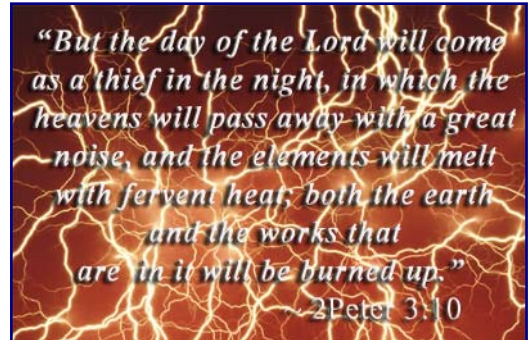


"Heaven and Earth Passed Away"

By [David Curtis](#)



We looked last week at the time statements in the Bible as to the coming of the Lord. We saw that he said he would come—while some that were standing there were still living; in that generation; soon; quickly; at hand; he said his coming was near. Everywhere that the Bible talks about the Lord's coming it gives us a time statement. The NT saints fully expected the Lord to return in their lifetime. How could we possibly miss this? Yet the majority of believers today, some two thousand years later are still saying that the Lord will return [soon](#).



Can the same event be imminent at two different periods of time separated by two thousand years? Someone said to me that they felt that the Lord said he was coming soon because he wanted every generation to be watching for Him. Think about that. What that means is that when he told the first century believers that he was coming back soon, he really didn't mean it, he was giving them false information to keep them looking for Him. Can you live with that? If that was the case what else did he tell them that wasn't true? Do we have a God who intentionally deceives men? Isn't it much easier to simply believe what Jesus said and believe that he came back in the first century?

What is at stake here is the inspiration of Scripture. If Jesus was mistaken or if he lied to us then what good is the rest of the Bible? There are those opponents who say that if you believe that Jesus came back in the first century then you don't need to read your Bible any more. I don't understand that argument, but if Jesus didn't come back in the first century, when he said that he would then you might as well throw your Bible out because if it isn't inspired, it isn't any good. I believe that the Bible is the [inspired Word of God](#) and therefore **without errors**.

Christianity is intellectual, faith is understanding and assent to what God has told us. God says in Isaiah chapter 1, *"come now let us reason together."* This is important because you are a product of your thinking. [Proverbs 23:7](#) says (NKJV) *"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."*

What is really frightening about this is that in our culture thinking is not really that important. Do you realize this? We are not so concerned about thinking as we are about two other things, **emotion** and **pragmatism**. We're concerned about feelings, and we're concerned about success. We're not so concerned about thinking. People don't ask the question, *"Is it true, is it right?"* They ask the question, *"Does it work and how will it make me feel?"* Emotion and pragmatism. This is tragic, especially because it has taken over the Christian Church. Even in theology, it's sad to say, the issue is not always is it right or true, but will it offend or upset someone.

We worry about how the truth will make people feel. In [Acts 17:11](#) the Bereans were noble because they searched the scriptures, not to see if these things felt good, or to see if these things worked, or even to see if these things would offend, but to see if these things were "so," to see if they were right and true. Some folks have said to me, "If I believe that Jesus came back in [70 AD](#) it might

affect some areas of my life. Such as; will a mission board take me, will I be accepted at certain colleges, could I work in an AWANA program?" Listen, please listen to me carefully. **Those are the wrong questions!** The first, the foremost, the only important question that we need to ask is: **IS IT TRUE?** If it's true we'll have to live with the consequences that the Lord gives us, but the issue here is truth, is it true?

Proverbs 23:23 (NKJV) *Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.*

When I first came to see as truth the fact that the Lord had come in 70 AD and all prophecy had been fulfilled my first objection was, "This means we are living in the new heaven and the new earth!" My response to that was "**Yea right!** If this is the New heaven and earth we got ripped off." Why did I feel that way? It was because I was looking for a **physical** fulfillment of **2 Peter 3** and **Revelation 21-22**. I thought that those passages were speaking of physical truths; I now know differently, I didn't understand **apocalyptic language**. The thing that changed my mind was seeing how the OT Scripture used the concept of heaven and earth. Let's look at how the Bible uses the concept of heaven and earth; I think you'll see that it is not always used physically.

Let's start by reading 2 Peter 3. Most Christians would say that this is the end of the world as we know it, the destruction of planet earth. It sure sounds that way doesn't it? That is how I had always seen it.

One of the major areas of difficulty in understanding correctly "heaven and earth" in the New Testament is the misunderstanding of how God referred to nations by this phrase in the Old Testament. Seeing the biblical concept of "heaven and earth" in the Old Testament will help us greatly in correctly understanding its use in New Testament passages. Rather than to assume that each time we encounter the phrase, we are to immediately think of this physical universe and its elements.

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV) *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Now is this literal or figurative? I think that this is clearly literal. I believe in a literal six day creation. Do you? Or do you believe that because with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day that creation took six thousand years?

Leviticus 26:14-20 (NKJV) *'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments,¹⁵ and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant,¹⁶ I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.¹⁷ I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.¹⁸ 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.¹⁹ I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.²⁰ And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.*

God warns Israel that she must listen and obey Him in the commandments that He has given them. God uses various terms and expressions in describing what it will be like if they despise His statutes, but notice particularly verse 19: "***and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.***" Compare Genesis 1:1 with Leviticus 26:19, are the terms "heaven and earth" to be understood in the same way? They clearly do not mean the same thing in each verse. Notice how the character of Israel's disposition in God's view is

personalized, "YOUR heaven" and "YOUR earth." So the terms "heaven" and "earth" belong or relate to Israel, they evidently constitute a "heaven" and "earth."

Isaiah 1:1-2 (NKJV) *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. ² Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me;*

Who is God speaking to here the physical creation? No, he is speaking to Israel. I think we can see this idea clearly if we look at Isaiah 51

Isaiah 51:15-16 (NKJV) *But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared; The LORD of hosts is His name. ¹⁶ And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, 'You are My people.'*"

The time of planting the heavens and laying the foundation of the earth that is referred to here, was performed by God when He *divided the sea* (ver. 15) *and gave the law* (ver. 16), *and said to Zion, Thou art my people*; that is, when He took the children of Israel out of Egypt, and formed them in the wilderness into a covenant nation. He planted the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth: that is, brought forth order, and government.

This idea is seen more clearly as we look at other passages where mention is made of the destruction of a state and government using language which seems to set forth the end of the world, as the collapse of heaven and earth.

Isaiah 13:1 (NKJV) *The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.*

In this chapter God is talking about the judgment that is to fall upon Babylon. The word burden is the Hebrew word massa' []##m], (mas-saw') an utterance, chiefly a doom. This introduction sets the stage for the subject matter in this chapter and if we forget this, our interpretations of Isaiah 13 can go just about anywhere our imagination wants to go. This is not an oracle against the **universe** or world but against the nation of Babylon.

Isaiah 13:6 (NKJV) *Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.*

Isaiah 13:9-13 (NKJV) *Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. ¹¹ "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. ¹² I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. ¹³ Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.*

Now remember he is speaking about the destruction of Babylon but it sounds like world wide destruction. The terminology of a context cannot be expanded beyond the scope of the subject under discussion. The spectrum of language surely cannot go outside the land of Babylon. If you were a Babylonian and Babylon was destroyed would it seem like the world was destroyed? Yes! Your world would be destroyed.

Isaiah 13:17 (NKJV) *"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who will not regard silver; And as for gold, they will not delight in it.*

This is an historical event that took place in 539 BC. When the Medes destroyed Babylon the Babylonian world came to an end. This destruction is said in verse 6 to be from the Almighty, and the Medes constitute the means that God uses to accomplish this task. The physical heaven and earth were still in tact, but for Babylon they had collapsed. This is apocalyptic language. This is the way the Bible discusses the fall of a nation. This is obviously figurative language.

In [Isaiah 24-27](#) we see the invasion of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar. He carries them away to captivity. Notice the language that he uses.

[Isaiah 24:3-6](#) (NKJV) *The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word. ⁴ The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish. ⁵ The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws, Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.*

[Isaiah 24:19-20](#) (NKJV) *The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. ²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.*

What I want you to see in these verses is how God refers to Israel as the earth. He says the earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly...the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again" (Verses 1,3,4,19,20) Notice how many times God referred to Israel as the "earth." This is apocalyptic language speaking of the destruction of the people of Israel.

In Isaiah 34 we have a description of the fall of Edom, notice the language that is used.

[Isaiah 34:3-5](#) (NKJV) *Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses, And the mountains shall be melted with their blood. ⁴ All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree. ⁵ "For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment.*

This is Biblical language to describe the fall of a nation. It should be clear that it is not to be taken literally. Let's look at one other OT use of this language.

[Nahum 1](#) (NKJV) *The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. ² God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies; ³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet. ⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, And dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, And the flower of Lebanon wilts. ⁵ The mountains quake before Him, The hills melt, And the earth heaves at His presence, Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.*

The subject of this judgment is Nineveh, not the physical world. This is the way God describes the fall of a nation. If this language describes the judgment of God on nations, why, when we come to the New Testament, do we make it be the destruction of the **universe**? It is only because we do not understand how the Bible uses this apocalyptic language. With this understanding of how "heaven and earth" is used in the OT lets look at 2 Peter 3.

This was by far the text that I struggled with the most. I could not understand how we were in the New heavens and the New earth. As you read different commentaries you will read things like, "this is by far the strongest passage to prove the consummation of time, the termination of the earth as we know it."

2 Peter 3:1-2 (NKJV) *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,*

Peter is reminding us of what has already been said. The NT does not contain brand new prophecies that just dropped out of the sky containing new information. 2 Peter 3 is just a reiteration of what has already been written by the prophets that spoke before. Peter gives us a key to interpretation. That key is that what he is saying has been written by the OT prophets. Keep that in mind.

2 Peter 3:3-4 (NKJV) *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

Peter said that these scoffers would come in the last days, when are the **last days**?

Micah 4:1 (KJV) *But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.*

Micah prophesizes that God's kingdom will be established in the last days.

Acts 2:14-20 (NKJV) *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.¹⁵ "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.¹⁶ "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.*

So according to Peter the last days began at Pentecost and these last days included and ended with the great and awesome day of the Lord.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV) *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

The "last days" refers to the last days of the house of Israel, the last days of the Old Covenant. The last days are the period from 30 AD to 70 AD. Isn't it interesting that during that time the scoffers were already asking, "Where is the promise of His coming?" If they were questioning His coming then, about 35 years after his death, what would they be saying today, two thousand years later? They knew that his coming was to be soon.

Now some use the argument from verses 5-7 that the world was destroyed in Noah's day and the world will be destroyed again. Let's consider that argument.

2 Peter 3:5-7 (NKJV) *For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, ⁶ by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. ⁷ But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

Peter says that the world consisted of heaven and earth, and that they were destroyed by water and perished. We know that substance of neither heaven nor earth was destroyed, but it was the evil men that were destroyed. Peter makes a distinction between the heaven and earth of Noah's day, which was destroyed, and the heaven and earth that existed then which were to be destroyed by fire. The literal visible fabric of heaven and earth were the same after the flood as they were before the flood.

Lets remember what we saw in the OT as to the apocalyptic use of heaven and earth. The destruction of heaven and earth refers to the civil and religious state, and the men of them. What was it that really perished in the flood? Look at verse 6—*by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water*. It was the world that perished, right? Now what does the word world mean? It is the orderly arrangement of society, it wasn't the dirt. **Now how do you go from an ungodly society that was destroyed to the destruction of the entire universe?** The literal earth was not destroyed. What is to be destroyed is the ungodly nation of Israel. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach that the **physical creation** will be destroyed. Notice what God said after the flood of Noah's day.

Genesis 8:21 (NKJV) *And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "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.*

Now, folks will say that the Lord destroyed the earth by water one time and He'll destroy it by fire the next time. Is God's promise here to just change his **method** of destroying everything? Is there comfort in being destroyed by fire instead of water? Or is he promising not to destroy the earth again?

Psalms 148:4-6 (NKJV) *Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. ⁶ He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away.*

What decree did God make concerning the establishment of the heaven and the earth that will never pass away? Genesis 8:21! God said that he would never again destroy every living thing. God can be trusted, He keeps his word.

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NKJV) *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

We looked at these verses last week and they are simply saying that God keeps his promises.

2 Peter 3:10 (NKJV) *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

What is "*the day of the Lord?*" It is a time of judgment on Israel; it is the end of the Old Covenant age. We have a parallel passage in:

Matthew 24:42-44 (NKJV) *"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Peter is talking about Jesus second coming at the end of the Jewish age. When the Lord comes, the heaven and earth of the Old Covenant age will pass away. Let me give you a question here to think about -- where is the millennium in Peter's discussion? Peter is talking about the Lord coming and when He does we go right into the new heaven and earth.

When we read the word, **elements** here we think of the scientific idea of the elements of matter, all the atoms of the universe burning up. But is this what the word elements means? The Greek word for elements is [stoicheia](#) (stoy-khi'-on) it is only used seven times in the NT.

Galatians 4:3 (NKJV) *Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*

Galatians 4:9 (NKJV) *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?*

Colossians 2:8 (NKJV) *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

Colossians 2:20-22 (NKJV) *Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; ²¹ "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," ²² which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men?*

Hebrews 5:12 (NKJV) *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*

In Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, the literal meaning of the word is "*element, rudiment, principle.*" In other words, this is the elements of religious training, or the ceremonial precepts that are common to the worship of Jews and of Gentiles. Obviously, this "[stoicheia](#)" (stoy-khi'-on) [stoixeiḁ] is not about atoms or destruction of the universe.

2 Peter 3:11-13 (NKJV) *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

What is being dissolved? The OC system is being dissolved not the universe. Where do we have a promise about a new heaven and earth? Peter was surly thinking of the book of Isaiah, chapters 65 and 66.

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

If you read Isaiah 65 and 66 you will notice that before God creates the new heavens and a new earth, He will pour out His wrath against Jerusalem, His rebellious people ([Isa 65:1-7](#), [11-17](#); [66:3-6](#), [15-18](#), [24](#)). When God created the new heavens and earth, notice that the physical death will remain ([Isa 65:20](#), [66:24](#)), home construction and agriculture will continue ([Isa 65:21-22](#)), we will have descendants ([Isa 65:23](#), [66:22](#)), the Lord will hear their prayers ([Isa 65:24](#)), there will be evangelism ([Isa 66:19](#)). The new heavens and earth therefore, cannot be referring to the eternal state; **it must be referring to a period in human history.** This is the period of the Kingdom of God which Christ rules in the hearts of the believers. The Kingdom of God is made without hands (spiritual—[Dan 2:34](#), [44-45](#); c.f. [Col 2:10-11](#)). If we take the statements from the scriptures at face value, then we should conclude that the first heavens and the first earth passed away and was replaced by the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, the kingdom without end. Notice that in this New Heaven and earth righteousness dwells, as it does in the New Covenant.

[2 Corinthians 3:9](#) (NKJV) *For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.*

Lets wrap this up by looking at a few more passages, turn with me to Luke 21.

[Luke 21:20-22](#) (NKJV) *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near." ²¹ "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her." ²² "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

Jesus is speaking here of the destruction of Jerusalem, an event that was to occur forty years from the time that he spoke. He said that in that event "all things written would be fulfilled." What does "all things" mean? Does it really mean all things? Look what Jesus said in Matthew 5:

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

Jesus does not have in mind here some specific statement of prophecy. He is not talking about a judgment of Israel, he is not speaking about a specific aspect of his atonement. The Jewish idiom "the law and the prophets" means the totality of the OT revelation. Jesus said he did not come to destroy it but fulfill it. Jesus is saying here in Matthew 5 that the old law has to be fulfilled, every jot, every tittle has to be fulfilled before it can pass away. If 2 Peter 3 is based upon the OT prophets, and it is, and if 2 Peter 3 has not been fulfilled then we are still under the OC law. That is quite simple. Do you believe that we are in the NC? If we are then the OC must have passed away. And if the OC has passed then 2 Peter 3 has been fulfilled.

Matthew 5 is not limited to any particular prophecy; it is a comprehensive statement encompassing the entirety of the OC revelation. Christ is not here simply speaking of the Word of God, it's talking about the OC revelation. It is not speaking of the NC; it had not yet been ratified.

Conclusion

"There are three heaven and earth time periods in 2 Peter 3, and the change from one epoch of time to another was referred to as a passing of heaven and earth. The object of that expression was to show a *change in God's dealings with man rather than a change in the literal, material constitution of the world itself*".

Futurists teach that the New heaven and earth of Revelation 21 and the New Jerusalem of Revelation 22 is the saved of all ages, the bride of Christ at the end of the millennium, when all

things have ended and we have embarked into eternity: They have entered eternity; sin, death, hades and Satan have all been cast into the lake of fire. Remember that all evil has been disposed of; God has healed the Church of her ills; & sin has been finally purged from her so that only a grandiose description of her can truly tell of her beauty. The futurists teach that the earth will be a **physical paradise** at this time, but is that what the Scriptures say?

Revelation 22:1-2 (NKJV) And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

When we look at this verse, a question immediately comes to mind: why would the nations need healing? If one adopts the futurist view, then one is at pains to explain this tree. If however, one adopts the preterist view, the explanation is quite easy. Does the New Covenant gospel age end, or is it truly an everlasting covenant as ***Hebrews 13:20*** (KJV) says, ***"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."***

Although Christ's return vindicated the witness of the first-century church, God didn't mean for the rest of history to be anticlimactic. His plan for us is an ever-deepening experience of Christ's presence and an unfolding realization of his sovereignty over all things.

God called Israel to be a light to the nations, to lead all people into a covenant relationship with the Father. His purpose for his church, the "Israel of God," is the same. We are to be calling the world to drink of the living water of the gospel. Let's be faithful to our calling.

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV) And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

This message was preached by [David B. Curtis](#) on May 14, 1997.



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