

Global Holocaust or Covenantal Change?

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Matthew 24:35

Today in our study of the Olivet Discourse, we come to verse 35 where Jesus tells His disciples that, "*Heaven and earth will pass away.*" Peter talked about this same idea in:

2 Peter 3:10-12 (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. ¹¹ 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?*

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 Matthew 24: Jesus taught that the destruction of Jerusalem would be a time of unprecedented tribulation, and a sign of His return:

Matthew 24:21-22 (NKJV) *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

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

1 Corinthians 16:22 (NKJV) *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

Revelation 22:20 (NKJV) *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

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 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. I thought that those passages were speaking of physical events. I thought that because I was thinking like a twentieth 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 Matthew 24C 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 (1853) 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. i. 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, in verse 34, Christ states specifically, "Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation** will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (Matt. 24:34). "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 Old Testament and see what it meant there. If it was used a certain way in the Old Testament, wouldn't it make sense that Jesus and the New Testament writer would use those expressions in the same way? We must get our understanding of "heaven and earth" from the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 31:30 (NKJV) Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:

Deuteronomy 32:1 (NKJV) "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth."

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

Deuteronomy 32:22 (NKJV) *For a fire is kindled by my anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*

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.

**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;***

Isaiah 1:10 (NKJV) *Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah:*

God is still talking to Israel and He calls them, "Sodom and Gomorrah." The literal Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed for some time. Here we see "rulers" used for "heavens" in verse 2, and "people" used for "earth." So the terms, "heaven and earth" are used to speak of rulers and people of a nation.

Isaiah 34:4-5 (NKJV) *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.*

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 bathed in heaven," then explains what He means by saying "It shall come down 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.

Isaiah 51:13-16 (NKJV) *And you forget the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth; You have feared continually every day Because of the fury of the oppressor, When he has prepared to destroy. And where is the fury of the oppressor?¹⁴ The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed, That he should not die in the pit, And that his bread should not fail.¹⁵ 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.

If the destruction of heaven and earth were to be taken literally in all of the Old Testament passages, 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 (1996) 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 C 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.

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?

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:

[Psalms 102:25-28](#) (KJV) *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. ²⁶ They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: ²⁷ But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. ²⁸ The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

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 Old Testament. In Hebrews 1, we find the writer quoting this prophecy word for word.

[Hebrews 1:10-12](#) (KJV) *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: ¹¹ They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; ¹² And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

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

[Hebrews 1:8-9](#) (KJV) *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

The heavens and the earth (Old Covenant Israel) would perish, but Christ and his throne would remain for ever and ever. The superiority of Christ over angels is shown in that he created the world wherein they were ministering spirits.

[Hebrews 1:7](#) (NKJV) *And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire."*

[Hebrews 2:1-5](#) (NKJV) *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? 5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

Verse 2 speaks of the Sinai covenant which was given by angels and compares it to the New covenant salvation that Christ brings. In Hebrews 2:5, the world to come would not be in subjection to angels, in contrast to the world that then was, which would pass away.

How is the world or the heavens and earth of old going to perish? David said they shall, "wax 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?

Hebrews 8:13 (KJV) *In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

The same Greek word *gerasko*, (ghay-ras'-ko) is translated "waxeth" 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 Matthew 24, 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 Matthew 24:35.

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:@

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? 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 Old Testament, 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 old Testament referred to various nations, the reference in all such expressions in the New Testament are to that "day of the Lord" in AD 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 face of the Lord.

Revelation 20:11 (NKJV) *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*

The word "face" is used in Scripture to denote the arrival or full presence of a person. The old covenant age fled from the face 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 Matthew 24:35, Jesus doesn't tell us but Peter does.

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

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

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

[Isaiah 66:22](#) (NKJV) *"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.*

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

[Isaiah 65:1](#) (NKJV) *"I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation that was not called by My name.*

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:

² I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good, According to their own thoughts; ³ A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; Who sacrifice in gardens, And burn incense on altars of brick; ⁴ Who sit among the graves, And spend the night in the tombs; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of abominable things is in their vessels; 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 silence, but will repay; Even repay into their bosom; ⁷ Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together," Says the LORD, "Who have burned incense on the mountains And blasphemed Me on the hills; Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom."

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

⁸ Thus says the LORD: "As the new wine is found in the cluster, And one says, 'Do not destroy it, For a blessing is in it,' So will I do for My servants' sake, That I may not destroy them all. ⁹ I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, And from Judah an heir of My mountains; My elect shall inherit it, And My servants shall dwell there. ¹⁰ Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, And the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, For My people who have sought Me.

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

¹¹ "But you are those who forsake the LORD, Who forget My holy mountain, Who prepare a table for Gad, And who furnish a drink offering for Meni. ¹² Therefore I will number you for the sword, And you shall all bow down to the slaughter; Because, when I called, you did not answer; When I spoke, you did not hear, But did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do 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 ashamed; ¹⁴ Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, But you shall cry for sorrow of heart, And wail for grief of spirit. ¹⁵ You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; For the Lord GOD will slay you, And call His servants by another name; ¹⁶ So that he who blesses himself in the earth Shall bless himself in 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 eyes.

In these verses, we see the fleshly Israel contrasted to the spiritual Israel C 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:

¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy.

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, just 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.**

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.

*[Revelation 21:1](#) (NKJV) *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.**

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

*[Revelation 21:2](#) (NKJV) *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

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

*[Revelation 21:9](#) (NKJV) *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."**

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.

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

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 Old Testament 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, which 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. Let me ask you a question; seriously, would you rather **walk** on streets of gold or ride a Harley down a country road? The walls of jasper and gates of pearl speak of the blessedness of the new covenant.

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

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.

Revelation 21:3 (NKJV) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

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

Revelation 21:24 (NKJV) And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

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.

Revelation 21:25 (NKJV) Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

What does that mean? Look at Isaiah 60:11:

Isaiah 60:11 (NKJV) *Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession.*

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.

Revelation 21:27 (NKJV) *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.*

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

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.*

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 the Old Testament in Ezekiel 47:

Ezekiel 47:1-12 (NKJV) *Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. 3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. 7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 "It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 "But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 "Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."*

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?

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 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 in John 4:

John 4:10-14 (NKJV) *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 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"¹² "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,¹⁴ "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

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.

John 7:37-38 (NKJV) *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."*

What Scripture predicted this? Ezekiel 47!

John 7:39 (NKJV) *But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

John 4:14 (NKJV) *"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

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(1865) 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 February 15, 1998.