

Luke 21:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Analysis

Jesus declares: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.' This contrasts the temporal (heaven and earth) with the eternal (Jesus' words). The universe itself will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10), but Jesus' words endure forever. The phrase 'shall not pass away' (Greek 'ou mē parelthōsin,' οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσιν) is emphatic double negative—absolutely will not pass away. This claims divine authority—only God's word is eternal. Jesus equates His words with God's word, asserting deity and Scripture's absolute reliability. His teachings are more certain than the universe's continued existence.

Historical Context

This concludes Jesus' eschatological discourse about signs, tribulation, and His return. The statement's force is stunning—heaven and earth seem permanent, yet will be destroyed; Jesus' words seem temporary (spoken breath), yet are eternal. Isaiah prophesied 'the word of our God shall stand for ever' (Isaiah 40:8); Jesus applies this to His own words. Jewish Scripture affirmed Torah's permanence; Jesus declares His teaching equally eternal. Early church recognized Jesus' words as Scripture alongside Old Testament. This verse guarantees New Testament reliability—Jesus' words recorded in gospels carry divine authority. Modern challenges to Scripture's reliability contradict Jesus' guarantee.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' claim that His words outlast the universe reveal about His divine identity and authority?
2. How should the permanence of Jesus' words affect our approach to Scripture and confidence in its reliability?

Interlinear Text

ο	ούρανὸς	καὶ	ἡ	γῆ	παρέλθωσιν	οἱ	δὲ	λόγοι
G3588	Heaven	and	G3588	earth	pass away	G3588	but	words
	G3772	G2532		G1093	G3928		G1161	G3056
μου	οὐ	μὴ	παρέλθωσιν					
my	G3756	G3361	pass away					
G3450			G3928					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:8 (Word): The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Mark 13:31 (Word): Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Matthew 24:35 (Word): Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Isaiah 51:6 (Parallel theme): Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Psalms 102:26 (Parallel theme): 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:

Matthew 5:18 (Word): For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

1 Peter 1:25 (Word): But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Revelation 20:11 (Parallel theme): And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

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