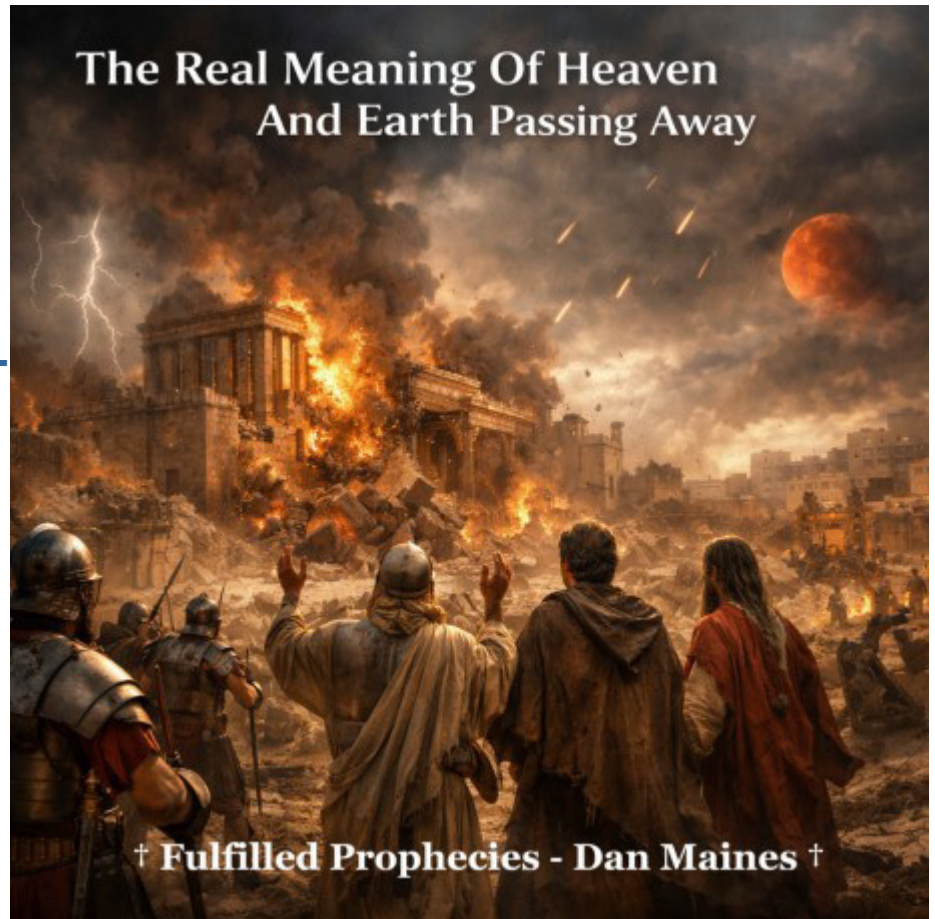


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Heaven And Earth -  
The Real Meaning  
Of Heaven And  
Earth Passing  
Away



By Dan Maines

## The Real Meaning Of Heaven And Earth Passing Away

### Introduction

† Most people read heaven and earth passing away and assume the physical universe is going to be destroyed, but that's not how Scripture consistently uses that language.

† In the Bible, heaven and earth is often covenant language, referring to a world order, a structured system between God and

a people (Isaiah 51:15-16).

† Jesus wasn't predicting the end of the planet, He was declaring the end of the Old Covenant world, and He clearly said it would happen in that generation (Matthew 24:34).

† If we ignore how the Old Testament defines these terms, we'll completely misunderstand what Jesus was saying.

### **Isaiah 51:15-16**

For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His name. I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, You are My people.

† This passage defines heaven and earth in covenant terms, establishing the heavens and founding the earth is directly tied to God establishing a people, Zion (Isaiah 51:16).

† God isn't describing physical creation here, He's describing forming a covenant world where He says, You are My people (Isaiah 51:16).

† That means heaven and earth can represent a covenant structure, a relational world between God and Israel (Deuteronomy 32:1).

† Moses even calls heaven and earth as witnesses against Israel, showing this language is used in a covenant courtroom sense, not a cosmic one (Deuteronomy 31:28).

### **Isaiah 13:9-10**

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark

when it rises, and the moon will not shed its light.

† This is describing the fall of Babylon, yet it uses cosmic language, proving that heaven and earth language is symbolic of covenantal or national judgment, not literal cosmic collapse (Isaiah 13:10).

† This establishes the pattern Jesus is using, the same prophetic language applied to Israel's judgment in His generation (Matthew 24:29).

### **Matthew 24:34-35**

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

† Jesus places a time limit, this generation, meaning His audience would see the fulfillment (Matthew 24:34).

† If heaven and earth meant the physical universe, then everything would've ended in the first century, but it didn't, so the meaning must be covenantal.

† Jesus is declaring the end of the Old Covenant system, temple, priesthood, sacrifices, all of it would pass away (Hebrews 8:13).

### **Hebrews 8:13**

When He said, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

† This was written before AD 70, showing the Old Covenant was already in the process of disappearing, confirming the timing Jesus gave (Hebrews 8:13).

† At the same time, He contrasts that with His words, which would remain and establish the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:26-28).

† This connects directly to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, which Jesus described in detail earlier in the chapter (Luke 21:20-22).

† That event marked the complete removal of the Old Covenant world, exactly as He said.

† This also matches the broader biblical pattern, the word of God stands forever even when covenant worlds pass away (Isaiah 40:8).

### **Isaiah 40:8**

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

† Jesus is echoing this exact truth, heaven and earth pass, but His word remains, showing covenant replacement, not cosmic destruction (Matthew 24:35).

† The Law and the Prophets were until John, then the kingdom was preached, marking the transition already underway (Luke 16:16).

† No first century listener would've understood this as the literal end of the universe, this was standard prophetic language for covenant judgment.

### **Hebrews 12:26-28**

And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven. And this expression, Yet once more, denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may

remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.

† Hebrews explains exactly what the shaking of heaven and earth means, it's the removal of things that can be shaken, meaning the Old Covenant system (Hebrews 12:27).

† The phrase yet once more shows this was a final covenant transition, not something that would keep happening over and over (Hebrews 12:26).

† The things that were made refers to the temple system, priesthood, sacrifices, everything tied to the Old Covenant order (Hebrews 9:10).

† What remains is the unshakable kingdom, the New Covenant reality established in Christ (Hebrews 12:28).

† This proves beyond question that heaven and earth passing away is about covenant removal, not the destruction of the physical universe.

### **Haggai 2:6-7**

For this is what the Lord of hosts says: Once more, in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the treasures of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

† Haggai was already using heaven and earth shaking language before Jesus spoke in Matthew 24, so the phrase didn't automatically mean the end of the physical universe.

† The shaking here points to covenant upheaval, God was announcing a major redemptive transition, not the destruction of

the planet (Haggai 2:6).

† Hebrews 12 quotes this very passage and explains its meaning as the removal of things that could be shaken so that what cannot be shaken would remain (Hebrews 12:26-28).

† That means Haggai 2 is directly tied to the passing of the Old Covenant order and the establishment of the unshakable kingdom of Christ.

† The old temple system was temporary, but Christ brought in what would remain, so the shaking was covenantal, not cosmic.

† This makes Haggai 2 one of the clearest bridges between the prophets and the New Testament teaching on heaven and earth passing away.

† This proves heaven and earth passing away is about covenant transition, not cosmic destruction.

## **2 Peter 3:10-13**

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will be dissolved with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

† Peter uses the same prophetic language as Isaiah, describing covenant judgment, not the destruction of the physical universe (Isaiah 34:4).

† The elements melting refers to the basic principles of the Old Covenant system, not physical atoms, the same word is used this way elsewhere (Galatians 4:3).

† The new heavens and new earth is the New Covenant order already established in Christ, not something future (Revelation 21:1-2).

† If heaven and earth passed, why do we still see them, because the language is covenantal, not physical, describing the passing of a system, not the planet (Isaiah 51:16).

## **Historical References**

† Flavius Josephus recorded the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, showing the end of the Old Covenant system.

† Eusebius of Caesarea wrote that the church understood these events as the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.

† Tacitus confirmed the massive destruction and collapse of the Jewish world in that time.

† The temple stood at the center of Israel's covenant world, when it was destroyed, that entire heaven and earth system collapsed with it.

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We're not waiting for heaven and earth to pass away, it already happened in the covenant sense when the Old Covenant ended.

† We're living in the New Covenant world where Christ reigns and His kingdom cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).

† This removes fear-based theology and replaces it with confidence in what Christ has already fulfilled.

† It calls us to live in the reality of the kingdom now, not waiting for something future that Scripture already says happened.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** If heaven and earth passed away, why are we still here?

**A:** Because it's covenant language, not physical destruction, it refers to the Old Covenant world ending (Isaiah 51:16, Matthew 24:35).

**Q:** What exactly ended in AD 70?

**A:** The temple, sacrifices, priesthood, and the entire Old Covenant system (Hebrews 8:13).

**Q:** What is the new heaven and new earth?

**A:** The New Covenant order where Christ reigns and righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1-2).

**Q:** Why does this matter?

**A:** Because it shows Jesus fulfilled everything He said in that generation, exactly as promised (Matthew 24:34).

**Q:** What did Jesus mean when He said heaven and earth would pass away?

**A:** He was speaking about the Old Covenant world, the system centered on the temple, priesthood, and law, which passed away in that generation (Matthew 24:34-35, Hebrews 8:13).

**Q:** Does this mean the physical earth will never be destroyed?

**A:** The focus of these passages isn't the physical planet, it's covenant transition, Scripture consistently uses this language for judgment on a covenant world, not the end of creation (Isaiah 13:10, Isaiah 51:16).

**Q:** How do we know this was fulfilled in AD 70?

**A:** Jesus tied it to that generation, and history confirms the temple and entire system were destroyed in AD 70, exactly as He said (Matthew 24:34, Luke 21:20-22).

**Q:** Why is the temple so important to this topic?

**A:** Because it was the center of the Old Covenant world, once it was destroyed, that entire heaven and earth system was gone (Hebrews 9:10, Hebrews 8:13).

**Q:** What replaces the Old Covenant heaven and earth?

**A:** The New Covenant kingdom in Christ, which cannot be shaken and will never pass away (Hebrews 12:28, Luke 17:20-21).

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Isaiah 51; Isaiah 13; Matthew 24; Hebrews 12; Hebrews 8; Haggai 2; 2 Peter 3; Deuteronomy 31; Deuteronomy 32; Luke 21; Luke 16; Galatians 4; Isaiah 40; Revelation 21

† Flavius Josephus; Eusebius of Caesarea; Tacitus

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