
PAROUSIA FULFILLED – NO END OF WORLD

By Kenneth N Higgs

In **Parousia Fulfilled – Time Statements** we examined numerous New Testament (NT) ‘time statements’ about the **Second Comingⁱ** or **Parousiaⁱⁱ** of Christ. These ‘time statements’ indicate that Jesus’ disciples were living **“in the last days”**. They needed to be prepared, because the **Parousia** would occur **“soon”**, **“quickly”** and **“without delay”**... certainly before all the disciples had died out.

Given these ‘time statements’, some may ask the obvious question: “If so, then why are we still here? Why didn’t the world end? Why wasn’t our planet vaporised and all human beings killed?”

NO END OF THE WORLD

Closer examination of the sacred scriptures reveals that **the idea of a global judgement and a catastrophic end to planet Earth is not scripturally sound. It is completely foreign to the Holy Bible.**

The idea of global destruction may derive from a faulty translation of the Greek word: αἰῶν (**aionⁱⁱⁱ**) in the KJV Bible and other early translations. Those translations render “aion” as “world”, but the correct translation is “age” or “period” or “eon”. The KJV also mistranslates the Greek phrase: “συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος” (**synteleia^{iv}** tou **aionos**) as “end of the world”. The actual meaning is: “full end of the age” or “consummation of the age”.

Here are some examples of this KJV translation error, alongside the more correct meaning in **Young’s Literal Translation^v** (YLT).

Scripture	KJV translation	YLT translation
Matt 13:39 (<i>synteleia aionos</i>)	✘ end of the world	✔ full end of the age
Matt 13:40 (<i>synteleia tou aionos</i>)	✘ end of the world	✔ full end of the age
Matt 13:49 (<i>synteleia tou aionos</i>)	✘ end of the world	✔ full end of the age
Matt 24:3 (<i>synteleias tou aionos</i>)	✘ end of the world	✔ full end of the age
Matt 28:20 (<i>synteleias tou aionos</i>)	✘ end of the world	✔ full end of the age
1 Cor 10:11 (<i>tele ton aionon</i>)	✘ ends of the world	✔ end of the ages
Heb 9:26 (<i>synteleia ton aionon</i>)	✘ end of the world	✔ full end of the ages

Throughout the Old Testament (OT) we find numerous passages affirming that **God will not destroy planet Earth...** there will be **no “End of the World”**. For example:

*“The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: **“Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”** (Gen 8:21 ESV)*

*“Generations come and generations go, but **the earth remains forever.**” (Eccl 1:4 ESV)*

*“He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, **like the earth, which he has founded forever.**”*

(Psalm 78:69 ESV)

*“He set the earth on its foundations; **it can never be moved.**” (Psalm 104:5 ESV)*

Psalm 148 proclaims that all created things are to praise the Lord: the heavens and the angels; the sun, moon and stars; and the waters. And the Psalmist declares:

“and he established them for ever and ever— he issued a decree that will never pass away.” (Psalm 148:6 ESV)

DANIEL’S PROPHECY AND VISIONS

The prophet Daniel was ordered by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to explain the king’s dream about a strange image/statue, which was destroyed by a stone “cut out by no human hand”. Daniel interpreted the dream and prophesied that “the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and **filled the whole earth**”. The stone was a metaphor representing the coming Kingdom of the Messiah which would destroy all previous kingdoms. Daniel declared:

*“In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up **a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.**” (Daniel 2:44 ESV) (see also Daniel 7 below)*

Some years later: “In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream...” about four great beasts (metaphor for great kings) that came up out of the sea. The climax of the dream was this:

*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a **son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.**” (Daniel 7:13-14 ESV)*

“His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.” (Daniel 7:27b ESV)

Therefore, the “rulers” and their subjects who “worship and obey him” would be born on and dwell on the physical Earth, which will never be destroyed. The verse shows that there will be no “end of the world”.

NO END OF THE INCREASE OF MESSIAH’S GOVERNMENT AND OF PEACE

The prophet Isaiah also prophesied that Messiah’s Kingdom would never be destroyed:

*“Of **the increase** of his government and of peace **there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**” (Isaiah 9:7 ESV)*

Thus, the government of Christ and peace will “increase” endlessly, which means that forevermore human souls will continue to be born on planet Earth and be converted to Christ.

WHAT ABOUT THE ELEMENTS MELTING AND THE EARTH BURNING UP?

Some **Futurists**^{vi} like to quote 2 Peter 3:10 as ‘proof’ that ‘one day’ the physical Earth will come to an end:

*“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which **the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements** ^[Gk:stoicheia] **shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**” (2 Peter 3:10 KJV)*

Note that this passage is using prophetic/apocalyptic language, not historical narrative language. We need to examine these words (“elements melting”, “heavens passing away” and “earth burning up”) in the context Old Covenant Judaism circa 60 AD.

Elements Melting:

The word rendered “elements” in the KJV is actually the Greek word “στοιχεῖα” (**stoicheia**) which is the plural form of the noun **stoicheion**^{vii}. Strong’s Definitions suggests that it likely means: “something orderly in arrangement”, “constituent”, “element, principle or rudiment”.

Here are the only other NT verses where “**stoicheia**” appears:

Scripture	ESV Translation
Gal 4:3 (<i>stoicheia tou kosmou</i>)	✓ elementary principles of the world
Gal 4:9 (<i>asthene kai ptocha stoicheia</i>)	✓ weak and worthless elementary principles of the world
Col 2:8 (<i>stoicheia tou kosmou</i>)	✓ elemental spirits [or elementary principles] of the world
Col 2:20 (<i>stoicheion tou kosmou</i>)	✓ elemental spirits [or elementary principles] of the world
Heb 5:12 (<i>stoicheia</i>)	✓ basic principles

Clearly, the predominant meaning of “**stoicheia**” is “elementary principles or rudiments” of the existing religious system or “world”. So, 2 Peter 3:10 is saying that those “elementary principles” of the Old Covenant religion would be destroyed/dissolved, including the temple, priesthood, circumcision, sacrifices, rituals, sabbaths and ordinances.

In the next verse (v.11), the Apostle reminds his readers to live in holiness and godliness because **these “elements” are “being dissolved/destroyed”**. The verse says:

*“All these, then, **being dissolved** ^[Gk: luomenon], what kind of persons doth it behove **you** to be in holy behaviours and pious acts?” (2 Peter 3:11 YLT)*

The Greek word: “**λυομένων**” (**luomenon**)^{viii} is a Present Participle, so it is obviously talking about something happening at that time, in the 1st Century, not 2,000 years later. Peter was urging his 1st Century audience to live in holiness and godliness, because the Old Covenant order was already beginning to be dissolved.

Heavens Passing Away:

John Owen said: “... through all the prophets, heaven, sun, moon, stars and the like are taken for **governments, governors, dominions in political states**, as Isa. xiv 12-15; Jer. xv. 9, li. 25”¹.

John L Bray wrote that: “This is prophetic language. When the rulers of the nation which God destroyed passed away, it was said the heavens passed away. ... in the New Testament we are thinking of **the nation of Israel** --- the only nation under consideration in the whole New Testament. When the heavens passed away, it was **Israel** which passed away.”²

Earth Burning Up:

The word “earth” in 2 Peter 3:10 is actually the Greek word: “**γῆ**” (**ge**), which means “**soil**”, “**region**”, “**land**”, “**country**” or maybe “**the solid terrene part of earth**”. It does not mean the physical planet. Apostle Peter wrote to 1st Century Israelites reminding them of the promised wrath and judgement of God which would soon fall upon their “land” or “country” including all of the Jewish nation.

HISTORICAL RECORD

Throughout the history of Israel, the stiff-necked and idolatrous nation was warned of the consequences of their continual disobedience and sin against God. All the prophets, from Moses to Jesus, warned of the coming

wrath and total destruction of their “heavens and earth. See: Deuteronomy 28:49-60, Malachi 4:1-6, Matthew 22:7 & 24:2, Mark 13, Luke 23:28-31.

Jesus prophesied (Matt 23:36) all the “woes” would come upon that last “evil and adulterous generation” (Matt 16:4), and finally, between 66 and 70 AD, the awesome judgement of God fell upon Israel, Jerusalem and the Old Covenant religion. The tragic events of the Siege of Jerusalem were recorded by Jewish historian **Flavius Josephus**^{ix} (“Wars of the Jews”, 6.5.3) and by Roman historian **Cornelius Tacitus**^x (“Annals” & “Histories”).

JESUS APPEARED AT THE END OF THE AGES

The writer to the Hebrews makes an interesting observation:

*“... But as it is, he has **appeared once for all at the end of the ages** ^[Gk: synteleia ton aionon] to put away sin by the **sacrifice of himself.**” (Heb 9:26b ESV)*

The writer is saying that Christ’s incarnation and crucifixion occurred “*at the end of the ages*”. Therefore that period was in the 1st Century AD, not in some vague future epoch that we are still waiting for.

CONCLUSION

This brief study has examined many passages in the holy scriptures, and found that the Holy Bible **does not prophesy a global judgement and catastrophic destruction of planet Earth**. The notion of the “End of the World” probably derives from translation errors in the King James Bible and other versions. The original Greek text actually refers to the “Full End of the Age”, not the “End of the World”. The “end of the age” means **the end of the age of the Mosaic Law and the Old Covenant religion of temple worship, circumcision and animal sacrifices.**

Furthermore, several OT passages affirm that the New Covenant Kingdom of Christ is forever... never ending.

The plain teaching of the Holy Bible is that the Earth, where humans dwell, will last forever and there will be no “End of the World”.

REFERENCES

Unless otherwise stated, all Bible verses in this study are from the English Standard Version Bible, Bible Gateway – ESV Bible, viewed online March 2018 at: <https://www.biblegateway.com>

Unless otherwise stated, **bold** fonts appearing in quotes are mine, used for emphasis of some text.

1. John Owen, vol. 8, 255, in a sermon entitled “Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth,” preached on April 19, 1649. (Quoted in Bray, John L., op cit.)
2. Bray, John L., “Matthew 24 Fulfilled”.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

While researching this topic, I was greatly assisted in my understanding of Preterism by the following books and publications:

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"Final Decade Before the End: Jewish and Christian History Just Before the Jewish Revolt" by Stevens, Edward E. International Preterist Association, Inc. Bradford, 2014.

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"Josephus: The Complete Works", translated by Whiston, William. A.M., Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville 1998.

"Matthew 24 Fulfilled", by Bray, John L., American Vision Press, Powder Springs, 1996.

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"The Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming" by Russell, J Stuart. Baker Books, Grand Rapids 1999. Ebook edition created 2014. (Originally published by T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1887)

"The Results of Fulfilled Prophecy" by Mills, Jessie E., Jr. International Preterist Association, Inc. Bradford, 2001

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ **Second Coming:** This term appears nowhere in scripture. It is a traditional expression referring to what the scriptures call the **Parousia** of Christ.

ⁱⁱ **Parousia:** Greek: Depending on the Bible translation and context, it is variously rendered as: **presence, coming, arrival, advent**. (Greek ref. from *Blue Letter Bible - Lexicon :: Strong's G3952 – parousia, viewed online March 2018 at <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g3952>*)

ⁱⁱⁱ **Aion:** Greek: Strong's Definitions says "properly, an **age**; by extension, **perpetuity** (also past); by implication, the **world**; specially (Jewish) a **Messianic period** (present or future):—**age, course, eternal,...**". (from: *Strong's Definitions - viewed online March 2018 at: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G165&t=YLT>*)

^{iv} **Synteleia:** Greek: Strong's Definitions says "entire **completion**, i.e. **consummation** (of a dispensation):—**end**." (from: *Strong's Definitions - viewed online March 2018 at: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G4930&t=YLT>*)

^v **Young's Literal Translation:** "an extremely literal translation that attempts to preserve the tense and word usage as found in the original Greek and Hebrew writings." (from *GotQuestions - What is Young's Literal Translation (YLT)?, viewed online March 2018 at: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Youngs-Literal-Translation-YLT.html>*)

^{vi} **Futurist:** These people claim that we are still living in the Last Days waiting for the Parousia, when Christ will return in judgement and resurrect the living and the dead and destroy the planet, etc. This viewpoint is generally held by Dispensationalism, Premillennialism, Postmillennialism and Amillennialism, with their own peculiar variations.

^{vii} **Stoicheion:** Strong's Definitions says "something orderly in arrangement, i.e. (by implication) a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (literally), proposition (figuratively):—element, principle, rudiment." (from: *Strong's Definitions - viewed online March 2018 at: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G4747&t=YLT>*)

^{viii} **Luomenon:** Present Participle Middle/Passive voice of the Greek verb: λύω. Strong's Definitions says "a primary verb; to "loosen" (literally or figuratively):—break (up), destroy, dissolve, (un-)loose, melt, put off." (from: *Strong's Definitions - viewed online February 2019 at: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3089&t=YLT>*)

^{ix} **Flavius Josephus** (circa 37-100 AD) was a Jewish priest, scholar, historian and active participant in the final decades of ancient Israel (Judea). He was also an aristocrat, a Pharisee, a military commander and politician, who wrote extensive accounts of his life and Jewish history, including a detailed account of the Jewish War against the Roman Empire (circa 66-70 AD).

^x **Cornelius Tacitus** (circa 56-120 AD) was a Roman orator, public official and historian. He wrote "Annals": a history of the Roman Empire from the reign of Tiberius (14 AD) to the end of Nero's reign (68AD). He also wrote "Histories": a Roman historical chronicle (written c. 100-110 AD), covering the period from the fall of Nero (68 AD) to the end of Domitian's reign (96 AD).