we live in that

fulfilled reality now.

Q & A Appendix

Q Did literal heaven and earth pass away?

A No. The passing refers to the covenantal heaven and earth connected to the law, Matthew 5:18; Hebrews 8:13.

Q When did heaven and earth pass away?

A In AD 70 when the temple and sacrificial system were destroyed, Matthew 24:34-35.

Q What is the new heaven and new earth?

A The new covenant order in Christ, Revelation 21:1; 2 Corinthians 5:1.

Q Were the last days future to us?

A No. The last days were the last days of the old covenant world, Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:20.

Q If heaven and earth passed away in AD 70, why are we still here?

A Because the passing of heaven and earth referred to the covenantal world of Israel, not the physical planet, Matthew 24:34-35; Hebrews 8:13.

Q Does 2 Peter 3 teach the end of the physical universe?

A No. Peter uses Old Testament covenant judgment language, Isaiah 13:10; Isaiah 34:4, and applies it to his generation, 2 Peter 3:1-2.

Q What are the elements in 2 Peter 3:10?

A The elements are the stoicheia, the elementary principles of the old covenant system, Galatians 4:3; Colossians 2:8, 20.

Q Was Jesus speaking to a future generation in Matthew 24?

A No. He said all these things would come upon this

generation, Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34.

Q If the law was fulfilled, why do some still try to bind it?

A Because they don't understand that the old covenant vanished away, Hebrews 8:13, and that Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness, Romans 10:4.

Q What does it mean that there is no more sea in Revelation 21:1?

A It signifies the removal of the old covenant temple structure and sacrificial system, Revelation 21:1; Hebrews 9:8.

Q Are we still waiting for a future new heaven and new earth?

A No. We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken, Hebrews 12:28, and we are the temple of God now, 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Q Did the apostles expect these things in their lifetime?

A Yes. The old covenant was near vanishing, Hebrews 8:13, and the end of all things was at hand, 1 Peter 4:7.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 5:17-18; Matthew 24:35; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-28; Deuteronomy 32:1; Isaiah 1:2; Isaiah 51:15-16; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1, 3; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Galatians 4:3; Colossians 2:8, 20

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 3, Chapter 7; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History Book 3; Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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