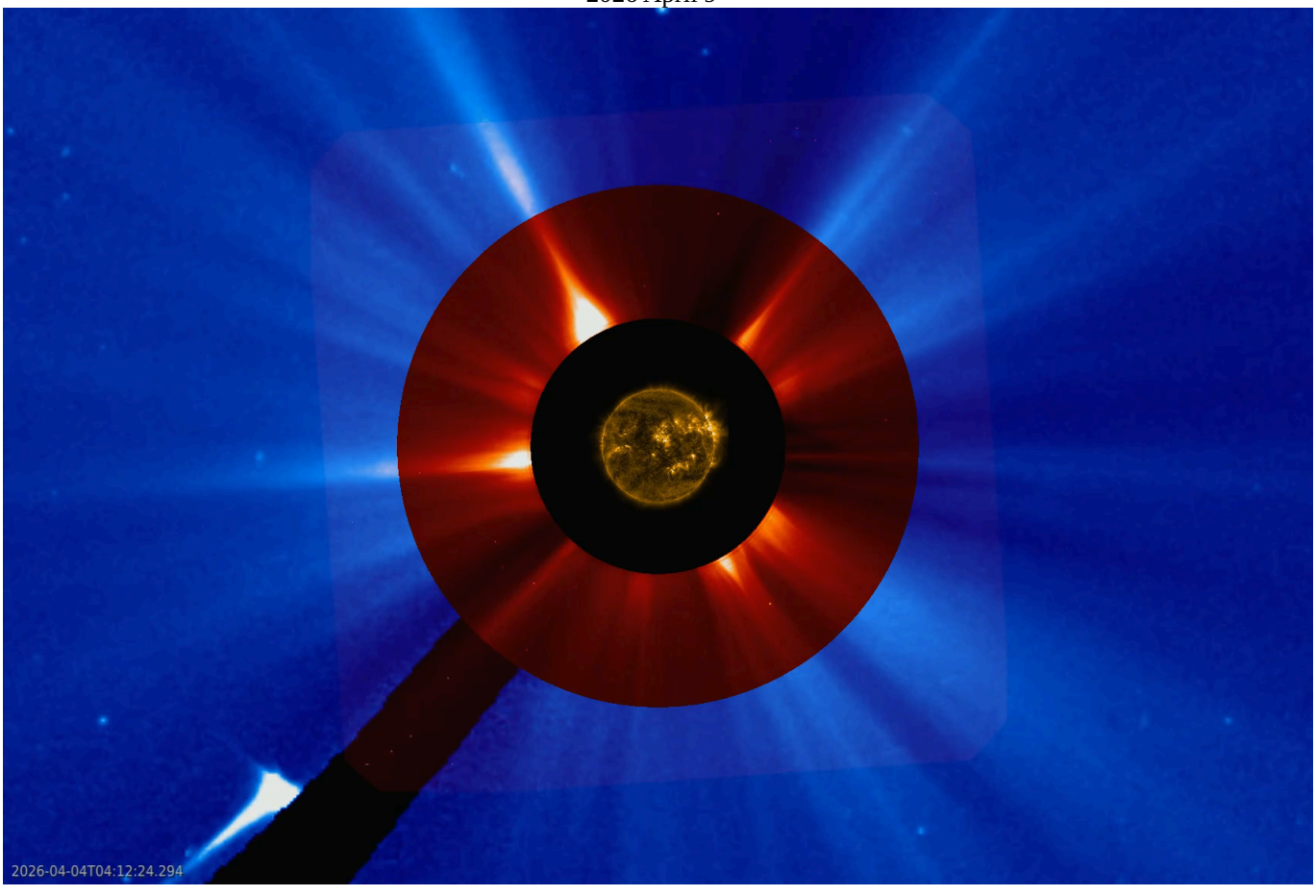
# Astronomy Picture of the Day

Discover the cosmos! Each day a different image or photograph of our fascinating universe is featured, along with a brief explanation written by a professional astronomer.

2026 April 9




**Destruction of Comet C/2026 A1 (MAPS)**
**Video Credit:** Brian Day, SOHO, SDO, JHelioviewer
Text: Cecilia Chirenti (NASA GSFC, UMCP, CRESST II)

**Explanation:** As the crew of Artemis II travelled towards the Moon this week, Comet C/2026 A1 (MAPS) was expected to have its closest approach to the Sun on Monday. At this point, comet and Sun would be closer than half the distance separating the Earth and Moon. The comet did not survive; the featured video was made with 40 hours of data and shows the comet plunging toward the Sun, like a moth to a flame. Observing the comet so close to our bright star requires a coronagraph, an instrument that blocks the Sun and is used for studies of its corona. This composite video combines, starting from the outside, views from: the wider angle coronagraph (blue) and the narrower angle coronagraph (red), both on NASA's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory, and NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory (black). We can see the comet approaching the sun, stretching, disappearing behind the coronagraph's occulting disk and reappearing as a cloud of debris that dissipates.

**Tomorrow's picture:** galactic antennae

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