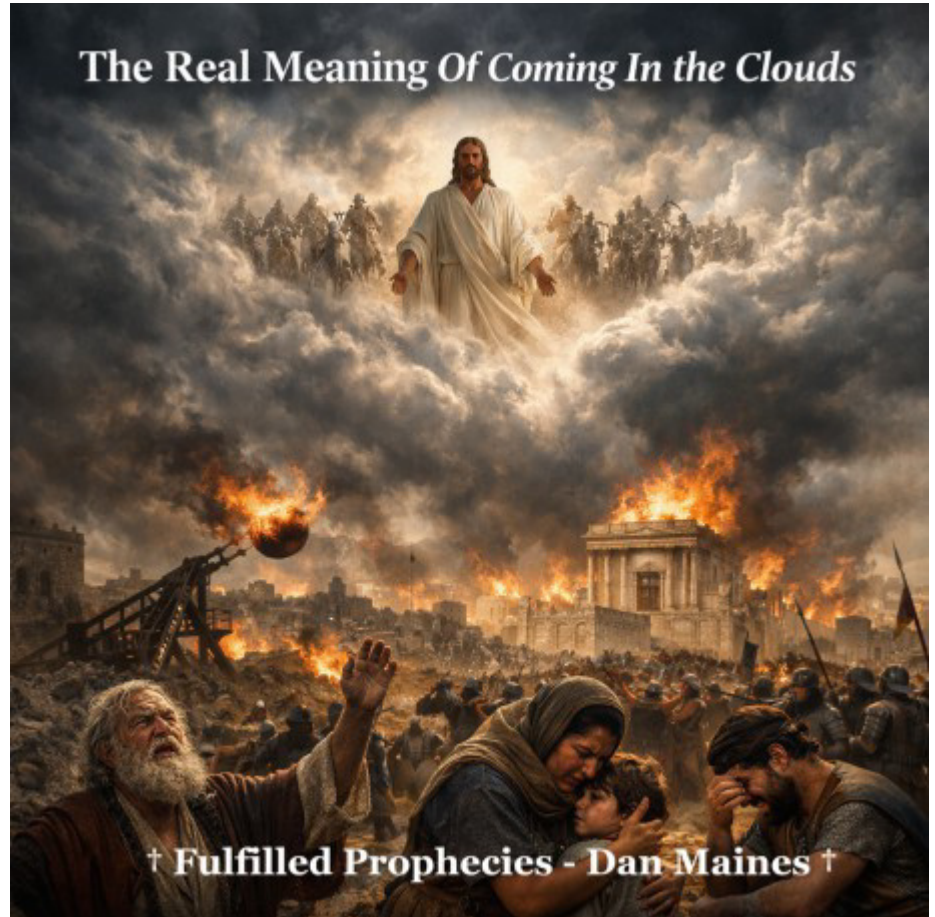


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Clouds - The Real Meaning Of Coming In The Clouds



By Dan Maines

The Real Meaning Of Coming In The Clouds

Introduction

† Most people hear coming in the clouds and immediately think of a physical descent through the sky, but the Bible defines its own language, and when we let scripture interpret scripture, we see this is judgment language, authority language, not a bodily return through the atmosphere (Matthew 24:30).

† The Old Testament repeatedly uses cloud coming language for God judging nations, and no one in those events saw a literal body riding clouds, yet the judgment was real, visible, and devastating (Isaiah 19:1).

† If we ignore that foundation, we'll misunderstand what Jesus said in His Olivet discourse, but if we follow the pattern, everything lines up perfectly with the destruction of Jerusalem in their generation (Matthew 24:34).

Isaiah 19:1

The pronouncement concerning Egypt: Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.

† God is said to ride a cloud into Egypt, yet this wasn't a physical appearance in the sky, it was judgment carried out through nations, armies, and real historical events (Isaiah 19:1).

† The Egyptians didn't look up and see a visible form of God in the clouds, but they experienced His authority and judgment unmistakably (Isaiah 19:1).

† This establishes the pattern, cloud coming equals divine judgment, not a literal sky event (Isaiah 19:1).

Isaiah 13:9-13

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. Thus I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the

haughtiness of the ruthless. I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of the Lord of hosts in the day of His burning anger.

† This is judgment on Babylon, yet the sun, moon, and stars are described as darkened, showing that cosmic language is symbolic of national judgment (Isaiah 13:10).

† No literal collapse of the universe happened, but Babylon was destroyed, proving this language is covenantal and political, not physical (Isaiah 13:9).

† This directly connects to Matthew 24:29 and prepares us to understand Jesus correctly (Matthew 24:29).

Psalm 104:3

He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks on the wings of the wind.

† The clouds are described as God's chariot, this is symbolic language showing sovereignty and movement in judgment, not physical transportation like a man riding a vehicle (Psalm 104:3).

† This imagery reinforces that clouds represent divine authority and presence, especially in acts of power and judgment (Psalm 104:3).

† When Jesus uses this same language, He's drawing directly from this well-known Old Testament imagery (Psalm 104:3).

Nahum 1:3

The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In the gale and the storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet.

† The clouds are described as the dust of His feet, again showing symbolic movement and presence, not a literal physical form traveling in the sky (Nahum 1:3).

† This reinforces that cloud language is poetic and prophetic, used to describe God's authority in judgment (Nahum 1:3).

† This is the same language Jesus uses, and His audience would have understood it this way (Nahum 1:3).

Daniel 7:13-14

I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Honor, and a kingdom, So that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

† The Son of Man comes with the clouds, but notice where He goes, not to earth, but to the Ancient of Days, this is an ascension scene, not a descent (Daniel 7:13).

† The coming in the clouds here is about receiving authority, dominion, and kingship, not about traveling through the sky to the planet (Daniel 7:14).

† Jesus later applies this exact passage to Himself, showing that His cloud coming is tied to His authority and judgment, not a physical return (Matthew 26:64).

Matthew 24:30

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

† Jesus is quoting directly from Daniel 7, this is about His authority being revealed in judgment, not Him physically appearing in the sky (Matthew 24:30).

† The tribes mourning matches Old Testament judgment language, especially against Israel, not a global event but a covenantal judgment on that nation (Zechariah 12:10-12).

† They would see Him coming in the same way Egypt saw God come, through destruction, through judgment, through undeniable events in history (Matthew 24:30).

Revelation 1:7

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

† This ties directly to those who pierced Him, meaning the first century generation, not a distant future group (Revelation 1:7).

† The mourning tribes again point to Israel, confirming this is covenant judgment language (Revelation 1:7).

† This matches Matthew 24 perfectly and confirms the timing (Matthew 24:30).

Matthew 26:64

Jesus said to him, You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

† Jesus told the high priest they would see this, not people thousands of years later, but that very generation standing before Him (Matthew 26:64).

† The seeing here is not physical eyesight of a body in the sky, but recognizing His authority in the judgment that came upon Jerusalem (Matthew 26:64).

† This was fulfilled when Jerusalem was destroyed, proving He was exactly who He claimed to be (Matthew 24:34).

Historical References

† Josephus records the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 as catastrophic, with signs, fear, and judgment that matched the warnings Jesus gave (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6).

† Josephus also records chariots and armies seen in the clouds before the destruction, matching the prophetic imagery of coming in the clouds (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6.5.3).

† Eusebius confirms that Christians fled the city before its destruction, recognizing the signs Jesus gave, showing they understood His words as imminent judgment (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

† Tacitus, a Roman historian, describes the devastation and unusual events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem, reinforcing that this was no ordinary event (Tacitus, Histories 5.13).

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't wait for Jesus to come in the clouds, He already came in judgment and authority, and His kingdom is fully established (Matthew 28:18).

† Christ is reigning now, seated in authority over all things, not waiting to receive His kingdom (Ephesians 1:20-22).

† Understanding this removes fear of future speculation and grounds us in what Christ has already accomplished (John 19:30).

† We now live under His present reign, called to walk in that reality, not looking for signs in the sky but living in His finished kingdom (Ephesians 2:6).

Q And A Appendix

Q If this already happened, why do people still expect a future coming?

A Because they ignore Old Testament language and read cloud coming as literal instead of symbolic, but scripture defines it as judgment and authority, not physical descent (Isaiah 19:1; Daniel 7:13).

Q Did anyone actually see Jesus in the clouds?

A They saw the result of His coming, the destruction of Jerusalem, which was the visible proof of His authority and judgment (Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:20).

Q What about Acts 1:9-11, doesn't it say He will come in the same way?

A The same way refers to cloud imagery and authority, just as Daniel 7 shows, not a physical return to earth, but His coming in

power and judgment (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13).

Q Does this mean Jesus is not returning at all?

A It means His coming in the clouds was fulfilled exactly as He said, in that generation, as a judgment event tied to the end of the Old Covenant system (Matthew 24:34; Hebrews 8:13).

Q If coming in the clouds is judgment language, why do people picture a literal sky event?

A Because they read the New Testament without the Old Testament foundation, but the prophets already defined cloud language as God's movement in judgment, not a physical appearance (Isaiah 19:1; Nahum 1:3).

Q What does it mean that the sign of the Son of Man appears in heaven?

A It means the sign was in heaven, not in the sky, it was proof that Christ had taken His throne and was exercising authority through judgment on Jerusalem (Matthew 24:30; Daniel 7:13-14).

Q Why does it say all the tribes of the earth will mourn?

A The word earth is often land, referring to Israel, and the tribes mourning connects directly to the tribes of Israel in Zechariah, not the entire world (Zechariah 12:10-12; Matthew 24:30).

Q How could they see Him if it was not physical?

A They saw Him the same way Egypt saw God come, through the visible effects of judgment, destruction, and fulfilled prophecy (Isaiah 19:1; Luke 21:20).

Q Why is Daniel 7 so important to understanding this?

A Because Jesus is quoting it directly, and Daniel shows the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days to receive a kingdom, not coming down to earth (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 26:64).

Q What proves this happened in the first century?

A Jesus said those standing before Him would see it, and He said all these things would happen in that generation, which was fulfilled in AD 70 (Matthew 26:64; Matthew 24:34).

Q Does this mean the coming of Christ was invisible?

A It means it was not a physical descent, but it was very visible through the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Old Covenant system (Luke 21:22; Hebrews 8:13).

Q Why connect this to the destruction of Jerusalem?

A Because Jesus tied His coming, the tribulation, and the judgment all to that same time period and generation (Matthew 24:21; Matthew 24:34).

Q What role did Rome play in this coming?

A Rome was the instrument of judgment, just like other nations were used by God in the Old Testament, carrying out His will against Jerusalem (Luke 21:20; Isaiah 10:5).

Q How does this affect how we read prophecy today?

A It forces us to read prophecy through scripture's own language instead of modern assumptions, recognizing symbolic judgment language rather than expecting literal sky events

(Isaiah 13:10; Matthew 24:29).

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

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Source Index

† Isaiah 19:1; Isaiah 13:9-13; Psalm 104:3; Nahum 1:3; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30; Matthew 26:64; Revelation 1:7; Zechariah 12:10-12; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22; John 19:30; Ephesians 2:6; Luke 21:20; Hebrews 8:13; Acts 1:9-11

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5; Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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