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The Removal of the Present Heavens and Earth

Introduction

There are some truths in the scriptures which are really hard to comprehend. As I look at this world, the magnificent Rocky Mountains, the Alps, the Himalayans, the vastness of the Steppes or the Sahara, I wonder can the words of scripture be literally true? When I read how the heavens shall be on fire or all the elements be dissolved, naturally it is beyond comprehension. Then I consider the fidelity and might of the God who is not threatening but these are His promises and I believe it. No matter how this creation, which seems so stable and unchangeable, it is going to melt, disintegrate. I say, the problem is that I have a far too small understanding of the uncircumscribable power of God, the fidelity of His word. Every time there is a volcano eruption the rock becomes liquid. God is reminding humanity that this earth will not last forever and the rocks of earth will ultimately melt.

Why will God destroy the earth and heavens?

Such is the holiness of God that anything marred by sin must never in the slightest degree contaminate the New Heavens and earth. While the earth and heavens being material are amoral, their contamination and debasing of use makes them obnoxious before God's holiness. God did this before when the children of Israel polluted Jerusalem with the population's wickedness.

Relevant Scriptures

I am aware of eight passages which inform us of the removal of the present earth and heavens. They are:

- a) Isa. 24:19; 34:4; 51:6; Hag. 2:6; Matt. 24:35; Heb. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12; 1 Jn. 2:17; Rev. 20:11. By reading these verses it is evident the new heavens and earth will not be a make over of this present earth and Heavens. This present sphere will be forever gone. Its purpose and usefulness will be past, never more to exist as we know them.
- b) This is not a horror story or the writings of a mystic's imagination. Hard as it is to believe, this world is going to come to a fiery end. People speak today of the end of the earth in 12 years etc., but they are godless people who know not the ways of the Lord. It will end but not at the hand of man or a nuclear or atomic bomb.
- c) In these verses:
 - i) Some emphasize the Person whose power removes them such as: "THOU shall fold them up" (Heb. 1:12).
 - ii) Some inform us the extent of the removal (Isa. 24:19; 51:6; Jer. 10:11).
 - iii) Some inform us the time of their removal, "They are kept in store. . . against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:7). During the Day of the Lord note, "In the which the heavens shall pass away" (2 Pet. 3:10).
 - iv) Some inform us the method used for their removal. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up" (2 Pet. 3:10).
 - v) Some inform us of the fact of their removal, "the earth and heaven fled away" (Rev. 20:11); "were passed away" (Rev. 21:1); "They shall perish, wax old, as a vesture they will be folded up and changed" (Heb. 1:12); "wax old" (Heb. 1:11).

The words used for the removal of the earth and Heavens:

English word/s	Reference	Greek / Hebrew word	Definition
Perish	Heb. 1:11	ἀπόλλυμι / apollumi	To utterly destroy
Fold up	Heb. 1:12	ἐλίσσω / helissō	To roll up as a garment

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Changed	Heb. 1:12	ἀλλάσσω / allassō	To transform to make other than what it is
Wax old	Heb. 1:11; Isa. 51:6	παλαιόω / palaiōō	To develop (in this context in deterioration)
Burned up	2 Pet. 3:10	κατακαίω / katakaiō	To burn utterly as chaff
Dissolved	2 Pet. 3:10, 11	λύω / luō	To loose, melt down
Pass away	Rev. 21:1	παρέρχομαι / parerchomai	To pass away
Flee away	Rev. 20:11	φεύγω / pheugō	Flee, escape
Broken down	Isa. 24:19	שׁוּבַר / rā' a'	To spoil by breaking in pieces
Moved exceedingly	Isa. 24:19	טִיַּב / mōt	To shake and fall into decay
Vanish	Isa. 51:6	תִּלְוָה / mālach	To pulverize, disappear as dust
Wax old	Isa. 51:6	תִּלְוָה / bālā	To wear out
Shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land	Hag. 2:6	שׁוּבַר / rā' ash	To quake, to make to tremble

In the consideration of this description of the removal of the heavens and earth, no wonder Peter writes, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11). John writes, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

When will the world come to its end?

- 1) Not according to man’s predications or his ways.
 - a) Those who accept the foolishness of evolution or the beginning of the universe without God now tell the people of the world that the earth will end in 12 years. Of course this is all foolishness and man made imaginations. This foolish talk has gone on for hundreds of years. For instance:
 - i) William Miller, in the 1840’s he began to preach about the world’s end, that earth would be engulfed in fire sometime between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. That did not happen!
 - ii) Harold Camping predicted that the world would end Saturday May 21, 2011. That did not happen! Again in 1992 he wrote a booklet to warn that the earth would end sometime in September 1994. That did not happen!
 - iii) This is not his first such prediction. In 1992, the evangelist published a book called *1994*, which proclaimed that sometime in mid-September 1994, Christ would return and the world would end.
 - iv) Hal Lindsey predicted that the world would end sometime before December 31, 1988.

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- v) Apparently Edgar Whisenant published a book in 1988 called *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988*. That did not happen!

2) According to the truth of God the world will cease to exist in God's time and way (Heb. 1:12).

Practical Exhortations

Noah lived in a world that was going to be no more. All the carnal entertainment around Him, the festivities of various occasions, each birthday was a reminder the judgment was coming closer. One can be sure he was not casually taking his time to build the Ark for he did not know when the earth would be destroyed. He preached warning the people, the judgment of the Lord is coming on this earth because of your sins (2 Pet. 2:5) but as long as I am in this world building the ark, the Lord will restrain his judgment (1 Pet. 3:20). Lot warned his two married daughters and their husbands that due to the evil of the two cities, Sodom and Gommorah, God was going to wipe them off the face of the earth, but they mocked (Gen. 19:14). One can be very sure that seconds after the first rumblings of thunder and the rain began, mockery began to quieten and terror began to take its place. When the first flashes of lightening came from a darkened sky the people of Sodom and Gommorah were not so sure of themselves. In both cases it was too late.

God informs us of what shall happen when the earth is no more

A "new" heaven and earth

- a) The word new is "Kainos", indicating, recently made and superior to that which was before.
- b) This will be looked at in the next paper.

. . . . Rowan Jennings