

Psalms 102:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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: This verse develops the contrast between creation's temporality and Creator's eternity introduced in verse 25. "They shall perish" (hemah yovedu, הָמָה יָבֹدָה) uses abad (אָבֹד), meaning to perish, be destroyed, or cease to exist. Even the seemingly permanent heavens and earth are temporary, destined for dissolution.

"But thou shalt endure" (v'attah ta'amod, וְאַתָּה תָּעִמֵּד) again provides emphatic contrast. Amad (עַמֵּד) means to stand, remain, endure—suggesting stability and permanence. While creation crumbles, God stands unmoved and unaffected by temporal decay. The contrast isn't just duration (God outlasts creation) but ontology (God's being is fundamentally different from contingent created beings).

"All of them shall wax old like a garment" (v'khulam k'beged yivlu, וְכָלָם כְּבָגֵד יִבְלֹו) introduces the garment metaphor. Balah (בָּלָה) means to wear out, become worn, decay through use. Even the heavens, despite their vastness and glory, will deteriorate like clothing subjected to repeated wearing. What seems most durable will eventually wear thin and fail.

"As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed" (ka-l'vush tachalifem v'yachalof u, כְּלֵבֶשׂ תְּחַלֵּפֶם וְיַחַלּוּ) depicts God changing creation like

someone changing clothes. Chalaph (חַלֵּף) means to change, replace, renew. This suggests not only creation's end but also God's sovereign control over cosmic destiny—He will replace the current order with something new.

Historical Context

The concept of creation's impermanence wasn't prominent in ancient Near Eastern thought, where cosmic order was typically viewed as eternal. The Babylonian creation epic Enuma Elish establishes the world order perpetually, with no suggestion of dissolution. Israel's prophetic tradition, however, envisions creation's renewal or replacement (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22).

Peter explicitly references this psalm when describing the future cosmic dissolution: 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up' (2 Peter 3:10). He then asks the decisive question: 'Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' (2 Peter 3:11).

Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes Psalm 102:25-27 word-for-word from the Septuagint and applies it to Jesus Christ, demonstrating His deity and eternality. The Son who created all things will outlast them and ultimately renew them. Revelation 21:1-5 describes the fulfillment: 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.'

Modern physics confirms creation's temporality through the Second Law of Thermodynamics (entropy increases, leading to eventual 'heat death') and cosmological projections of the universe's far future. What seemed most permanent—stars, galaxies, cosmic structure—will eventually cease. Only the Creator transcends thermodynamics.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the promise of creation's eventual replacement ('new heavens and new earth,' Revelation 21:1) affect stewardship responsibilities toward the current creation?
2. What comfort does this verse offer when facing personal, national, or global crises that seem overwhelming?
3. How should recognizing that even cosmic realities are temporary influence attachments to material possessions, earthly achievements, or temporal security?

Interlinear Text

וְהַ	הַ	וְאָבֹדُ	וְאַתָּה	תִּעְמַד	תְּלִמְזַד
H1992	They shall perish	H6	H859	but thou shalt endure	H3605
				H5975	
כְּפֶן	וְיֶלְלָה	כְּלֵב וְשָׁ	כְּלֵב וְשָׁ	לִמְלָפָה	לִמְלָפָה
like a garment	yea all of them shall wax old	as a vesture	as a vesture	shalt thou change	shalt thou change
H899	H1086	H3830		H2498	
לִמְלָפָה:					
shalt thou change					
H2498					

Additional Cross-References

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.

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

Isaiah 34:4 (Parallel theme): And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

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.

Luke 21:33 (Parallel theme): Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Revelation 21:1 (Parallel theme): And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Isaiah 66:22 (Parallel theme): For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

Psalms 102:12 (Parallel theme): But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

Romans 8:20 (Parallel theme): For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,