

## Study Series 7 Lesson 3b: Matthew 16:27-28 (Sub study on Heaven and Earth)

MATTHEW 24 "OLIVET DISCOURSE" (Verses 1-31)

Go over **handouts**:

Study Series 7 Lesson 3a1: **Matt 24 Fulfillments Documented – Ed Stevens**

Study Series 7 Lesson 3a2: **Matthew 24 Fulfillments Documented and Works of Josephus**

Study Series 7 Lesson 3a3: **Matt 24 Chronological Arrangement 4 Gospels Olivet Discourse**

Study Series 7 Lesson 3b: **Matt. 16:27-28**

(Including parallels: Mark 8:39-9:1, Luke 9:26-27)

Before we proceed further in Matt. chapter 24 I think it is very important that we take a step back to look at another interlinking passage which will help put in context for us with even more clarity what the Lord is telling His disciples standing before Him is about to transpire in the rest of Matthew 24.

\*\* We need to first put down an anchor point of testing for truth that we can hold onto, and here we will look at the famous passage of the **Test of a Prophet** (and this was not just "a prophet," but in specific was referring to the "Lord Jesus Christ" Himself):

(**read**) Deut. 18:18-22, "**...will put My words in His mouth** and He shall speak to the people all that I command Him...how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?...if the thing **does not happen** or come to pass, **that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken...**(and vs. 20 says the prophet **should be killed**)"

The modern prevalent view of the following passage of Scripture has led to the strongest attacks against Jesus Christ being a true prophet, the Bible being inspired and inerrant, and Christianity being true. The critics, the Muslims and the liberal teachers have used this passage more than any other passage to disprove Jesus Christ as being a true prophet, as "they quote the absolutely unchanging Deut. 18 test of a prophet passage" and then they go to this passage in Matt. 16 and say that Jesus Christ clearly promised to return before all of His disciples standing right there before Him would die – and He did not (so they say).

## Matt 16:27-28

**For the Son of Man is (going) (Greek: *Mello*) about to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.**

Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will **not taste death** until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

What were so plain and clear words spoken by our Lord, that unbelievers and critics are able to understand, has led to the most confusing and unscholarly attempts to twist and change the meaning of words, as they attempt to "save and explain" what the Lord meant. Attempts have been made to change the meaning of the words due to a writer's predetermined futuristic view of scripture, combined with a misunderstanding of the "nature" of the coming.

Regardless of all the attempts at this unbiblical approach to exegetical hermeneutics (in context Biblical interpretation, which by going against the clear descriptive language in this passage, is violated), there is no way from this passage to get around that if Jesus Christ did not come back as He promised "before all of the disciples standing in front of Him died" – then He told a false prophecy – therefore He was not a true prophet – therefore there is no way to give infallible credence to any other thing He said – therefore the Bible is not inspired and inerrant – therefore how can Christians claim that other parts of the Bible are true – therefore on what grounds do Christians have to claim that their faith and salvation is real and sure?

- **The seriousness of this single issue cannot be overstated, because if Jesus Christ did not do exactly as He promised He would – then it is not just Him proved to be a false prophet, but also God the Father would have told us a lie, as Deut. 18:18 states that it was the Father who would "...put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him." (The Bible says God cannot lie: Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29),**
- **Jesus Himself confirmed this in John 12:49-50 where He said, "For I have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command what I should say and what I should speak...therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."**

Of course, we as Christians believe that Jesus Christ has never said anything that was not true, or promised anything that He did not fulfill, **but it is not good enough that we just say it is so, but we must be able to prove it**, as the critics are using our own Bible to claim that He is a false prophet. I am convinced that the problem has been coming to read the Bible "already having settled in our mind what we think is true" and what we believe the "end things" and the "nature of Jesus' coming" would be (these are called presuppositions). This is what has led to a wrong understanding of many scriptures, and what was meant by the nature (the how) of the fulfillment of a given passage. It is not Jesus Christ who has said anything that was not fulfilled, but it has been people misunderstanding about what the fulfilling was to be.

I believe a plain reading of Matt. 16:27-28 by any unbiased and unconditioned to already think otherwise person (meaning untaught in any denomination's belief system, including those of the futurist persuasion) would never naturally result in someone saying these are not as they are plainly written – “before some of those standing there listening to Him speak would die – they would see Jesus Christ return in His glory and Kingdom with His angels to reward each person according to their works.” The truth that this is fact is being repeatedly confirmed today by the critic/Muslim/liberal, who have not been pre-indoctrinated to twist the scriptures to mean other than what their plain meaning is saying. They are able to clearly see our Lord's words and cut through the double-talk misinterpretations being put forth by many in modern Christendom about how the Lord was not actually meaning what it clearly indicates He was saying. They are espousing that we clearly have a false prophet because He did plainly say these very things and did not return before the last of His first century disciples had died.

In the past, some of those struggling to find an answer to this passage have tried to force it under the carpet of the transfiguration that is described in Matt. 17:1-8, so let's try to objectively look at this and see if this could possibly be the answer? (**Read**) Matt. 17:1-9. We will notice:

- 1) There are no angels at the TF – In Matthew 16, there were angels**
- 2) Moses and Elijah were at the TF – in Matthew 16, there were no Moses and Elijah**
- 3) No reward at the TF – in Matthew 16, there is a reward**
- 4) The TF was close – Matthew 16 was a long way off (only some still alive)**
- 5) In the TF none of them had died (7 days later) – by the time of Matthew 16:28 (40 years later), some will have died, as Jesus prophesied**
- 6) In the TF Jesus is already there – in Matthew 16, He had not left yet. He has to leave the earth first (die), before they can see Jesus coming again**
- 7) In the TF Jesus said it was only a vision – in Matthew 16, Jesus said some would not die until they saw Him coming with His Father's glory and the angels – not just a vision**

**For these 7 reasons alone, I believe we can safely conclude that they are speaking of 2 entirely different events!**

Even though the transfiguration was not the fulfillment to what the Lord had promised His disciples standing in front of Him, and Jesus Himself tells them in the next verse, Matt. 17:9, that it was a vision of what was to come, if we do not slow down during this amazing passage of the transfiguration, we can miss even more of **what it is trying to tell us**. Peter makes this meaning clearer in (**read**) 2 Pet. 1:16-19, look at the significance of what the Holy Spirit inspires him to write: what was this vision representing - what **did** Peter/James/John see on the mountain – “they saw the **power of the coming** and a majestically changed Jesus Christ.”

- What “**did**” the Apostles see on that mountain? – they saw the “power” of what Jesus’ coming was going to accomplish – the “power” of Messiah had superseding the authority of Moses and Elijah, and all that they symbolized and embodied, which was the very OC itself – the entire law and the prophets – and the power of Christ’s coming was to cause them to **pass way** (Moses and Elijah). They heard the Father speak after Moses/Elijah had been removed – “Here Ye Him! (The Greek emphatic is: ‘Him – Hear!’)” We have to stop and seriously ask the question of why were Moses and Elijah on the mountain in the first place? Why was it so important that they had to be there? What full and deep message was the Father wanting the Apostles to know?
- If the purpose of the transfiguration was supposed to be just about their seeing Christ majestically transfigured – then **why have Moses and Elijah there**, and then **why did they disappear**? The significance of this event is one of the most underappreciated and often ignored eschatological passages in scripture by all of the futurist camps. Peter, James and John **literally saw a vision of the “power” of what would happen at the bringing in of the new heavens and earth and removal of the old, the old world order of animal sacrifices which had been epitomized in the OC temple and sacrificial system, and was now spoken of as “obsolete” and “ready to vanish away” in Heb. 8:13, 12:26-28** – they saw that old heaven and earth epitomized in those OC (law/prophets) “vanish” and the everlasting NC was confirmed to be in Jesus Christ - confirmed by the Father Himself (which is stated to be everlasting in the church: Eph. 3:21).
- Do you also notice what they “**did not**” see? - They did not see any earth burning, cosmos dissolving, time ending event. We need to seriously ponder these passages. Peter said they saw what the purpose of the second coming signified, and it was most definitely an end/transition, but **not** the end of the cosmos – it was the end of the old heaven and earth world order of provisional forgiveness through animal sacrifices, and its codified epitome seen in the Mosaic OC (God to man relationship) → and the “full consummation” of the NC world administration of heaven and earth (God to man relationship) through the blood of Christ in the church.

One of the key components of proper Biblical hermeneutics is to study a scripture within its surrounding context, and another would be to interpret the meaning as it pertains to the audience to which it is being spoken by the speaker. We need to go back and take a look at Matt. 16:27-28 within the context and audience within the passage.

**(Read)** In Matt. 16:21, Jesus now reveals to His disciples clearly, “From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

- Within this context of the great sufferings and martyrdom that were all about to shortly happen to Christ, Peter, in Matt. 16:22-23 pulls Jesus aside and says he would not allow all of these horrible things to happen to Him. Jesus sternly and emphatically rebukes Peter. Jesus then turns back to speak to all of **His disciples** “and crowd” He had gathered (The parallel passage in Mark 8:34 indicates there was a multitude of people, which included His disciples), and to all of **them** standing right in front of Him He spoke the whole passage of Matt. 16:24-28, telling **them** plainly the life of hardship and suffering that would face them, as well as the very real potential of martyrdom that would be looming over any and all of them who chose now to follow Him to Jerusalem and stand with Him as His disciple, and to carry His message forward during their life.
- This entire passage is an intimate and personal prophecy and promise by the Lord to **them**. Jesus said to **them** that it was going to be a difficult road of suffering for those who would choose then to follow Him, but He then goes on to promise and encourage **them** in Matt. 16:27 that they should stand fast and endure because He was going to come back to reward them soon (Mello), and then in vs. 28 He emphatically tells “**them**” that He would be returning before all of “**them**” standing right there in front of Him had all died. This was the promise to His disciples and 1<sup>st</sup> century followers of their coming persecution for their stand of faith to follow Him, but also the promise of the “in their generation” to follow vindication and rescue and reward. (Matt. 21:33-45 and Matt. 23:33-36 Jesus plainly describes the vindication for all the martyrs with the coming judgement on those who were their murderers).

\*\* Attempts have also been made to try and break up these two verses of Matt. 16:27 and 28 to try and impose a gap of 2,000+ years between them (and astonishingly enough, and with no hermeneutical or contextual or any supported biblical reasoning, it is vs. 27 that is the verse that is attempted to be pushed somehow over 2,000 years in the future?!). Besides the obviously untenable “**reversing - then splitting/projecting**” of the verses just mentioned, the other question you should *ask yourself is if these attempts are made because the scriptures themselves are so obviously not connected and clearly indicate that these are different events, and exegetically different periods in time, or* if the people trying to teach these things “must have it broken up in order to fit into a futuristic view **they already come to these scriptures believing in**”? Is this proper biblical exegesis to split these scriptures up with a massive gap, and also to reverse the order or occurrence – or, are these people already believing what they do, and now trying to squeeze and twist these scriptures to fit into their **presuppositional** view? Not only does this **splitting/reversing/gap projecting** completely ignore the entire audience context which we were just studying above, but it also ignores the unified link of this entire passage being spoken of by Christ to His **living breathing** disciples and 1<sup>st</sup> century followers who were standing in front of Him.

- Word for word literal translations of the Bible help clarify this unified passage by correctly showing each of verses 25, 26 and 27 all starting with the same word translated into English as “For” (YLT, ESV, NAS, NKJV, KJV to just name some). It is important to understand that there are no verse numbers or chapter breaks in the original manuscripts – these verses flow and are linked together in one unbroken and contextual thought and message, and to emphasize this message that Jesus is telling them, He then emphatically starts vs. 28 with the Greek phrase, “*Amen lego hymin* (Truly I say to you).” It is absolutely critical for us to understand that **every single time** this phrase appears in the Bible – it **always** is in reference to, and **emphasizes the points just discussed immediately prior to it.** To stress the importance of this point again: **never, ever in scripture,** is this phrase **ever broken out of its context** and applied to something **unrelated to what was just being discussed in the immediate passage before it.**

\*\* Another untenable attempt to try and change the meaning of this passage that some people have tried to do is to say that the glory and the Kingdom spoken of in vs. 27 and 28 are not the same thing. However, as the Bible should always be our only answer, then we need to allow the Bible to interpret itself, and with some simple word and context study we can plainly see that no such distinction can be made in the scriptures, and in fact, we will find that the words “glory and Kingdom” are both **interchangeable** words that mean the exact same thing illustrated in these passages:

- Matt. 20:21 and Mark 10:37 are parallel accounts of James and John wanting to sit at the Jesus’ right and left hand in the afterlife. Matthew records them asking to sit in those positions “in Your kingdom,” while Mark records the exact same event as them asking to sit in those positions “in Your glory.”
  - The **kingdom is the glory.** If Jesus came in His glory, then He came **in His Kingdom.**
- In Luke 21:27 and vs. 31 Jesus Himself uses these two words as interchangeable. He tells His disciples that, “...they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great ‘**glory.**” Then, just a few verses later in vs. 31 He tells them that when they see all those signs He was just speaking about happening, “know that the ‘**Kingdom**’ of God is near.” (Greek: *Eggus* = near. To be brought near. **Imminent, soon to come.**)
- In Matt. 25:31 Jesus again describes to His disciples that the **glory and His Kingdom are at the same time,** interlocked as the same thing, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.”

If Matt. 16:27-28 was the only gospel account in the Bible that we had of Jesus' words in this message, that would be enough in itself from all the evidence we have just explored, but we also have two other gospel accounts of this same message:

\*\* Consider the parallel passage of Matt. 16:27-28 in (read) Mark 8:34-9:1:

- As mentioned in the earlier section, Mark 8:34 expounds on the audience to whom Jesus was speaking to show us that it was to a multitude of people following Him, only part of which were His group of disciples.
- In Mark 8:38, Mark records an extra definitive time statement which was not recorded in Matthew, clearly indicating when Jesus was saying all of this was to take place – vs. 34 said that Jesus had called together and started speaking to that audience in front of Him, and He said, “...in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes...” (Condemning language He associated with that 1<sup>st</sup> Century unbelieving Hebrew audience: Matt. 12:39, 17:17; Luke 11:29).
- Keeping in mind that there are no chapter or verse numbers in the original writings, and of great importance how the exact same Greek phrase, “*Amen lego hymin* (Truly I say to you),” is spoken of again here by Jesus in Mark 9:1, which inextricably connects this with, and emphasizes the passage just before it.
  - Look at what the Holy Spirit has Mark add to more clearly indicate both the “audience” in question (that adulterous generation...some standing there will not die), as well as describes to us the “nature and timing” of the coming (some of those standing right in front of Jesus are told they will “see the kingdom of God present with power.”
  - This one statement on its own completely negates the vision of the transfiguration on the mountain being any possibility of the fulfillment of these verses. No one would claim that Jesus came in His kingdom six days later on the mountain. Likewise, there is no one who would say that on the mountain the Apostles actually saw the kingdom, and even more so, never claim that it was seen on the mountain to be present with power. No, the transfiguration on the mountain was clearly not the fulfillment of this passage.

\*\* The third parallel passage of Matt. 16:27-28 is (read) Luke 9:23-27:

- The same unified unbroken words starting and connecting each of the other passages are the very same used here as well, with the literal Bible versions starting each of verses 24, 25 and 26 with the English word “For.” Then in vs. 27 Jesus is again connecting with the previous verses, and closing and emphasizing the passage with, “I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.”
  - As previously presented in the other two parallel passages – the kingdom did not come and was seen on the mountain a few days later – and any and all attempts to try and make the transfiguration the fulfillment of any of these three parallel passages in completely untenable, an eisegesis misinterpreting of scripture. With even worse results of potential dangerous misleading of people by these presuppositional interpretations which are taken out of context and are being taught on a wide platform to many people, and have been confusing and misleading many others into the same false conclusions and misinterpretations.

### Matt. 5:17-18 and a study on “Heaven and Earth:”

\*\* I believe it is also of vital importance, and interconnected, that we need to understand the significance of another of the sayings/prophesies of our Lord that is confusing for the futurist, Matt. 5:17-18 Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”

- Do we understand the power of what the Lord was saying? He said *we are still under the OC law if the heaven and earth “He was speaking of” have not passed away.* There is no exegetical way to get around this, and this has caused many people problems with their eschatological interpretations. Again, a lot of twisting of the very clear straightforward language has been attempted to be done due to some people unwilling to accept, or understand, what Jesus was saying. The complete fulfilling of all prophecies cannot be referring to the time of the cross, Christ’s resurrection, or even at the time when the gospel was poured out to the Gentiles after Stephen’s stoning and the soon after conversion of Cornelius in AD 35, as certainly all prophecies had not been fulfilled at any of these events (the OT states many more prophecies yet unfulfilled even at the commencement time of the conversion of the Gentiles (i.e. Dan. 9, 12; Isa. 2-4, 25-26, 28, 65-66; Hos. 1-2; Joel 3; Amos 8; Hag. 2:6-7; Zech. 12-14, as well as many others, including the many John re-iterates in Revelation).



- This Matt. 5 passage also fits in inextricable conjunction with Heb. 8:13, as at the time Hebrews was written (AD 62 or 63), it says that the obsolete OC had “**not yet**” passed away - it was about to, **but had not yet**. This means that whatever the phrase “heaven and earth” was meaning – we are **bound by the scriptures** we just read to be still under the OC law system **if** it has not passed away (and it says “all” the law, and there is no way to try and separate the law and say some old ceremonial and civil laws passed but the moral law remains – no, Jesus said “**not one single dot**” of the law would pass away until “**all**” was fulfilled). (\*\*While Col. 2:14-15 clearly tells us the OC requirements of the law were nailed to the cross, vs. 16-17 also clearly state that the Torah Sabbaths and ceremonies were “still” a shadow in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and the substance in Christ “about to” come.)

Agreeably, no Christian in the world believes that we are still under the OC, yet no futurist eschatology has any contextual answer for the “heaven and earth passing away” in the above passage, and yet we see that it was a must for it to pass away in order for us to be consummated from the OC into the NC.

**Question:** if you believe a future coming of Jesus will destroy the physical “heavens & earth,” Matt. 5:18 clearly says that the law will be fulfilled and pass away at that time as well → do you believe that there will not be any laws in heaven? How do you answer what law has every jot and tittle still in existence that would still be waiting to pass away at some yet future coming?

It is important for us not to approach any Bible passage with our presuppositions, where we need to impose something which is not stated within the passage. This can lead us to both: miss what a passage is trying to say to us, as well as lead us to misinterpret the passage which can affect our understanding of other passages. We need to search within the Bible to allow other scriptures to interpret other scriptures as to the intended meaning and definition, and not turn to our modern dictionaries.

## Sub study on the meaning of Cosmology, *Kosmos* and *Oikonomia* (by Ed Stevens):

In order to assist us in understanding the biblical meaning being taught in Matt. 5:17-18 about “until heaven and earth pass away” I believe it is beneficial at this point to have a small sub study on the meaning of the following words. It may get a little technical, but it is quite important, and will be very beneficial in helping to understand the **biblical meanings** of the topics we are studying, including “heavens and earth.”

The “cosmos” (Gk. *kosmos*) is the orderly arrangement of the created universe, including both its heavenly and earthly realms. *Cosmology* in modern science is the study of the nature of our physical and observable universe, its arrangement, and how its various parts relate to each other.

In contrast, **Biblical Cosmology focuses on how God and the normally *unseen* spiritual realm interacts with man and the *seen* physical realm.** Biblical Cosmology attempts to explain how both realms interrelate to each other. Notice the contrast between the *invisible* things in the heavens and the *visible* things on the earth mentioned in Col. 1:16:

- “by Him all things were created, both ***in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.***”

As Christians we believe there is an *invisible* realm that is different in nature from the *visible* realm in which we dwell. And that *unseen* realm has been there since the beginning of creation, however, all too often someone will return a blank stare when asked to explain what the *unseen heavenly realm* is like, and how it interacts with and relates to the *visible earthly realm*. But that is what biblical “cosmology” is all about.

Genesis 1:1 is the first place in the Bible which mentions “the heavens and the earth.” Here it is referring to the creation of both the **seen realm** (the earth and the visible realm) and the **unseen realm** (the heavens above where God and the angels are).

Robert McCabe explains this very well for us:

- The “heavens” of this verse (Gen 1:1) refer to God’s creation of the upper register and the “earth” the lower register. This upper register does not refer to the visible sky above the earth but to the invisible heavens that are the created dwelling place for God and his angels. Likewise, the lower register refers to the earth and the visible heavens above it. (Robert V. McCabe. “A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Account (Part 1 of 2).” “Two-Register Cosmology.” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 10 (2005): pp 28-29.)

## Meaning of Kosmos and Oikonomia:

The Greek word *kosmos* basically means an orderly arrangement, adornment, or decoration of something, as, for example, in the English word *cosmetics*. *Kosmos* is used 186 times in 151 New Testament verses, where it is most often translated in English as *world*. In regard to the visible *world* of people, it can refer to how we are organized socially, politically, economically, or philosophically into a *world order* or orderly system, such as the *ancient world* or the *modern world*. It can also apply to the unseen realm, such as *the angelic world*, and can apply to anything which is organized around or associated with some physical, spiritual, or philosophical principle, such as the *philosophical world* or the *religious world*.

*Kosmos* can also refer to the whole creation, including both seen and unseen realms. “*In the beginning, God created **the heavens and the earth***” (Gen 1:1). As previously mentioned, the heavens and the earth here refer to the whole *created world*, including **everything in both the seen and unseen realms**. But in many contexts, the phrase *heavens and earth* has the connotation of a ***world order or orderly arrangement*** (Gk. *kosmos* cf. Acts 17:24; Rev 11:15; 13:8; 17:8), or an ***administration of world affairs*** (Gk. *oikonomia* cf. Eph 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4). In this context, the meaning of the *NEW heavens and earth* seems to be that the entire world (Gk. *kosmos*), **including both the seen and unseen realms**, will operate under a ***new set of laws or a new covenantal arrangement or administration*** (Gk. *oikonomia*).

## How the word KOSMOS interrelates to the new Heavens and new Earth (Kingdom):

Furthermore, it appears that the word *kosmos* can refer to just one part of the heavens and earth. For instance, in John 18:36, Jesus says: “*My kingdom is not of this **world*** [Gk. *kosmos*]. *If My kingdom were of this **world**, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is **not from here.***” (NKJV)

Here, the word *kosmos* is applied only to the visible earthly realm (“the world below”), and not to the heavenly realm (“the world above”) from where Christ’s Kingdom actually comes. **His Kingdom is a new arrangement of the universe, both in the unseen realm of heaven and in the seen realm on earth.** The invisible realities of His Kingdom emanates in the unseen realm from heaven, and manifests itself on earth through the visible Church. The New Heavens and Earth is a new government (Kingdom) and new world order of things both in the SEEN and UNSEEN realms, **based on the redemptive work of Christ**. The old arrangement of the world, which was based on the sacrificial system (instituted since the fall in the garden where the Lord Himself slayed the first animal to cloth Adam and Eve), passed away, and Christ’s new world order (*kosmos*) or administration (*oikonomia*) was set up.

Jesus prayed in Matthew 6 that the Father's Kingdom would come and His will be done ON EARTH (seen realm) as it is already being done IN HEAVEN (unseen realm). The Kingdom will continue growing and spreading throughout the SEEN realm, but it will never reach perfection here on earth (seen realm). Perfection is only found in heaven (unseen realm). The earth is where the visible church has its activity. The Cross and the Parousia were two world-changing events, which forever and irreversibly affected both the seen and unseen realms.

Ezekiel 47 with its description of the new temple (the church) that was built in the Last Days, with its little trickle of water coming out of the temple threshold, is a good illustration of this idea of the river of life always growing and spreading in the world to change every culture, but never reaching perfection. There are always some stagnant back-waters where the living water will not reach. There will always be nations and cultures which resist the gospel and remain in darkness. But we take the light to them anyway, regardless of whether they choose to walk in that light or not. We have the promise of the Lord that "of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...from that time forward, even forever." (Isa. 9:7)

Lest there be any doubt about whether the New Testament writers shared the same cosmological perspective as the Old Testament writers, all one needs to do is simply compare the usage of "heavens and earth" in the following Old and New Testament texts: Exodus 20:4; Philippians 2:10; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 5:3; 13. **(End of sub study by Ed Stevens)**

### **Heaven and Earth Shall Pass Away:**

The Bible does not oppose itself or conflict with itself. Heaven and Earth in PROPHECY do not mean the literal physical heaven and earth. Instead, heaven refers to the heavenly or spiritual things like the law, sacrifices, ceremonies, etc. Earth refers to the earthly, material or political things like the land or the nation of Israel, city of Jerusalem, the physical temple, etc.

Let us look at Isa. 51:15-16 (read), "...And I put My words in thy mouth, And with the shadow of My hand have covered thee, To plant the heavens, and to found earth, And to say to Zion, 'My people [art] thou.'" (Young's Literal Translation (YLT) – A very valuable Bible to add to your study resources. If you are using the NIV, or another version that is not a word by word translation, then you will lose much of the clear and powerful language in this passage, as well as in other places.)

Obviously, this was not referring to the physical heavens and earth, as no people existed at the time when God created them, and clearly here God is speaking through Isaiah to His people Israel standing in Isaiah's presence about a time when He put His words in their mouth, which He describes as "planting the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth."

- Some scholars and theologians believe this is referring to the establishing of the "old heaven and earth" when God gave **Israel** the OC law on Mt. Sinai, and the continued relationship through animal sacrifice and the subsequent prophets and oracles revealing God's words to them (in other words: the way in which God had established to deal in relationship with mankind. In the OC, to come to God, you had to come to him thru the OC relationship laws and practices He gave to Israel).
- Other scholars and theologians, including Puritans like John Owen, see this "establishing" talk, as the putting in place of a new order, as Israel at that coming time being spoken of, the time of the new birth/pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost (put my words in your mouth – new heart/born again), and the establishing of the "new heaven and earth" in that 1<sup>st</sup> century time in the gospel churches of the world, of which we continue today. Never again to go back under the old heaven and earth God/man relationship, by which the only way for man to come to God was through the animal sacrificial system, nor in its epitome given through the OC with physical Israel.
- Whichever of these two ways you interpret the "laying/establishing" of the heavens and earth in Isaiah 51:16 (either meaning God first putting His words in the mouth of His OC people (Mt. Sinai, laws, prophets), or God putting His words in the mouth of His NC people (Heb. 8:10 rebirth, Apostles, gospel, church)), the fact remains, that **neither** is talking about the **literal physical heavens and earth**. The Bible must interpret the Bible, and the Bible must provide the definition for its meaning of words, and not our dictionaries, or our modern 21<sup>st</sup> century western thought.
- God is clearly telling us in Isaiah 51:16 that His meaning of "heaven and earth" is symbolic and spiritual, as His way He intersects with man in a relationship (either the OC way of through physical fleshly means in the OC sacrificial laws and ceremonies and earthly temple, where God was separated from man behind a veil, or in the NC way where the man is reborn, given a new heart, is called **the temple where God now dwells** (2 Cor. 6:16), and that through the gospel and the church God now has established His "new heavens and earth" cosmological administration order means of the God/man relationship based on the redemptive work of Christ – spiritual and eternal).

(**Read**) Heb. 1:10-12, "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain<sup>1</sup>; And they will all grow old like a garment<sup>2</sup>; Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail. "

- <sup>1</sup> This section of the verse is cross referenced to and quoting from (**read**) Isa. 34:4, and that passage is describing a **complete end to only the kingdom of Edom** (vs. 5) – **not** the literal heaven/earth, and yet it is described as, "All the host of **heaven shall be dissolved**, and the **heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll...**"

Heb. 1:10-12 draws on the passage back in Psalm 102:25-26, however, look what David says in verse 18, "This will be written for the generation to come, that a people **yet to be created** may praise the Lord." And in verse 21 says the Lord will do this to "declare the name of the Lord in **Zion**, and His praise in Jerusalem."

Heb. 1:11 also quotes back from Isa. 50:9 and 51:6. Leading just a few verses later into Isa. 51:15-16 → the passage we just studied more extensively → which a vast array of scholars agreed was not referring to the beginning of time or literal heavens and earth.

- <sup>2</sup> This section of the verse, "will grow old" is from the Greek word = *palaios*, and means "I make old, declare obsolete." This is the exact same word used in (**read**) Heb. 8:13, in which the writer is referring to the "OC as powerless/obsolete and was **about to** (*Mello*) be abrogated/removed and replaced by the NC."

It is true that God created the physical heaven and earth, however, the context and audience as indicated in Heb. 1:1-2 (as well as the name of the letter itself - Hebrews), is in reference to the old administration or world order, and subsequently the physical nation of Israel as His people, along with the Old Covenant laws, sacrifices and ceremonies that pointed to the future Messiah, and the consummation of His Kingdom and new world order or administration (we will look into this more fully in a sub-study later in this study). God established the Old Covenant laws and founded Israel as His chosen nation to carry the Word of God and bring the Seed into the world. However, when the Messiah comes and fulfills all of those laws they were to perish or pass away. They were to be folded up and CHANGED to a new heaven and new earth cosmological world order based on the redemptive work of Christ. Yet God is the same, He is eternal.

(**Read**) Lev. 26:19, God says “I will break the pride of **your** power; I will make **your heavens** like iron and **your earth** like bronze.”

- A clear passage which is **only** referring to the **heaven and earth** of Israel.

(**Read**) Deut. 28:23, God again promises **only OC Israel** of destruction if they will break their covenant with the Lord, “And **your** heavens which are over **your** head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under **you** shall be iron.”

### **New Heavens and Earth:**

God does away with the old world administration with its covenantal system of laws, sacrifices, ceremonies, and rituals (old heaven). He also does away with the physical nation of Israel as His chosen land and people (old earth). This includes the city of Jerusalem and the physical temple. The Messiah has come. He has fulfilled all of the Old Covenant laws and prophecies. All are fulfilled. All, not some! All of the Old Covenant laws are fulfilled and finished in Christ and no longer effective in the New Covenant spiritual Kingdom. He has made the final sacrifice once for all.

It includes a gospel message of salvation and freedom in Christ. God has also given the Holy Spirit to indwell His new people. They make up His Kingdom and His temple (Eph. 2:19-22). This is the new earth. It is no longer made up of just Israelites, because there is no longer Jew or Gentile in the New Covenant system. His believers, Jews and Gentiles, are now all one in Christ and are part of the visible realm of the One Eternal Kingdom of God. They are called Christians. They are born again spiritually by faith and are all spiritual children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 28-29).

\*\* The “new heavens and earth” are now the new world administration/order and way God’s relationship is with man – by Christ’s blood in/through the church. Did you realize that the “new heavens and earth” are **not** described as the **end of the cosmos**, in fact, did you realize that the Bible says there will still be living and dying, and even sinners in existence after the creation of the new heaven and earth? It does not tell of an annihilation of the present “**physical earth**,” but rather a new **God/man relationship (unseen heavenly realm/seen earthly realm)**.

\*\* Turn to (**read**) Rev. 21:1, “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...”

- Critical to not allow our presuppositions or modern dictionary definitions get involved with Bible interpretation. John is an OC Hebrew speaking the same familiar language and worldview as the OT prophets, Jesus, and the other NT writers. We need to try and allow the multiple other Bible verses and descriptions form the definitions and answers.

(**Read**) Rev. 21:24-22:2, “...the **kings of the earth** bring their glory and honor into it...and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the **nations** into it. But there **shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie**, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life...the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits...the leaves of the tree were for the **healing of the nations.**”

- As we just read in Rev. 21, this is **after** the time of the creation of the “new heaven and earth” – **if** this was **after** a time ending, cosmos melting, final judgement and wrapping up of all humanity on earth, then:
  - What **kings are left on earth** to come and bring anything into the New Jerusalem?
  - What **nations are left on earth** if this is supposed to be **after** the complete destruction of the physical earth?
  - Vs. 27 clearly states a requirement in order to get into the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and earth, and **stopped outside the gates** are those who defile, cause an abomination, or lie – if this is **after the 1,000 year reign** (which was said to have **already** happened in Rev. 20:4-5), and **after** a supposed complete judgement and doing away of **all sinful humanity into the Lake of Fire** with no one but Christians left (which was already said to have already happened according to Rev. 20:14-15), **then who is this supposed to be who is outside the gates, being sinful, not able to enter?**
  - Rev. 22:2 tells us that the leaves of the tree of life were for the “**healing** of the nations” – **what nations are left? Who would need to still be healed** if the entire old physical planet and people were gone, all sinners cast away into the Lake of Fire, and there only supposed to be heaven with only Christians left in existence?



**(Read)** Rev. 22:14-15 says, “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolater, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”

Rev. 21 and 22 are talking about the effect of the **one** Eternal Kingdom upon both the **SEEN** and **UNSEEN** realms. It is important to keep this in mind as we look at Rev. 22:14-15 → there is “both” an **earthly** and **heavenly** aspect of the one eternal Kingdom to this passage. God’s Kingdom is fully active in **both** realms (**seen** and **unseen**).

### **Earthly realm aspect:**

The **earthly** Kingdom’s realm **existence is in the church**. Christians have free unhindered entrance into the earthly aspects of the Kingdom city, God dwells with us, we are blessed with His Holy Spirit living with and guiding us. No “unsaved” person can truly enter the body of Christ in the earthly church.

### **Heavenly realm aspect:**

The New Jerusalem is in the **heavenly unseen realm** where God dwells. The Tree of Life is **in this heavenly city**. Those outside the heavenly city are there because of their wickedness and spiritual uncleanness and will never be allowed to enter (they are barred forever into another realm of the Lake of Fire). But the righteous will freely enter the heavenly city with no opposition from the gatekeepers (also see Rev. 21:12, 27).

(See **Study Series 16 Lesson 9 and 10** for more on the “dual aspect” of the “**one**” Kingdom)

\*\* Let’s turn back to the OT to put this more into perspective as to the **nature** and **timing** of what John is speaking of, as he is drawing his text from the prophecy in Isaiah:

**(Read)** Isa. 65:1 tells us, “I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me...to a nation that was **not** called by My name”

- Paul quotes this passage in Rom. 9:24 and 10:20 showing this was referring to the fulfillment in Gentiles becoming Christians through faith in Christ.

**(Read)** Isa. 65:2 says, “I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people...a people who provoke Me to anger continually to my face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense on alters...”

- Paul quotes this verse in Rom. 10:21 clearly referring to **OC Israel**.

(**Read**) Isa. 65:6-7 the prophet speaks from God to OC Israel of **their** promised judgement for their continual rebellion and harlotry, "...I will not keep silent, but will repay – even repay into **their** bosom – **your** iniquities and the iniquities of **your fathers together**, says the Lord."

- We must keep the audience reference in place and not try to stretch this beyond who it is speaking of – **OC Israel**.

(**Read**) Isa. 65:11-12 goes on to tell us, "But **you** are those who forsake the Lord, who **forgot My holy mountain**, who **prepare a table for Gad...therefore** I will number **you** for the sword, and **you** shall bow down to the slaughter..."

- God is clearly telling them through the prophet Isaiah the **who** (OC Israel is the contextual audience as introduced in vs. 2, and clarified by Paul in Rom. 10:21), the **why** (OC Israel forsook and broke the OC with their God, as God also prophesied to Moses back in Deut. 31:16-18), and **what** judgement was coming (they were numbered for the sword and slaughter).

(**Read**) Isa. 65:13-15 also clearly tells them the "**when**," "...My servants shall eat, but **you** shall go hungry; Behold My servants shall rejoice, but **you** shall be ashamed...my servants shall sing...but **you** shall cry...for the Lord shall slay **you**, and call His servants by another name."

- This passage is contrasting and concluding the results of the two people groups being spoken of in vs. 1 (NT Christians = **My servants**) and vs. 2 (OC Israel = **you**). The saving of one and the judgement of the other are **coinciding events!**
- This is the same kingdom transference language we see from Jesus in Matt. 21:33-45; Luke 13:22-29.
- This is the wedding banquet language of Matt. 22:9 (also Rev. 19:1-9). The OC Israel servants who were invited were not willing to come, they killed the servants of the King sent to them, so the King sent His armies to destroy "**those** murders and burned up **their** city," while **at that same time** He send his servants to invite in the Gentiles and all.

\*\*Now, right after this slaying of one people and calling of another people in Isa. 65:15 is when Isaiah tells them in vs. 17 that God will create a "**new heavens and earth**." It is here that I think it would be a good place to do a sub study into understanding what the Bible concept and meaning is when it uses the term "remember or remembered," as here in Isa. 65:17.

## Sub study on “Remembered”:

(**Read**) Isa. 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be **remembered** or come to mind."

- Consider what is being said in the above verse. God will not "remember" the former heavens and earth. Would this apply to His physical creation? What would be the point for that "never coming to His mind"? On the other hand, if He is referring to the Old Heaven and Earth cosmological world order through the animal sacrificial system, and this such system which started in the Garden, and then was codified through the old specially chosen physical nation of Israel, wouldn't that make sense? He would not "remember" that system, or those laws and sacrifices ever again → they would never again have any validity, because now He has a New Covenant of salvation by grace through the shed blood of Christ on the cross called His true spiritual Israel believers.
  
- This term “remember” is **covenantal** language, and must not be interpreted by our modern dictionary or cultural worldview, but as always, we must let the Bible provide for us the definition of words.
  - This term “**remember**” is of the same context as Jer. 3:15-16, “Then it shall come to pass...that they will say no more, ‘the ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It shall not come to mind, **nor shall they remember it**, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.”
    - This is in reference to the restoration of true Israel in Acts 3:19-21, when the NC through Jesus Christ would supersede the OC as spoken of in Heb. 8:13. Jeremiah says that the Ark of the Covenant will not be visited, not be rebuilt, and **not be remembered**. This clearly does not mean forgotten from the mind, but is **covenantal language** → never to be valid again → never to be sought after to have its significance reconstituted again.
  
  - (**Read**) Exod. 2:24 says, “So God heard their groaning, and God **remembered** His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.”
    - We clearly know that God did not “forget” His people, or just then hear their plea and remember His covenant again.

- **(Read)** Gen. 8:1, “Then God **remembered** Noah, and every living thing...”
  - Here God is saying that He remembered His word, His promise, His covenant with Noah.
  
- **(Read)** Isa. 63:11 says, “The He **remembered** the days of old, Moses and His people...”
  - In vs. 10 we were just told how God had turned on rebellious OC Israel and fought against them as their enemy. Then He “**remembered**” – clear covenantal talk showing how He would act and do something because of His promised covenant.
  
- **(Read)** Lam. 2:1 says, “...the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud of His anger! He cast down from heaven to the earth the beauty of Israel, and **did not remember** His footstool in the day of His anger.”
  - Here God is giving the contrast of “**not remembering,**” where clearly we know He does not turn on and off His memory. Israel here is depicted as “cast down from heaven” and under God’s anger and judgement and **not** the blessings of privileged covenantal relationship (described in this verse as being His footstool).
  
- **(Read)** Rev. 16:19 says, “Now **the great city**...and great Babylon was **remembered** before God, to give **her** the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”
 

**(Read)** Rev. 18:5, “for **her sins** have reached heaven, and God has **remembered her** iniquities.” And **(read)** Rev. 11:8, “and their dead bodies will lie in the street of **the great city...where our Lord was crucified.**”

  - “**Remembered**” is covenantal language – in all of history – only OC Israel ever was in a covenant with God!

- All of the previous verses we have looked at confirm the same as here in Revelation – “**Babylon**” – “**that great city**” – “**where our Lord was crucified**” (Rev. 11:8) – can be no other city than OC Jerusalem.
  - Rev. 16:19 echoes the promise of Ezek. 23:31-33 that Judah would drink and drain the **cup of God’s wrath for her sins**. As well as the promise of Jesus in Matt. 23:32-39, and reiterated by Paul in 1 Thess. 2:14-16.
- A few other verses to look at to better understand this Biblical covenantal language of “remember”: (read) Psa. 105:42, 106:45; Luke 1:72

**(End of Sub study)**

\*\* Now, turning back to (read) Isa. 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be **remembered** or come to mind."

- Recalling that this is the same language and descriptions as we read in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 (re-read) Rev. 21:1-2.
- Now (read) Isa. 65:18-20, “But be glad and rejoice forever in what I **create...I create Jerusalem...no more an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.”**
- Keep in mind what you just read – this is “after” God has created the “new heavens and a new earth,” and in vs. 18 God has just declared this is the new Jerusalem (just as we read in Rev. 21:1-2, “new heaven and new earth and new Jerusalem” which was created after the 1,000 year reign and judgement of Revelation chapter 20). God has also just declared that what He has created is “forever.” While Isa. 65:18 relates to our heavenly afterlife once we leave this physical life (see **Study Series 16 Lesson 9** for an in-depth study into Rev. 21:4), when we look at Isa. 65:20-23, if the modern view of many is to be accepted that the “new heavens and new earth” are literally exclusively our eternal heaven where Christians go when they physically die – then this raises some serious problems in verse 20 that cannot be answered by such a belief:

- If this is the eternal heaven destiny of believers - how are their **infants** and **children** there?
- If we are to be perfect – how are there **old men** there?
- How can there be **dying**? Vs. 19 says there will no longer be any weeping or crying – how could that be if people are dying? Do we only get to live in heaven for a certain amount of years and then **die**? – where then does someone go? What does eternal life mean if we can die in heaven?
- And if this is the eternal heavenly dwelling place of the believer once they leave this world to be in the presence of God forever - **how could there possibly be sinners there?**
- **(Read)** Verses 21 – 23 go on to talk about “**building houses**” and “**planting vineyards,**” and also states how the length of life of “**God’s elect**” will be like the days of a tree (trees are not eternal, so again this is saying that a believer’s life will not be forever).
- **(Read)** Verse 23 says people will be having “**children**” – how are people still having children in heaven – where else does the Bible ever teach this? **It doesn’t!**
- These are just a few of the reasons which make it **impossible** that Isaiah is speaking about the literal, physical earth and heavens being destroyed and gone, and then a new literal and physical heavens and earth being created and describing the final heavenly place of the believers after they physically die and leave this earth.

**(Read)** Isa. 66:22, "'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall **remain** before Me', says the LORD, 'So shall your **descendants** and your name **remain**'."

- How are there **descendants** if this is supposed to be the end of the cosmos, and all believers are in heaven? Clearly, this passage indicates that **after** this “**new heavens and new earth**” are created that **the human race still continues** – new people/descendants continue to be born. You **can’t** have descendants if more people are not still being born.

- We believers are the descendants of Christ and Abraham. We belong to Christ and we are Abraham's spiritual seed and heirs according to the promises of God (Rom. 2:25-29, 10:12, 4:16, 11:26, 9:6-8; Gal. 3:16-26, 28-29, Phil. 3:2-3; Jer. 4:4, 9:25-26; John 8:39-47). Just after having destroyed the Old Covenant people and calling His servants by a new name in Isaiah 65:15 → leads directly into vs. 17 where God creates a New Heavens and Earth. The cosmological world administration has forever been changed to now be the eternal New Heavens and Earth (which is by the blood of Jesus Christ in the eternal New Covenant of grace). Not only that! But He will also cause the descendants of Abraham to remain. How does He do this? He wisely makes a new people and a new nation, which are spiritually related to Abraham (Beautifully illustrated in Eph. 2:11-22 where God creates in Himself **one new man out of the two**).
  
- God does away with the old world order of animal sacrifices and ceremonies. He replaces/fulfills them with the blood of Christ. His shed blood atonement on the cross covers once and forever all those who will be saved through faith in Him. His people with a new name will be the true spiritually Israel (made from NC believing Jews/Gentiles which Christ made into one as His body, of which He is the head). They are spiritual heirs of Abraham and heirs to the promises in the Old Testament.
  
- Look at the language written in Isa. 66:24 (**read**), “And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me...”
  - Are there going to be corpses lying around in our eternal heavenly dwelling place?
  - This is the same kind of metaphoric language as we read in (**read again**) Rev. 21:27, 22:14-15.
  - Clearly, we cannot allow our literalistic modern dictionaries and world view define for us what God is trying to tell people through Isaiah and John. They are both OC Hebrews raised with their own world view and language style who are speaking to others who know this language and thought.

- The Bible is never wrong or in contradiction! So if our current beliefs are wanting us to change verses like this to mean something that is not in the plain contextual reading, then this should be a warning to us that it is our presuppositional beliefs which are in error and need to be changed to fit the Bible verses, and not the other way around.

**(Read)** 2 Peter 3:13, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth** in which righteousness dwells."

- It is critical that we allow other Bible verses to interpret other Bible verses, and we must not pull a verse like this in Peter out of context and impose different interpretations that are not supported by the other verses on the topic. One of the proper hermeneutic rules of Bible interpretation is that clear verses help interpret ones not as clear.
- We will spend a much deeper study section into 2 Peter 3 in a later study series, for now, let me just make a few points:
  - We must interpret Peter in light of all the other passages we have just studied on this same phrase "new heaven and new earth."
  - Peter mentions in vs. 16 how Paul in **all** of his epistles is speaking about these things: however, **never** anywhere in Paul's writings does he ever talk about the end of the church age – he actually says the opposite in Eph. 3:21. Paul only speaks of Israel's judgement, so it is the end of the OC Hebrew world that must be "these same things."
  - In 2 Pet. 3:1-2 Peter says, "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in **both** of which I stir up your pure minds by way of **reminder**), that you may be mindful of the words which were **spoken before by the holy prophets**..."



- Peter is saying that he is saying nothing which was not said before by the OC prophets, so our interpretation of his epistle must be kept in light that he is reiterating what we just studied in our previous passages.
  
- He says to them in vs. 1 to “**remember**,” confirming that this is not any new teaching they have not heard from the OT prophets from their past.
  
- In vs. 1 he says **both** of his epistles are joined to “**remind**” the beloved, so to understand this better we need to go back to 1 Peter to know more clearly what he is referring to:
  - 1 Pet. 1:10-12, 20 he says that the OC prophets knew the things they spoke of were not for their time, but that they were searching and speaking of things which were referring to a time in their (OT writers) future, which Peter is now writing saying “**is**” the time these 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians were living in.
  
  - In vs. 20 he also says that “**their time**” when Jesus was just with them was said to be “these last times.”
  
  - 1 Pet. 4:5 he used the Greek word “*hitoimos*” → which literally means that the time is morally and temporally ready to judge the living and the dead (a very strong sense of nearness).
  
  - 1 Pet. 4:7 he uses another very significant Greek word “*eggiken*” in the perfect active indicative tense → literally means “has drawn near.” (the “all things” needs to be kept in perspective of the OC world, as that was the world they were living in).
  
  - 1 Pet. 4:17 he says the “time” has come, and uses the Greek word “*Kairos*” → literally means “the appointed time,” and combines this with saying for “judgment” to begin, and uses the Greek word “*krino*” → literally means “the judgment.” He also indicated that this judgment was to begin with those early believers “**first**,” writing in around mid-AD 63, in which as short as a year away was to begin the great Neronic persecution on the church.

- This New Covenant world administration/order, which had been promised by God, comes to full consummation in AD 70. It is the “**new heavens and earth Eternal Kingdom**” is a new arrangement of the universe, **both** in the unseen realm of heaven and in the seen realm on earth. The invisible realities of His Kingdom emanates in the unseen realm from heaven, and manifests itself on earth through the visible Church. The New Heavens and Earth is a new government (kingdom) and new world order of things both in the SEEN and UNSEEN realms, **based on the redemptive work of Christ**. The old arrangement of the world, which was based on the sacrificial system (instituted since the fall in the garden where the Lord Himself slayed the first animal to cloth Adam and Eve), passed away, and Christ’s new world order (*kosmos*) or administration (*oikonomia*) was established.
- The visible realm of this one eternal Kingdom is made up of the believers in Christ in the church. Their sins are all forgiven. They are justified in the eyes of God. Unrighteousness continually ruled among the Old Covenant Hebrew kingdom people in the old heavens and earth world order, but now righteousness dwells among the New Covenant people. The Old Covenant system required continual sacrifices for the people in order to temporarily atone/cover their sins. The New Covenant people of God have been forgiven forever through Christ's “once at the end of the ages” sacrifice, and no further sacrifices are needed – ever.
- I think keeping in mind **both** 1 and 2 Peter gives a much clearer picture of the 1<sup>st</sup> century time statements of the events which they were presently living in, and those which were just “**about**” to happen. This, combined with all of the other Bible passages we have just studied related to the “new heavens and new earth,” I believe puts more into perspective the “**nature**” and “**timing**” of what was meant by the change from the Old Heavens and Earth world/age to the New Heavens and Earth world/age. (We will cover 1 and 2 Peter far more extensively, and in the light and context of many other NT passages, in **Study Series 10 on 2 Pet. 3:1-13**).

(We will look further into this subject of the “new heaven and new earth” when we come to **Study Series 16 Lesson 9 and 10 on Revelation**)

**\*\* See Appendix “A” OC vs. NC comparison chart**

## Shaking the Heavens and Earth:

\*\* As we have been learning from the many Bible passages, such language as “the Heavens and Earth passing away” is Hebrew Metaphoric Hyperbole Apocalyptic talk (exaggerative symbolic language). This is the same language as with the phrase “shake the heavens and earth.” You will recall looking at some of these passages in our “Study Series 5” about being a Hebrew in the OC, and understanding the audience relevance and their language.

Let us look more into this topic as described in the Bible:

- **(Read)** Isa. 13:6-13 “Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!... and every human heart will melt...They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame. Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity... Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place...”
  - Isa. 13:1 properly puts into context that this was referring to just **Babylon’s world** that was coming to an end, “The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.” **Then vs. 17 and 19**, “Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them... And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.”
- **(Read)** 2 Sam. 22:8-16, ““Then the earth shook and quaked; the foundations of heaven were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry. “Smoke went up out of His nostrils, Fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it. “He bowed the heavens also, and came down with thick darkness under His feet...He appeared on the wings of the wind. And He made darkness canopies around Him, a mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky...the foundations of the world were laid bare By the rebuke of the LORD, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.”

- The foundations of the literal heavens never trembled, nor did God bow down the heavens and come down and has feet, nor did He appear on the wings of the wind. In **vs. 1** David plainly explains what was meant by the Hebrew language's nuances and metamorphic description of how God defended him from His enemies and Saul, (**2 Sam. 22:1**) “And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.”
  
- **(Read)** Joel 2:10 says, “The earth quakes before them, **the heavens tremble**, the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness...for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible...”
  - This was speaking of the coming judgement from the Lord by sending the Babylonian army to destroy Jerusalem and take the people away into captivity in 586 BC. **Jerusalem's** rulers and heavens trembled – **their** king, princes and sun, moon, stars diminished their brightness. (**Notice how Jerusalem's sun, moon and stars were not completely destroyed or gone dark**, as they had been spoken of being completely gone for Babylon in Isaiah 13. We must understand the significance of why the Lord inspired the scriptures to be recorded like this → Jerusalem was not completely judged and destroyed in 586 BC. They were **diminished**, as they went into captivity, but their final full destruction would not be until AD 70)
  
- **(Read)** Heb. 12:26-28, “Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “**Yet once more** I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.” Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that **are being** shaken, as of things that are made, **that the things which cannot be shaken may remain**. Therefore, since **we are receiving** a kingdom that cannot be shaken...”

- The first question I would ask is – when did God ever physically literally destroy the entire planet in the past? – **Never!** So where does anyone have biblical precedence to apply this same phrase to be fulfilled in a **different** way than the Bible has shown us it was done in the past – especially when God says He will “**yet once more,**” clearly indicating that that someone can look back to see where and what it was describing from the previous times this language and phrase was used?
  
- It is also important to understand that this was **written to 1<sup>st</sup> century Hebrew Christians**, and they are being told that the “heavens and earth” **are being shaken** right there, right in their time (vs. 28). The old heavens and earth cosmological world order was obsolete and presently being dismantled...and just a few years away from that time was about to be completely destroyed and removed forever in AD 70.
  
- While in past judgments from God He shook the earth when He would use one nation to carry out His vengeance on another → the promise for this next time was that not only would there be judgment poured out to shake the earth, but that He also would shake the things in the spiritual heavenly realm as well. While at the cross the Lord disarmed and made a spectacle triumphing over the spiritual forces (Col. 2:14-15), He then ascended to His throne in heaven where He reigned and brought all those spiritual forces and principalities and enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25). After which time He would return a second time consummating a complete changing of the heavens and earth government world order (cosmology).
  
- In **Daniel 7:13-14** it pictures Jesus **ascending** to the Father **to receive the Kingdom**. In **Luke 19**, Jesus similarly teaches that a nobleman **went** to a foreign country **to receive a Kingdom** (at the ascension), and then when he returned to reign over that country he destroyed those who did not want him as their king (**Luke 19:12-15, 27**). In the parable of the vineyard owner (**Matt. 21, Mark 12, Luke 20**), Jesus states that the Kingdom will be taken away from the Jews and given to a new nation producing the fruit of it. Here we see that the saints did **not take full possession of the Kingdom until** it was taken from the Jews and given to the Church in AD 70.

- **Hebrews 12:26-28** corresponds to the consummation period of **Daniel 7** where we see Christ having received the Kingdom upon His ascension to His Father and then **reigning “in the midst of His enemies”** (Psa. 110:1-2; Acts 2:29, 34-35; Heb. 10-12-13; Psa. 2) until He “**put all of His enemies under His feet**” (1 Cor. 15:25). **Daniel 7:22** speaks of the end of the millennial reign of the Son of Man when He returned with the Ancient of Days and the Kingdom where the saints **then** took full possession of the Kingdom → consummated in AD 70. While it is true that the saints “were receiving” (present tense) the Kingdom in a **provisional** sense before AD 70, they really did not take full possession of it until it was **officially taken away from the Jews and given to the Church** in AD 70.
  
- The Kingdom those 1<sup>st</sup> century saints provisionally possessed was soon going to be **consummated** in the New Heavens and Earth under a new arrangement of the universe, both in the **unseen** realm of heaven and in the **seen** realm on earth. The invisible realities of His “one eternal Kingdom” emanates in the unseen realm from heaven, and manifests itself on earth through the visible Church. The New Heavens and Earth is a new government (Kingdom) and new world order of things both in the SEEN and UNSEEN realms, **all based on the redemptive work of Christ**. The old arrangement of the world, which was based on the sacrificial system (instituted since the fall in the garden where the Lord Himself slayed the first animal to cloth Adam and Eve, and seen codified under the Mosaic Old Covenant), was empty, obsolete and passed away, and Christ’s new world order (*kosmos*) or administration (*oikonomia*) was set up.
  
- **(Read)** Hag. 2:6, “...**once more** (it is a little while) I will **shake the heaven and earth**, the sea and dry land.”
  - This verse is stating a prophecy to be fulfilled in the future, and says “a little while” – Heb. 12:26 is the direct quote of this Haggai prophecy, and yet now in the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, that audience is told it was **no longer “a little while,”** but that it **was being fulfilled/received** during the time of that 1<sup>st</sup> century audience (vs. 28).

**\*\* Turning back to read Matt 5:17-18 again**, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, **until heaven and earth pass away**, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Matt 5:17-18 NASB)

In light of this study we have just done I believe we are now able to more clearly understand in context, and audience relevance, what Jesus was referring to when He said “...until heaven and earth pass away...”

- Both the **seen** and **unseen** realm of the original created perfect “Heavens and Earth” were affected at the fall, and an animal had to be sacrificed that day in the garden (performed by the Lord Himself – Gen. 3:21) and the arrangement and functioning of both the **seen** and **unseen** realms of that “Heavens and Earth” altered and then **centered on the sacrificial system** (as the way a Holy God could continue to deal with sinful mankind).
  - However, God “promised” Adam/Eve about the Seed (Christ) to come (Gen. 3:15).
  - Later God then took a man Abram out of the fallen/separated nations to build into a people for His portion - the nation of Israel (Deut. 32:8-9), in whom He established that “promise” in the eternal forever covenant to Abram (Gen. 12:3, 15:5-17).
  - 430 years later God then constituted a Theocratic conditional covenant of blessings and curses through Moses at Mt. Sinai with the physical nation of Israel (Deut. 28:1-68), with the ultimate goal being through which the “promised” Seed (Christ) covenanted by God to Abraham would come (Gal. 3:7-8, 17, 24-29).

The Seed (Christ) was to come and establish the **new and eternal covenant through His blood**, and this would alter and **reconstitute the “old Heaven and Earth”** (seen and unseen realms) and **make a “new Heaven and Earth” arrangement/administration (oikonomia)** or Kingdom world order (kosmos), which superseded the old Heaven and Earth world order and is **now centered on the finished and perfect sacrifice of His son** (Heb. 9:26, 10:12).

This forever changed the way man and God had relationship, how **heaven met earth**:

- → no longer in the earthly Old Covenant temple Holy of holies by an earthly priest mediator (Heb. 9:6-7).
- → now through the New Covenant in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20).
- → His glory is no longer behind a veil in an earthly physical temple, but is now to all generations, forever and ever in the church (Eph. 3:21, 2:19-22; 2 Cor. 6:16; Ezek. 37:26-28)
- → All believers are all now priests (Rev. 1:6, 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9), and able to be in the presence of God through the access made sure by the one true and final mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).
- **His Kingdom is a new arrangement of the universe, both in the unseen realm of heaven and in the seen realm on earth**. The invisible realities of His Kingdom emanates in the unseen realm from heaven, and manifests itself on earth through the visible Church. The New Heavens and Earth is a new government (Kingdom) and new world order of things both in the SEEN and UNSEEN realms, **based on the redemptive work of Christ**.

Also, in conclusion: this complete fulfilling of the smallest letter or stroke of the law and prophets in Matt 5:17-18 **necessitated** the judgment in the **unseen realm** commencing at the cross (Col. 2:14-15), as well as the **seen realm** removal of the adulterous/harlot physical 12 tribes of Israel as God's **Old Covenant wife** (Hos. 1-2; Jer. 3:1-9, Ezek. 16 & 23) to prepare for the **New Covenant bride** (Church) full consummation of all things which happened at Christ's *Parousia* (Presence/Return) in AD 70 (Luke 21:20-22).

The Bible writes about this transition process from the initiation of the New Covenant Kingdom at the cross/resurrection of Christ in AD 30 until the final full consummation with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 (This was the period of time inferred in Heb. 8:13 → 40 years - one generation). In AD 62 Col. 2:16-17 speaks of the Torah Sabbaths and ceremonies as "still" being a shadow in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and the substance in Christ was spoken of as future, but "**about to**" come. We are shown this transition process to consummation in Hebrews chapters 8 - 12, where the writer was specifically telling those 1st century Hebrew Christians when they would know all of this had happened → in Heb. 8:13, 9:8-9 – when the obsolete symbol which epitomized that Old Covenant relationship, "**the temple in Jerusalem**," was in finality destroyed. They were given the sign in the **seen** realm of what had happened in the **unseen** realm → the removal of the old heavens and earth cosmological order and the **consummating** of the eternal new heavens and earth cosmological order (through the redemptive work of the blood of Christ).



**(Read)** In Jer. 31:31-33 God had declared that He would make a New Covenant (NC) of grace to replace the Old Covenant (OC) Jewish system, and in approximately AD 63 when Heb. 8:6-13 was written, **those 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians** were told that this obsolete OC to NC full transition was **“about to”** consummate, and in fact it was so close to completing at **their** time that **they** are promised in Heb. 10:37, “For yet **a little while**, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry.”

Within 7 short years from the writing of the book of Hebrews, this OC to NC transition spoken of in Hebrews 8:13 was fully consummated with the Roman armies destruction and burning of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, “where not one stone was left standing upon another (exactly how the Lord had prophesied in Matt. 24:2) – the **OC heaven and earth administration/order** had completely and finally “vanished away,” and the full glory of **Holy God with man in the “New heaven and New earth” covenantal relationship consummated by Christ Jesus** in the church to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (**Eph. 3:21**) had come.

Jesus’ AD 70 “coming (Matt. 24:3 *Parousia*/Presence)” was “in like manner” as He said He saw the Father had done in the past in that He enacted His judgment through another nation (John 5:19, 22). His Father’s “Parousia/Presence” is found all throughout the Old Testament where the metaphoric, apocalyptic, hyperbole language used by the prophets described His coming many times. YHWY was said to have “come” in judgment on Babylon (Isa. 13:1, 6-11, 13, 17, 19), Edom (Isa. 34:3-6), Egypt (Isa. 19:1, 16, 22-23, 20:4; Ezek. 34:7-8), Assyria (Isa. 30:27-33, 31:4, 8, 37:33-36), and even when David escaped Saul (Psa. 18:1, 3-18) → in this same way Jesus said He would come bringing judgment on OC Israel, which is exactly what He did through the Roman armies in AD 70 where He poured out their “filled up” cup of wrath → the OC Hebrew nation would be gone forever, Jerusalem destroyed, and its temple torn down with not one stone left upon another (Matt. 24:2).

## Matthew 5:17-20 – The Jots and Tittles

Let's start with **Matthew 5:17-19**, Jesus says, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished."

Did you ever wonder what Jesus meant when He said to **His Jewish audience** that they had to keep "every jot and tittle" of the Law until it was all fulfilled and heaven and earth passed away? Yet, no such requirement of keeping these "jots and tittles" were ever imposed on the Gentiles (Acts 15:22-29).

Let's continue with verse 19a to His Jewish audience, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."

- Notice that this is something that relates to their life inside the Kingdom after it arrives. You'll be called least in the Kingdom if you annul even one of the least of the commandments and teach others to do likewise.

Verse 19b-20, "But whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

- Does anybody see a difficulty here? Or maybe even several difficulties? This Matt. 5:17-20 passage has been one of the most challenging texts for many Christian to handle. I want us to see the problem that's introduced here. Notice Jesus says in verse 17, "I have not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but to fulfill." What does this word "abolish" mean? Does it mean that He did not come to remove the law and take it out of the way, and that he's going to keep it eternally binding upon us? Certainly not!

While the actual "Mosaic Law" is **not** still binding on Christians today, I do say that in a spiritual sense the law of God is certainly still binding. We still sacrifice today (spiritually speaking). We still keep the festivals today, in a spiritual way, as they're applied in a spiritual context to our life in the Kingdom. Christ is our once-for-all sacrifice to **fulfill all sacrifices**.

We still observe the Passover in a spiritual way. We still sacrifice; Hebrews 10:13 talks about that. So, Jesus didn't come to abolish it, but to **bring it to its final, fullest meaning**, to fulfill it, to fill it up, to **bring it into fullness**. That's what He did by bringing the real things. Those physical sacrifices were only typological and symbolic of the greater, more spiritual and "**better**" things in Christ and in the church. So, Jesus was correct. He did not come to abolish it, but to fulfill it, **to bring it to its "full and final spiritual" meaning and purpose.**

So how does this apply during this 40 year transition period between AD 30 - 70? Jesus is talking to His Jewish audience in Matt. 5:17-20 about entering into the Kingdom when it arrives, and says you'll not enter into it (verse 20) unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees. Are there any scribes and Pharisees around now? Not in the sense that Jesus was referring to here. So, the **heaven and earth Jesus was speaking about must have passed away** if there are no more scribes and Pharisees. But Jesus implies that there would be scribes and Pharisees around until that heaven and earth passed away. And that means that the heavens and earth must have passed away at the same time the scribes and Pharisees passed away (i.e. AD 70).

But why does Jesus mention the scribes and Pharisees in this context about keeping every jot and tittle of the Law? It is because the Jewish Christians needed to be a good example to those scribes and Pharisees. How in the world would the gospel ever be seriously considered by the Jews of that day if the people bearing that good news were law breakers or Gentiles? The scribes and Pharisees would have written off Christianity as hopelessly out of sync with Biblical Judaism if those preaching the gospel were not living in accordance with Biblical Judaism.

In Deut. 13 Moses gave the test of a true prophet. Not only did the prophet have to provide miraculous signs to back up his words, but the words themselves must be in conformity with the already revealed written word of inspired Scripture. If the Christians abandoned the Law and did not keep it, then the scribes and Pharisees would have considered Christianity to be out of conformity with their Hebrew scriptures. **They would have tuned out the gospel instantly and permanently.**

Think about it. Would a Pharisee or a priest ever listen to a Christian if they were law breakers? Remember that **until AD 70 the law of the land in Israel was still the Mosaic law.** It still had not passed away. That was still the law of the land, and if you lived in that land, that was your law, no matter whether you were Jew or Christian. And it would be illegal for you to break that law if you lived in that land. You were still bound to keep the law, **not for salvation's sake**, but **for conscience sake**, as Paul says (1 Cor. 10:23-33).

It would have discredited Christianity instantly if the preachers of the gospel were law-breakers. Instead, Jesus tells them that until all that stuff in the Law was fulfilled and heaven and earth passed away, the **Jewish Christians** needed to keep every jot and tittle of it better than the scribes and Pharisees were keeping it.

After the Cross the law was **bound only for the "Jewish Christians" and only for "conscience-sake"** (testimony's sake) until it was all fulfilled and removed in AD 70. Jesus commanded His Jewish followers (not Gentiles) to keep every jot and tittle of it better than the scribes and Pharisees so that their **good law-keeping example** would pave the way for them to preach the gospel to their fellow-Jews. That gave the Jews a whole generation (40 years) to hear the gospel coming from fellow law-keeping Jews before the Law was rendered inoperable in AD 70. After AD 70 no one could keep the Law. It was a moot issue for Christians (Jew and Gentile alike) after AD 70. But until the temple was destroyed and the sacrificial system was abolished, those **Jewish Christians** needed to continue keeping it so that their good law-abiding exemplary lifestyle would open the door for the gospel to be heard and accepted by their fellow Jews. They were to continue to keep the law, but now, **not** for "**salvation's sake**" → It was for "**conscience's and testimony's sake.**"

There is a big difference between those two motivations for keeping the Law. I think many Christians today have not understood this very well. Paul certainly didn't continue keeping the sacrifices and the festivals because he believed that he was bound to do so for salvation's sake. He knew very clearly, as did all the apostles, that salvation is in Christ, and **in Christ alone**. So they knew that performing those sacrifices did not save them. But **they were still a part of the national governmental system**, and those laws were kept for "conscience sake" in order to be a good example, to maintain a good law-abiding reputation, so that the gospel would be adorned and attractive to other Jews.

In net effect, by keeping the jots and tittles better than the scribes and Pharisees, it could make the scribes and Pharisees sit up and take notice of Christianity. It could make some of them take a serious look at it and examine it carefully. If Christianity made Jewish people better law-keepers, then the scribes and Pharisees would have been jealous, and some would have wanted to get into Christianity in order to be the best Law-keepers possible. Christianity would become attractive to them because it would make them better law-keepers. And Jesus tells the **Jewish Christians** that **they** need to maintain that law-keeping **UNTIL** all the promises in the Scriptures were fulfilled and the old heavens and earth passed away. After the fulfillment and the passing away, the Law would no longer be bound on them.

On a last note, Jesus says (Matt. 5:19), "Whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments, even the smallest letter [jot] and the smallest stroke of the law [tittle], whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom." Notice that Jesus does not make a distinction between Jews inside Palestine versus Jews who dwelt outside in the Diaspora. **All Jewish Christians** whether inside Israel, or outside in the Diaspora, needed to keep every jot and tittle. If they didn't keep the Law, their preaching of the gospel to their fellow Jews would be rejected and discredited. So it was absolutely critical that they kept every jot and tittle, and that they kept it even better than the scribes and Pharisees did → until that old heaven and earth passed away in AD 70.

### **The New Covenant Bride:**

\*\* The NT writers wrote to the 1<sup>st</sup> century churches telling them that the New Covenant church was the **new bride**: see Rev. 19:7 then 21:2-3 then 21:9-10, 14 then 2 Cor. 11:2 then Eph. 5:24-27 then Gal. 4:24-26 then Eph. 2:19-22 then 1 Pet. 2:3-5.

- The OT types and shadows of Old Covenant Israel, with her **physical** temple, priesthood, sacrifices, land and promises → are fulfilled in the **eternal spiritual** New Covenant Israel in the church. Both Jewish and Gentile "Christians" are the true descendants of Christ and Abraham. We belong to Christ, and we are Abraham's spiritual seed and heirs according to the promises of God (Gal. 3:26-29; Rom. 9:6-8).

## Study Principle:

The only way to prove a Bible truth, is not by simply accepting what some people say, even if it is someone we like or trust, or relying on what we may have been taught in the past – but the only way to prove a Bible truth right or wrong is **through the scriptures themselves**, “...test all things; hold onto what is good.” (1 Thess. 5:21). As with the admonition from Paul to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:15, we should also, “Be diligent...rightly handling the word of truth.” Acts 17:11 tells us of the Berean believers who “received the word with all readiness,” **but** “searched the scriptures daily” to find out if even the things Paul was telling them were true – how much more should we “search and test, and then hold on to, and then proclaim the truth” if they even did this with the Apostle Paul’s teaching).

## The Earth Abides:

\*\* Did you realize that the common OC Hebrew thought and teaching for their millennia of existence was **never** about the “end of the cosmos?” They believed in two ages, the age they were in, the Old Covenant age, and the age to come, the age of the Messiah, and they believed that **the age of the Messiah would never end**. How was this nation under God who were raised generation after generation on the Old Testament scriptures so sure of what they believed, yet many people today teach some very different things?

- THE LITERAL PHYSICAL HEAVEN & EARTH SHALL ABIDE **FOREVER**: let us look at what the scriptures have to say about the **existence of the earth**, and let us try to allow them to teach us what God is trying to say to us:
  - **A. (Psalm 104:5) "You who laid the foundations of the earth, So that it should not be moved forever,"**
    - The literal earth is not predicted to pass away. David said that it should not be removed forever.
  - **B. (psalm 78:69) "And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He established forever."**
    - The Bible says that the physical earth has been established forever.

- **C. (Ecclesiastes 1:4) *"One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever."***
  - The Bible says that the literal earth abides forever.
  
- **D. (Psalm 148:4, 6) *"Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens!... He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away. "***
  - The Bible says that the physical heavens have been established forever.
  
- **E. (Psalm 119:90) *"Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands."***
  - God's faithfulness is never-ending, and it is declared that it will endure "to all" generations. In the same comparison it says the earth abides forever.
  
- **F. (Genesis 8:21) *"... I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done."***
  - After the flood, God said He will never again destroy mankind. He had saved Noah and his family along with all of the animals when the flood came. Likewise when He destroys Israel and the Old Covenant system, He will establish His New Covenant system on the planet. It will involve true spiritual Israel which would be made from all Jew/Gentiles believers who will be His people from then on. In addition, He will allow mankind, including those who never will believe in Him, to continue their human lifetime of allotted years on the physical earth throughout history!

- **G. (Isaiah 45:17) “Israel has been saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or humiliated To all eternity.”**
  - To all eternity, or as in some translations Forever and Ever, this is the Hebrew meaning of “world without end.”
  
- **H. (Isaiah 9:7) “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”**
  - Incredibly powerful verse – notice it says “there will be ‘no end to the increase’ of His government or of peace...” – you cannot have it always increasing unless there are always more people being saved to add to the increase of His Kingdom.
  
- **I. (Psalm 2) “<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed... <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them... <sup>6</sup> ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.’ <sup>7</sup> I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD...’ <sup>8</sup> ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession...”**
  - The Kingdom is given to Christ. Verses 6-12 does not sound like His rule and reign of the world is ever coming to an end. Verse 8 also declares that the world dominion is given as a gift from the Father to the Son. Will Christ ever lose His inheritance? – Never!
  - Nowhere in the Bible does it say that all of the nations will submit willingly to Christ. It says the opposite in fact, but look how in verse 9 it shows how He will rule whether they want Him to or not.
  - Psalm 2 clearly shows that there was not going to be any delay when the Lord was to establish His Kingdom, dispelling all premillennial dispensationalism teaching (Also: Isa. 42:3-4; and Psa. 89:34-37 (next)).



- J. (Psalm 89:34-37) “<sup>34</sup> ***“My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. <sup>35</sup> “Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. <sup>36</sup> “His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. <sup>37</sup> “It shall be established forever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful.”***
  - David is promised that his descendants will endure and continue forever. You could not have the world end and have his descendants still continue to endure forever. God’s character prohibits Him changing His decrees: Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 6:17-18, 13:8; Jam. 1:17; Tit. 1:2.
  
- K. (Ezekiel 37:26-28) “<sup>26</sup> ***“I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. <sup>27</sup> “My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. <sup>28</sup> “And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.””***
  - His sanctuary will be in the “**midst**” of the nations – forevermore. This is not the language of the end of a universe, or there would not be any nations remaining. Verse 26 also says God will “**multiply**” the people of the new covenant. This can only be possible if **people are still being saved forever** (just as we also saw in Isaiah 9:7 above. Also see Eph. 3:20-22, 3:21 below).
  
- L. (Ephesians 2:20-22) “<sup>20</sup> ***having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”***
  - This was the start of the building of the Messianic temple of Ezek. 37:26-28, and notice that it is said to have started right there “in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.” This clearly is not a “physical” temple, as Jesus and the apostles were not “physical” stones, and a physical building also does **not** grow. No, rather, the temporary earthly physical temple was now obsolete and the reality was being fulfilled with the eternal spiritual temple → the “church.”

- **M. (Ephesians 3:21) “to Him is the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.” (YLT)**
  - The renowned British scholar F.F. Bruce says, “It is the strongest expression in the Greek language for unendingness possible.” If God was wanting to tell us that His glory was no longer in the physical temple but was now **through Christ in the church**, and that it would remain there to **every generation** – for all time, **forever** – He could not have used any stronger language in the Greek vocabulary than He just did.
  - God’s glory is in the church, indicating that **the church can never end**, as God decreed that His glory would never cease being in the church to **all generations**. End the church (which is also the body of Christ, and He is the head on the body) and you would end the glory of God – and that is **not possible**.

God created the physical Heavens, the planets and the earth. His creation is good. The Bible says He will continue the physical heavens and earth forever. It also says that the **increase** of His kingdom (**souls being saved**) shall **never end**.

We will spend a subsequent Study Series exploring more into 2 Peter 3, Revelation, Daniel, and some other metaphoric hyperbole apocalyptic passages, which I believe once seen through looking at many other clear verses will shed some bright light onto what “heaven and earth” was to be burned up with fervent heat, and what the Bible was describing that to mean.

However, at this point, I think it is becoming fairly evident through our many studies, **as we become the audience in the passage**, and **think in their worldview**, and **understand their metaphoric, apocalyptic and hyperbole Hebrew language**, how imperative it is **that we allow only Bible verses to interpret other Bible verses**, and we must not turn to our modern literalistic thinking, culture or language for the interpretations, if we are ever going to truly understand many of the scriptures.