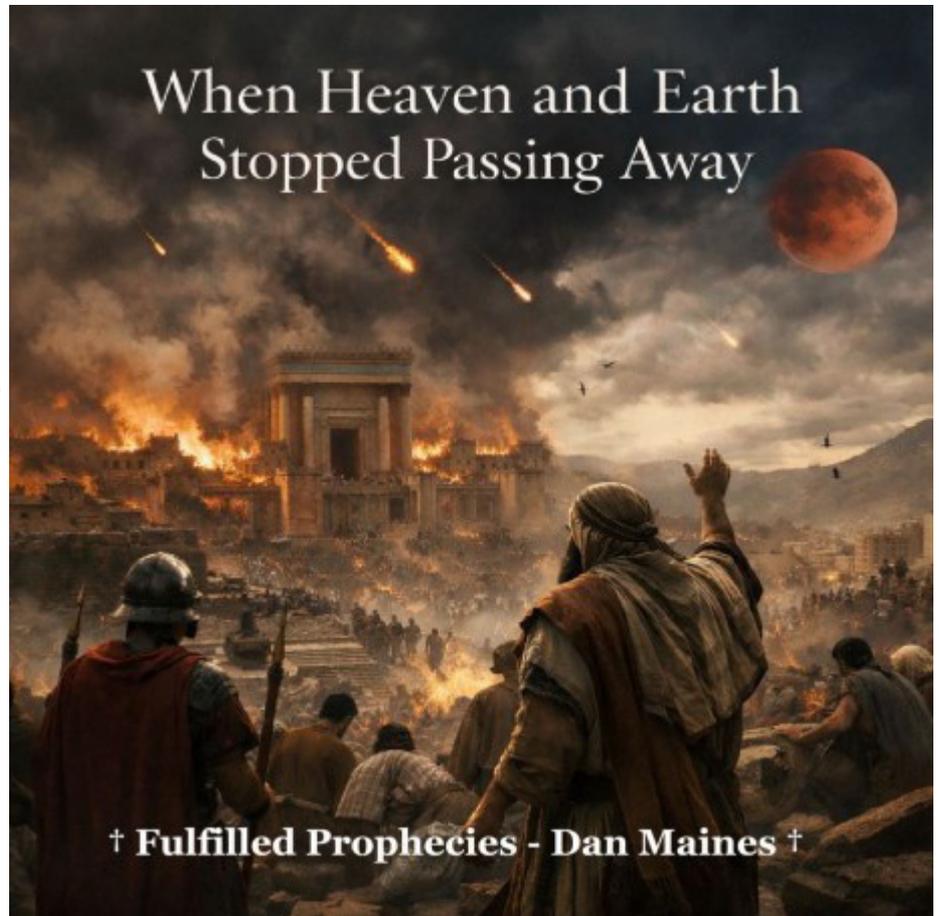


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Heaven and Earth - When Heaven and Earth Stopped Passing Away



By Dan Maines

When Heaven and Earth Stopped Passing Away

Introduction

† Jesus spoke words Israel already understood, not mysterious phrases about the end of the planet, but covenant language rooted in their Scriptures. (Isaiah 1:2; Deuteronomy 31:28; Matthew 13:34-35)

† Heaven and earth passing away wasn't new language, it was familiar prophetic speech describing covenant transition. (Isaiah 51:6; Jeremiah 4:23-26)

† Matthew 24:35 stands as a declaration of covenant stability, not cosmic annihilation. (Matthew 24:34-35; Hebrews 12:27-28)

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

† Jesus contrasts two things Israel already knew how to distinguish, the old covenant order and the enduring authority of His word. (Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Isaiah 40:8)

† Heaven and earth here refer to the covenant world Israel lived under, the system defined by temple, priesthood, sacrifices, and law. (Exodus 24:9-11; Psalm 78:69; Isaiah 65:17)

† The passing away Jesus speaks of is covenantal, not material, because His words were already being fulfilled within that generation. (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:22)

Isaiah 51:6

Lift up your eyes to the sky,
Then look to the earth beneath;
For the sky will vanish like smoke,
And the earth will wear out like a garment
And its inhabitants will die in like manner,
But My salvation will be forever,
And My righteousness will not wane.

† Isaiah uses heaven and earth language to describe covenant instability, not the destruction of the universe. (Isaiah 24:1-6; Isaiah 34:4)

† Israel understood this imagery as prophetic language for judgment and transition. (Hosea 4:1-3; Joel 2:10)

† Salvation remaining forever shows covenant continuity through change, not physical extinction. (Isaiah 45:17; Isaiah 55:11)

Isaiah 13:10

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 language was spoken against Babylon, not the physical cosmos. (Isaiah 13:1; Isaiah 14:4)

† Israel already knew that darkened heavens described national judgment and covenant overthrow. (Ezekiel 32:7-8; Amos 8:9)

† Jesus was speaking within a well established prophetic framework. (Matthew 24:29; Luke 21:20-22)

Jeremiah 31:35-36

Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for light by day
And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,
Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar,
The LORD of hosts is His name:
If this fixed order departs
From before Me, declares the LORD,
Then the offspring of Israel also will cease
From being a nation before Me forever.

† Jeremiah anchors covenant promises to the reliability of creation to illustrate certainty, not to predict cosmic collapse. (Jeremiah 33:20-21)

† Heaven and earth imagery is used to show covenant faithfulness, not physical destruction. (Psalm 89:36-37)

† Israel would've recognized this as covenant assurance language. (Lamentations 3:31-33)

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.

† The writer of Hebrews defines passing away as covenant obsolescence, not planetary decay. (Hebrews 7:18-19)

† Heaven and earth were in the process of vanishing because the old covenant was still standing but was about to end.

(Hebrews 9:8-10)

† This aligns directly with Jesus' words in Matthew 24:35.

(Matthew 24:2; Matthew 24:34)

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.

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.

† The shaking of heaven and earth refers to the removal of the old covenant order. (Haggai 2:6-7; Hebrews 9:26)

† What remained was the unshakable kingdom, already received by believers. (Luke 17:20-21; Colossians 1:13)

† This marks the moment heaven and earth stopped passing away. (Hebrews 10:9; Revelation 21:1)

Historical References

† Josephus records the destruction of the temple and the end of the sacrificial system, confirming the covenant world had collapsed in AD 70. (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:6)

† Eusebius writes of the complete judgment upon Jerusalem, marking the end of the old order and the establishment of the church without the temple. (Matthew 22:7)

† John Chrysostom identified the fall of Jerusalem as the final sign that the old covenant had ended and Christ's kingdom stood alone. (Hebrews 12:28)

How It Applies To Us Today

† We aren't living in a world waiting to pass away, we're living in the unshakable kingdom. (Hebrews 12:28)

† Our faith rests on fulfilled promises, not future instability. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

† We live at rest, not vigilance, because the shaking is finished and Christ's word stands complete. (Matthew 11:28; John 19:30)

Q and A Appendix

† Q. When Jesus said heaven and earth would pass away, was He talking about the physical universe? (Matthew 24:34-35)

† A. No. In Scripture, heaven and earth often describe a covenant world. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hebrews all use this language for covenant judgment and transition, not the destruction of creation itself. (Isaiah 51:6; Jeremiah 4:23; Hebrews 12:27)

† Q. If heaven and earth passed away, what are we living in now? (Hebrews 12:26-28)

† A. Hebrews says we've received a kingdom which can't be shaken. What passed away was the old covenant order, what remains is the unshakable kingdom established in Christ. (Colossians 1:13; Luke 17:21)

† Q. Did Jesus place the passing away of heaven and earth in the distant future? (Matthew 24:34)

† A. No. Jesus tied it to His generation. Hebrews confirms it was already happening in the first century as the old covenant was becoming obsolete and ready to disappear. (Hebrews 8:13)

† Q. Does this teaching remove hope for believers after death? (John 11:25-26)

† A. No. It strengthens hope. The passing away of the old covenant removed separation, not life. Believers live in

uninterrupted fellowship with Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

† Q. Why does understanding this matter today? (Hebrews 12:28)

† A. Because it removes fear and uncertainty. We aren't waiting for collapse or loss. We're living in what remains, the completed and stable kingdom of God. (Romans 8:38-39)

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

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Source Index

† Matthew 24:35; Isaiah 51:6; Isaiah 13:10; Jeremiah 31:35-36; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-28

† Josephus, The Jewish War

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew

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