

The Passing Away of Heaven and Earth

[Mark 13:31](#)



Today in our study of the Olivet Discourse, we come to verse 31 where Jesus tells His disciples that:

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. (Mark 13:31 NASB)

When most Christians read these words about "[Heaven and earth passing away](#)" they think it is referring to the end of the world. This idea is strengthened by Peter's language in:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! (2 Peter 3:10-12 NASB)

We know what Jesus and Peter **said**, but what did they **mean**? Were they talking about a time to come when the earth will be destroyed by fire? A time when the whole planet will explode and life, as we now know it, will end? It sure looks like that to us, doesn't it?

Think about what we have seen thus far in Mark 13; Jesus taught that the [destruction of Jerusalem](#) would be a time of unprecedented tribulation, and a sign of His return:

"For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall. 20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days. (Mark 13:19-20 NASB)

But before this great holocaust, that would not be surpassed, occurred, Christians prayed for their Lord to return:

If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha. (1 Corinthians 16:22 NASB)

[Maranatha](#) means: "O Lord, come!" It is a prayer for the early return of Christ. The phrase seems to have been used as a greeting between early Christians, and it is probably in this way that it was used by the Apostle Paul. There is a strong similarity here to the final words of the *Book of Revelation*:

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20 NASB)

Now, according to the way His coming is commonly understood today, this would mean that they would be

praying for an instantaneous fiery destruction of the "whole earth." That not only would far surpass the destruction of Jerusalem, it would wipe out "all flesh" on the earth.

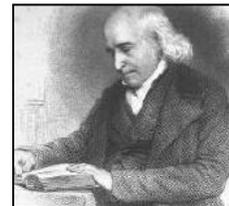
The futurists today can't escape this ridiculous dilemma. In their view of the end, those first-century saints would be waiting for the fall-of-Jerusalem holocaust, being assured by Jesus that **all flesh would not perish**, while at the SAME TIME they would be waiting, watching, and praying for Christ to come in a destruction that wipes out EVERYBODY. No flesh would be spared. The one destruction would vindicate gospel faith; the other one would extinguish it from the earth. I doubt if the latter was that which the prophets had in mind when they spoke of a coming age, an everlasting age, wherein "all families of the earth" would be blessed.

The Bible is not a history of the planet from its creation to its ultimate destruction. The Bible is about spiritual truths made known through physical things. Genesis introduces spiritual death. Revelation tells how death is conquered. The theme of the Bible is the redemption of man, not the history of the planet. Please keep that in mind.

When I first came to see as truth the fact that the Lord had come in A.D. 70 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. I thought that those passages were speaking of physical events. I thought that because I was thinking like a twenty first century American and not like a first century Jew. I didn't understand [apocalyptic language](#). But Jesus' disciples and those living in the first century were very familiar with apocalyptic language. Remember what Jesus had been talking about in Mark 13 — He was telling His disciples of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. That Old Covenant nation was going to pass away in their generation. Remember, this whole chapter is an answer to their question about when the temple was to be destroyed and the Jewish age would end.

[John Brown](#) said:

"Heaven and earth passing," understood literally, is the dissolution of the present system of the universe, and the period when that is to take place, is called the "end of the world." But a person at all familiar with the phraseology of the Old Testament Scriptures, knows that the dissolution of the Mosaic economy, and the establishment of the Christian, is often spoken of as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the creation of a new earth and new heavens" (vol. 1, p. 170)



It appears, then, that Scripture being the best interpreter of Scripture, we have in the Old Testament a key to the interpretation of the prophecies in the New. The same symbolism is found in both, and the imagery of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets helps us to understand the imagery of St. Matthew, St. Peter, and St. John. As the dissolution of the material world is not necessary to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, neither is it necessary to the accomplishment of the predictions of the New Testament." (vol. 1, p. 200).

One of the fundamentals of [hermeneutics](#) is to ask, "**What did the passage mean to the recipients of the message?**" Modern prophetic interpreters would tell you that these passages meant little or nothing to the hearers because the text dealt with matters that would take place 2,000 years later. That is, God really intended these prophecies for us and not for the people to whom they were spoken or written.

But is this what the Bible teaches? What does God reveal about the timing of these events? We saw last week in our study, Christ states specifically:

"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. (Mark 13:30 NASB)

“[This generation](#)” refers to the time period to which Jesus was speaking. The Bible is clear, that Jesus was warning His generation of impending judgment.

If you want to know what a term means in the New Testament in relation to prophecy, you need to go back to the Scripture and see what it meant there. If it was used a certain way in the Hebrew Scriptures, wouldn't it make sense that Jesus and the New Testament writers would use those expressions in the same way? We must get our understanding of “heaven and earth” from the Scriptures.

Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete. (Deuteronomy 31:30 NASB)

"Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. (Deuteronomy 32:1 NASB)

In the song of Moses God is speaking to Israel. He calls them, “O heavens,” and, “earth.” He is clearly not speaking to the physical heavens and earth, but to Israel. Notice what he says to them:

For a fire is kindled in My anger, And burns to the lowest part of Sheol, And consumes the earth with its yield, And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. (Deuteronomy 32:22 NASB)

God is not talking here about burning up the physical earth. God is using apocalyptic and symbolic language to warn Israel of judgment that He will bring upon them. When Israel is finally destroyed, it is as though heaven and earth are burned up.

In biblical apocalyptic language, “heavens” refers to **governments and rulers**, and “earth” refers to **the nation of people**. This can be seen in the book of Isaiah:

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. ² Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. (Isaiah 1:1-2 NASB)

Here we see “heavens” used for rulers in verse 2, and “earth” used for people. So the terms, “heaven and earth” are used to speak of rulers and people of a nation.

Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. (Isaiah 1:10 NASB)

God is still talking to Israel and He calls them, “Sodom and Gomorrah.” The literal Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed for some time.

And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree.⁵ For My sword is satiated [say-she-ated] in heaven, Behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, And upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction. (Isaiah 34:4-5 NASB)

Here we have a description of the fall of Edom; notice the language that is used. This is Biblical language to describe the fall of a nation. It should be clear that it is not to be taken literally. God says that, “*His sword will be satiated in heaven,*” then explains what He means by saying “*It shall descend for judgment on Edom.*” The NIV puts it this way, “*My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed.*” So, God speaks of His sword being bathed in heaven, meaning **the nation Edom**, not the literal heaven. Edom shall be rolled up like a scroll.

*That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens, And laid the foundations of the earth; That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor? 14 "The exile will soon be set free, and will not die in the dungeon, nor will his bread be lacking. 15 "For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (the LORD of hosts is His name). 16 "And I have put My words in your mouth, and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.'"
(Isaiah 51:13-16 NASB)*

The time of planting the heavens and laying the foundation of the earth that is referred to here, was performed by God when He *stirs up the sea* (ver. 15) *and put my words in your mouth* (ver. 16), *and said to Zion, “You are 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.

If the destruction of heaven and earth were to be taken literally in all of the passages in Scripture, it would mean that heaven and earth were destroyed a bunch of times. This language is clearly not literal, but figurative and apocalyptic.

[Gary DeMar](#) said:



Jesus does not change subjects when He assures the disciples that “heaven and earth will pass away.” Rather, He merely affirms His prior predictions, which are recorded in Matthew 24:29_31. Verse 36 is a summary and confirmation statement of these verses.(6) Keep in mind that the central focus of the Olivet Discourse is the desolation of the ‘house’ and ‘world’ of apostate Israel (23:36). The old world of Judaism, represented by the earthly temple, is taken apart stone by stone (24:2). James Jordan writes, “each time God brought judgment on His people during the Old Covenant, there was a sense in which an old heavens and earth was replaced with a new one: New rulers were set up, a new symbolic world model was built (Tabernacle, Temple), and so forth.”(7) The New Covenant replaces the Old Covenant with new leaders, a new priesthood, new sacraments, a new sacrifice, a new tabernacle (John 1:14), and a new temple (John 2:19; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21). In essence, a new heaven and earth.

The darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars, coupled with the shaking of the heavens (24:29), are more descriptive ways of saying that "heaven and earth will pass away" (24:35). In other contexts, when stars fall, they fall to the earth, a sure sign of temporal judgment (Isaiah 14:12; Daniel 8:10; Revelation 6:13; 9:1; 12:4). So then, the "passing away of heaven and earth" is the passing away of the old covenant world of Judaism led and upheld by those who "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). " The Hebrew people understood this kind of language.

So in Matthew 24:35, Jesus is talking about the passing away of Israel when He speaks of heaven and earth passing away. This is what the whole chapter is about — the destruction and passing away of the nation Israel.

Nowhere do the Scriptures teach that the **physical creation** will be destroyed. Notice what God said after the flood of Noah's day.

And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. (Genesis 8:21 NASB)

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?

Now, some of you Bible students might say, "What about Psalm 102, that predicts the destruction of the physical planet—doesn't it?" Let's look at it:

"Of old Thou didst found the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. ²⁶ "Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed. ²⁷ "But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not come to an end. ²⁸ "The children of Thy servants will continue, And their descendants will be established before Thee." (Psalms 102:25-28 NASB)

This prophecy of David sure sounds like it is referring to the physical earth, doesn't it? As always, the New Testament gives us insight and illumination to the Scriptures. In Hebrews 1, we find the writer quoting this prophecy word for word:

And, "THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING DIDST LAY THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; ¹¹ THEY WILL PERISH, BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD AS A GARMENT, ¹² AND AS A MANTLE THOU WILT ROLL THEM UP; AS A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END." (Hebrews 1:10-12 NASB)

The writer of Hebrews tells us that the fulfillment of these is related to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ:

But of the Son He says, "THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM. ⁹ "THOU HAST LOVED

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY COMPANIONS."
(Hebrews 1:8-9 NASB)

The heavens and the earth (Old Covenant Israel) would perish, but Christ and His throne would remain for ever and ever. How is the world or the heavens and earth of old going to perish? David said they shall, "become old like a garment," and then they would be "changed." Is it just a coincidence that the Bible speaks of the passing away of the old covenant using the same language?

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (Hebrews 8:13 NASB)

The same Greek word *gerasko*, (ghay-ras'-ko) is translated "growing old" in Hebrews 1:11 and 8:13. The writer here says that the old covenant is about to pass away. Not many years later, it did in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jesus predicted the end of the Jewish age in Mark 13, and said it would happen in His generation. David said the heavens and earth would perish, but Christ would remain, and this is exactly what Christ taught in Mark 13:31.

The Bible does not speak of "**the end of time.**" The expression "the end time" or the "time of the end" is found in Scripture, but nowhere in the Bible can we find the expression "the end of time." The expression "the end time" or the "time of the end" speaks of the end of an age, but the end of an age is not the end of time. Scripture does not indicate that God has any plan to destroy this created world that we enjoy.

Peter connects the destruction of heaven and earth with the "day of the Lord:"

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10 NASB)

What is the day of the Lord? Peter connects "his coming" (verse 4) with "the day of the Lord" (verse 10), to the destruction of the heavens and earth (verse 10 & 12). The "day of the Lord" is an expression also taken from the Scriptures, and was used many times as regards to the judgments and destruction of various nations. It usually meant a time when God Himself would punish or judge people by the means of armies of other people. The invading armies of other nations brought judgment and destruction upon various nations, and these times were each called "the day of the Lord" when they were proclaimed of the Lord.

While the various references to "the day of the Lord" in the Scriptures referred to various nations, the reference in all such expressions in the New Testament are to that "day of the Lord" in A.D. 70, when the nation Israel was destroyed.

What is it that causes heaven and earth to pass away? Many today would say it is a nuclear holocaust. But the Bible tells us that the old heaven and earth flees from the presence of the Lord:

And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. (Revelation 20:11 NASB)

The word “presence” is used in Scripture to denote the arrival or full presence of a person. The old covenant age fled from the presence of Christ at His [parousia](#). He came in judgment on Israel.

Well, what was to happen when heaven and earth passed away? In our text in Mark 13:31, Jesus doesn't tell us but Peter does:

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:13 NASB)

“According to His promise” — where do you find the promise of a New heaven and new earth?

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

"For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure. (Isaiah 66:22 NASB)

Let's look at the context of these verses in Isaiah 65:

"I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' to a nation which did not call on My name. (Isaiah 65:1 NASB)

This is speaking of the Gentiles who would behold the Lord— those who had not been called by His name. But notice what it says about Israel:

"I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name. ² "I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, ³ A people who continually provoke Me to My face, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks; ⁴ Who sit among graves, and spend the night in secret places; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of unclean meat is in their pots. ⁵ "Who say, 'keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. ⁶ "Behold, it is written before Me, I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will even repay into their bosom, ⁷ Both their own iniquities and the iniquities of their fathers together," says the LORD. "Because they have burned incense on the mountains, and scorned Me on the hills, Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom." (Isaiah 65:1-7 NASB)

God will destroy disobedient Israel, but He would preserve a remnant:

Thus says the LORD, "As the new wine is found in the cluster, And one says, 'Do not destroy it, for there is benefit in it,' So I will act on behalf of My servants In order not to destroy all of them. ⁹ "And I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, And an heir of My mountains from Judah; Even My chosen ones shall inherit it, And My servants shall dwell there. ¹⁰ "And Sharon shall be a pasture land for flocks, and the valley of Achor a resting place for herds, For My people who seek Me. (Isaiah 65:8-10 NASB)

Here he talks of an “heir” coming out of Judah who will be his elect.

"But you who forsake the LORD, Who forget My holy mountain, Who set a table for Fortune, And who fill cups with mixed wine for Destiny,¹² I will destine you for the sword, And all of you shall bow down to the slaughter. Because I called, but you did not answer; I spoke, but you did not hear. And you did evil in My sight, And chose that in which I did not delight."¹³ Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry. Behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. Behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame."¹⁴ "Behold, My servants shall shout joyfully with a glad heart, But you shall cry out with a heavy heart, And you shall wail with a broken spirit."¹⁵ "And you will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones, And the Lord GOD will slay you. But My servants will be called by another name."¹⁶ "Because he who is blessed in the earth Shall be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight! (Isaiah 65:11-16 NASB)

In these verses, we see the fleshly Israel contrasted to the spiritual Israel — the elect. God is going to slay that fleshly nation of Israel and take a new people, the church. This is the context of verse 17:

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

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. The new heaven and earth stands in contrast to the Jewish world, not this present material world.

Peter doesn't tell us much about this [New Heaven and earth](#) except that it is a place where righteousness dwells:

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:13 NASB)

This is what Paul tells us about the New Covenant.

For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. (2 Corinthians 3:9 NASB)

Daniel tells us in chapter 9, that at the end of the seventy weeks after *“the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”* (a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem) that *“everlasting righteousness shall be brought in.”*

The Scriptures all bear this out; the old covenant nation is destroyed and the new covenant is fully consummated. It is an eternal covenant of righteousness.

If you want to know more about the new heaven and earth, you have to look to John in his book of Revelation.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1 NASB)

Here we see what happens after the old Heaven and earth are destroyed. We see the New Heaven and earth.

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2 NASB)

Who is this bride and what is this holy city? Verse 9 tells us who the bride is:

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." (Revelation 21:9 NASB)

The bride is the Lamb's wife. We know from [Ephesians 5](#), that the bride is the church. The bride of Christ is the totality of God's elect.

The book of Revelation is concerned about two women. One woman is the wife of Jehovah. She was a harlot, so God divorced her. Babylon is a picture of Israel who is this unfaithful wife of Jehovah. The other woman is the bride, the wife of Jesus Christ, the New Jerusalem. She comes down out of heaven indicating that she originates in heaven, not on earth.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, (Revelation 21:10 NASB)

Revelation is also concerned about two cities. The old Jerusalem, which was physical Israel, and the new Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ. The old city was destroyed but the new city that takes its place is that city which is the bride of Jesus Christ.

Revelation is dealing with two Israels of God, as presented in [Paul's allegory](#) in [Galatians 4:21-31](#). In that allegory we have two women who are also said to be two cities, and they derive their origin from two covenants, giving birth to two kinds of children. The first is Hagar, answering to literal Jerusalem, unto whom is born a nation after the flesh. The second is Sarah, answering to new Jerusalem, unto whom is born a nation after the Spirit. **These two nations, or Israels, are the theme of prophecy, the gospels, the epistles, and finally the Revelation message.**

We're often taught that after this life is over, with all its misery and heartache that we are going to walk on streets of gold in heaven. It does say that this city will have streets of gold, but we must remember that Revelation was written in figurative or apocalyptic language. God is not describing a materialistic city. He is describing His church, His people who are going to live and be with Him forever. The walls of jasper and gates of pearl speak of the blessedness of the new covenant.

And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. (Revelation 21:22 NASB)

There is no temple in this city. Why? The temple represented the presence of God. In the New Jerusalem, we

are in the presence of God, we need no temple.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them," (Revelation 21:3 NASB)

This age in which we now live is the New covenant age. We are the New Jerusalem, God's holy bride.

And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. (Revelation 21:24 NASB)

The saved of the nations walk in the light of this holy city. We are the light of the world today, a city set on a hill.

And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; (Revelation 21:25-26 NASB)

What does that mean? Look at Isaiah:

"And your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession. (Isaiah 60:11 NASB)

Here we see the reason that these gates are never shut; that men may bring into it the wealth of the Gentiles, and their kings in procession. This is a reference to the power of the gospel. The next verse tells us that only the elect enter it.

and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27 NASB)

Salvation is always available; the gates are always open to this city. Look at chapter 22.

And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming 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, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2 NASB)

Here the river of the water of life flows forth from the temple to the nations of the world. The tree of life is there for the healing of the nations. The river of the water of life was predicted in Ezekiel:

Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar.² And he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side.³ When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles.⁴ Again he measured a thousand and led me

through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins.⁵ Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded.⁶ And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river.⁷ Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other.⁸ Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh.⁹ "And it will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there, and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.¹⁰ "And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many.¹¹ "But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt.¹² "And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." (Ezekiel 47:1-12 NASB)

This river comes forth from the New Jerusalem in [Revelation 22:1-2](#), the church, the bride of Christ. We are to be involved in taking the water of life to the nations. What is the water of life?

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. (Revelation 22:17 NASB)

This is a call to salvation! If the new heavens and the new earth are supposed to be the eternal state, why is the invitation to salvation still going out? The new heaven and earth is the [New Covenant](#), the church. And from the church go forth the water of life for the healing of the nations.

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman:

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."¹¹ She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?"¹² "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?"¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again;¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." (John 4:10-14 NASB)

This water is springing up in the person. In Ezekiel, the water flows out from the temple. What is the temple? We are the temple. We are the dwelling place of God.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:37-38 NASB)

What Scripture predicted this? Ezekiel 47!

But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39 NASB)

We are now living in the new heaven and earth. We are the new Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ. Jesus Christ and His Father are among us and we need no temple, we need none of the rituals and ceremonies of the old heaven and the old earth. We are in God's presence now and forevermore.

C.H. Spurgeon said:

Did you ever regret the absence of the burnt-offering, or the red heifer, or any one of the sacrifices and rites of the Jews? Did you ever pine for the feast of tabernacle, or the dedication? No, because, though these were like the old heavens and earth to the Jewish believers, they have passed away, and we now live under the new heavens and a new earth, so far as the dispensation of divine teaching is concerned. The substance is come, and the shadow has gone: and we do not remember it."
(Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol. xxxvii, p. 354).



The old heavens and earth of Judaism have passed away, and we **now** live in the new heavens and new earth of the New covenant. May God help us to fully understand and appreciate our position in the new heaven and earth where righteousness dwells, and where God dwells with His people.

This message was preached by David B. Curtis on July 8, 2007 . Media #373.



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