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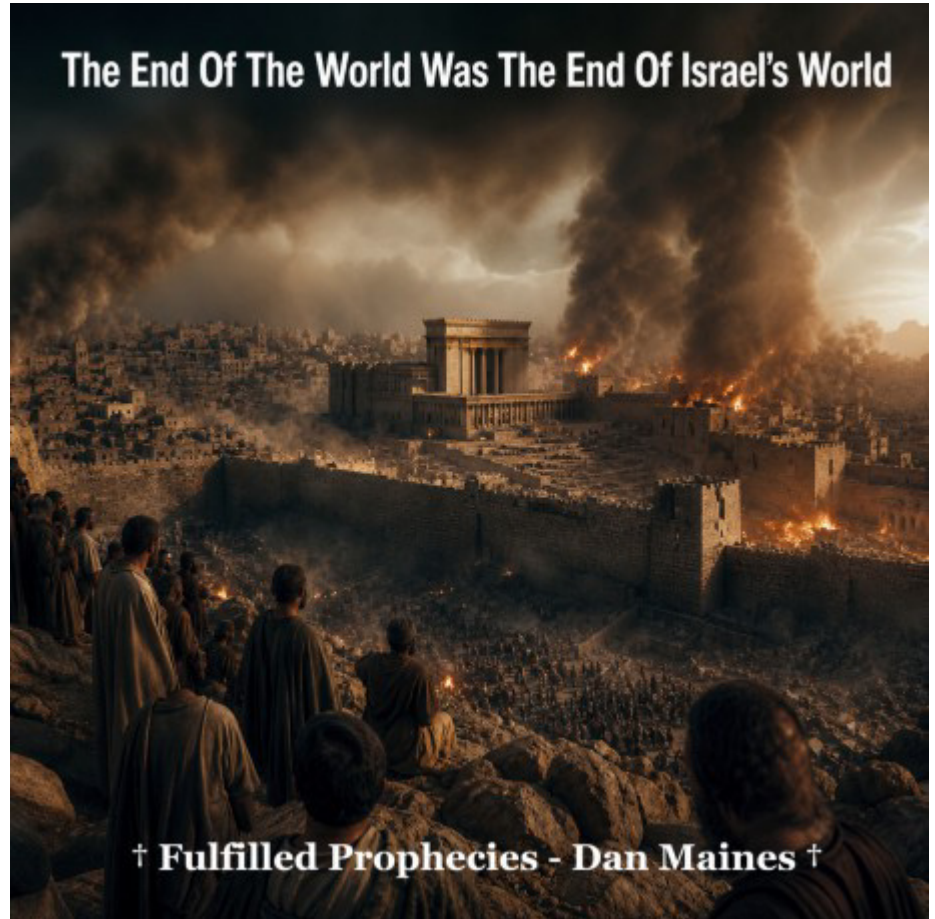
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The End Of The World Was The End Of Israel's World



By Dan Maines

The End Of The World Was The End Of Israel's World

Introduction

† Most people hear the phrase "end of the world" and immediately think of the destruction of the physical planet, but the Bible never defines it that way (Matthew 24:3).

† The Bible uses covenantal language, prophetic language, and audience relevance, and when we let Scripture define its own

terms, everything becomes clear (2 Peter 3:10).

† The word translated "world" in many passages is the Greek word *aion*, which means age, not the physical earth (Matthew 24:3).

† Once we understand that, the entire conversation shifts from global destruction to the end of a covenant age, specifically Israel's world (Hebrews 9:26).

Matthew 24:3

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

† The phrase end of the world here is the Greek phrase *sunteleia tou aionos*, which means completion of the age, not the destruction of the planet (Matthew 24:3).

† The disciples were not asking about the end of planet earth, they were asking about the end of the age they were living in, the Old Covenant age centered around the temple (Matthew 24:3).

† Jesus had just told them the temple would be destroyed, so their question is directly tied to that event, not some distant future global catastrophe (Matthew 24:3).

† This is about the end of Israel's covenant world, not the end of the physical creation (Matthew 24:3).

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† This verse defines the time frame, Jesus said everything He just described, including the end of the age, would happen in their generation (Matthew 24:34).

† This eliminates any future interpretation, because their generation did not last thousands of years (Matthew 24:34).

† This ties the end of the age directly to the first century destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:34).

Matthew 5:18

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the Law, until all is accomplished!

† Heaven and earth here are directly connected to the Law, showing it is covenantal language, not the physical universe (Matthew 5:18).

† The Law remained until heaven and earth passed, meaning the Old Covenant system stayed in place until its fulfillment (Matthew 5:18).

† This perfectly aligns with the destruction of Jerusalem when that system came to its full end (Matthew 5:18).

Hebrews 9:26

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been revealed to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

† The phrase end of the ages confirms that multiple ages were in view, and Christ appeared at the climax of those covenant ages (Hebrews 9:26).

† This shows that the writers of the New Testament believed they were already living in the last days of that age, not waiting thousands of years for it (Hebrews 9:26).

† The Old Covenant system was reaching its end, and Christ's sacrifice marked the beginning of that transition (Hebrews 9:26).

† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 completed what was already in motion (Hebrews 9:26).

Hebrews 8:13

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

† The Old Covenant was already in the process of disappearing in the first century (Hebrews 8:13).

† This proves the end was not thousands of years away, it was imminent to their audience (Hebrews 8:13).

† AD 70 marks the visible end of what was already fading (Hebrews 8:13).

2 Peter 3:10

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 discovered.

† Many read this and assume it's describing the literal destruction of the planet, but this language comes directly from Old Testament prophetic imagery (2 Peter 3:10).

† The word elements refers to the stoicheia, the basic principles or elements of the Old Covenant system, not atoms or the

periodic table (2 Peter 3:10).

† The heavens and earth language was commonly used to describe covenant systems, governments, and nations (2 Peter 3:10).

† Peter is describing the end of the Old Covenant world in the same symbolic language the prophets always used (2 Peter 3:10).

Isaiah 34:4

And all the heavenly lights will wear away,
And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll;
All its lights will also wither away
As a leaf withers from the vine,
Or as one withers from the fig tree.

† This passage describes the judgment of Edom, yet it uses cosmic language like the heavens dissolving and the sky rolling up (Isaiah 34:4).

† No one believes the literal stars fell when Edom was judged, because we understand this as prophetic, covenantal language (Isaiah 34:4).

† This is the exact same type of language Peter uses, proving he is not introducing a new idea but continuing a consistent biblical pattern (Isaiah 34:4).

† When Israel's world ended in AD 70, the language of heaven and earth passing away was fulfilled in that covenantal sense (Isaiah 34:4).

Isaiah 13:10

For the stars of heaven and their constellations
Will not flash their light;
The sun will be dark when it rises

And the moon will not shed its light.

† This was spoken about Babylon, yet uses the same cosmic language (Isaiah 13:10).

† This proves beyond question that prophetic language about the heavens collapsing is symbolic of covenant judgment (Isaiah 13:10).

† Peter is using established prophetic language, not describing the end of the physical universe (2 Peter 3:10).

Historical References

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 4, describes the destruction of Jerusalem as unparalleled, marking the complete end of the Jewish temple system.

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, records that Christians recognized the destruction of Jerusalem as a divine judgment tied to Christ's prophecy.

† Tacitus, Histories 5.13, confirms the devastation of Jerusalem and the collapse of the Jewish system.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We are not waiting for the world to end, we are living in the age that came after the Old Covenant was removed (Hebrews 8:13).

† The fear of global destruction is not a biblical teaching, it comes from misunderstanding prophetic language (2 Peter 3:10).

† Christ already brought judgment on that system and established His kingdom, and we are living in it now (Matthew

24:34).

† This changes everything, instead of fear, we walk in confidence knowing His work is complete (Hebrews 9:26).

Q & A Appendix

Q If the world did not end physically, why does the Bible use such extreme language?

A Because that is how prophetic judgment language has always been used. Isaiah 34:4 and Isaiah 13:10 use the same language for nations, yet the physical earth remained.

Q What does aion really mean?

A It means age, not planet. Matthew 24:3 is asking about the end of the age, not the destruction of the earth.

Q What are the elements in 2 Peter 3?

A They are the stoicheia, the elements of the Old Covenant system, not physical matter.

Q Are we living in the new heavens and new earth now?

A Yes, the old covenant world has passed, and we are in the new covenant reality established by Christ as seen within that generation (Matthew 24:34).

Q Why do so many people still believe the earth will be destroyed?

A Because they read prophetic language literally instead of comparing it with Old Testament usage like Isaiah 13:10 and Isaiah 34:4.

Q What exactly ended in AD 70?

A The Old Covenant world, the temple system, the sacrificial system, and Israel's covenant identity centered on the Law came to a complete end (Hebrews 8:13).

Q Did Jesus ever say the physical earth would be destroyed?

A No, He spoke about the end of the age and tied it directly to the destruction of the temple and that generation (Matthew 24:3, 34).

Q What does heaven and earth passing away really mean?

A It refers to the passing of the Old Covenant system connected to the Law, not the physical universe (Matthew 5:18).

Q Why is 2 Peter 3 misunderstood?

A Because people ignore the Old Testament background where identical language was used for covenant judgment, not literal cosmic destruction (Isaiah 34:4).

Q What difference does this make for us today?

A It removes fear and confusion, and it shows that Christ's work is complete and His kingdom is fully established now (Hebrews 9:26).

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

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Source Index

† Matthew 24:3, Matthew 24:34, Matthew 5:18, Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 8:13, 2 Peter 3:10, Isaiah 34:4, Isaiah 13:10

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 4, Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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