

Matthew 5:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Jesus intensifies His previous statement with solemn authority ('verily I say unto you'—ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν/amen lego hymen). The 'jot' (ἰῶτα/iota) is the smallest Hebrew letter (yod), while 'tittle' (κεραία/keraia) refers to the minute decorative strokes distinguishing similar Hebrew letters. Jesus affirms Scripture's absolute reliability down to its smallest components. The phrase 'till heaven and earth pass' establishes a timeframe extending to the end of the present created order. The dual 'till' clauses create emphasis:

1. until the cosmos ends,
2. until all is fulfilled.

God's Word possesses unshakeable permanence and authority. This verse undergirds biblical inerrancy and the unity of Scripture—every detail matters in God's redemptive plan.

Historical Context

Jewish scribes took extraordinary care copying Scripture, counting letters to ensure accuracy. They recognized that changing even a small letter could alter meaning (e.g., Leviticus 6:2 vs 6:5 in Hebrew). Jesus affirms this reverence while opposing the Pharisaic traditions that could effectively nullify Scripture's intent (Matthew 15:6). For Matthew's primarily Jewish-Christian audience, this statement assured them that following Jesus didn't require abandoning their Scriptures—rather, Jesus brought Scripture's true fulfillment.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does Scripture's permanence reveal about God's character and faithfulness?
2. How should the indestructibility of God's Word shape our approach to Bible study?
3. In what ways has Scripture proven trustworthy in your experience despite cultural changes and challenges?

Interlinear Text

ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν· ἔως ἀν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς
verily **For** **I say** **unto you** **Till** G302 **pass** G3928 **heaven**
G281 G1063 G3004 G5213 G2193 G3588 G3772

καὶ ἡ γῆ ἵωτα μία ἡ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ
and G3588 **earth** G1093 **jot** G2503 **one** G1520 **or** G2228 **one** G1520 **tittle** G2762 G3756 G3361 **pass**
G2532 G1520 G2228 G1520 G2762 G3928

ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἔως ἀν πάντα γένηται
from G3588 **the law** G3551 **Till** G302 **all** G3956 **be fulfilled**
G575 G2193 G302 G3956 G1096

Additional Cross-References

Luke 16:17 (Word): And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

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

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.

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.

Mark 13:30 (Parallel theme): Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

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:

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