

HOW "HEAVEN AND EARTH" PASSED AWAY

"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. **Heaven and earth will pass away**, but My words will by no means pass away."

-Matthew 24:34-35

That the literal/physical heaven and earth shall pass away is not taught anywhere in Scripture, unless 2 Peter 3:10 is likewise misinterpreted.

Rather, "heaven and earth" is a reference to Jerusalem which would indeed pass away in 70AD, as the principle reference of "heaven and earth" is the temple-centered cosmology of old covenant Israel, i.e. the covenant world of the Jews,

cf. Isaiah 51:15-16:

"But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared --- The LORD of hosts is His name. 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.' "

which gave way to the new Jerusalem, the "new heavens and earth": living stones in the new living temple: the body of Christ, the church.

Here's my translation (idiomatic paraphrase for modern western readers) of Matthew 24:35 / Luke 21:33:

The old covenant, structure and elements, shall pass away, but My perfect law shall not pass away.

cf. Hebrews 8:13:

In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

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Indeed, the Jews were about to witness the passing away of their "heaven and earth," Jerusalem. And the passing away of Jerusalem would come as a result of judgment according to the very Law they had for so long ignored and abused.

And while to some it may seem a stretch to refer to Jerusalem as "heaven and earth," Jesus will more explicitly make this application in Luke 21:32-33: after describing the coming destruction of Jerusalem vividly, Jesus adds, "Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." This is a clear reference to Jerusalem that would in fact ("will") pass away, and would do so within Jesus' generation. The meaning is certainly the same in Luke 16:17. [and Matthew 24:35 -GG]. The Law itself was eternal, and would stand as the bar by which Jesus would sue that generation's adulterous expression of the Law.

[Joel McDurmon, Jesus Vs Jerusalem, pdf p. 108]