

Chapter 3

THE MYTH OF INEVITABLE, LITERAL ARMAGEDDON

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2 Peter 2:1;

But there were also false prophets among the people,
just as there will be false teachers [*in the future*] among you.
They will secretly introduce destructive heresies,
even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them
—bringing swift destruction on themselves."

Peter's prophecy has come to pass. One of the most "destructive heresies" is about Doomsday, or "Armageddon". It says it's God's will that a horrible event in which three quarters of humanity dies and the Earth is rendered uninhabitable must occur because the Bible says so. It makes it appear God's will is to "judge" us with mass incineration by nuclear weaponry. Christians who believe this heresy have been convinced to support unholy things such as the war in Iraq, believing it's part of God's plan.

Worse yet, many are taught to expect a "Rapture" in which believers literally, physically, rise into the air to be with Jesus. Because they view Armageddon as an unfortunate but necessary prelude to their salvation, they're numbed to the grim reality of war. This belief denies Jesus' most basic gospel of love for all humanity. However, they're right about one thing—the "End Times", or more correctly, the "End of the Age" is upon us. The real questions are...

- 1.) Will Armageddon occur *figuratively* and peacefully through repentance, or *literally*, with mass destruction, death, and misery for billions?
- 2.) Will Christians obey God's command to love our neighbors and choose a peaceful solution? Or will they insist upon a cruel, satanic, "Win/Lose" scenario in which their "unsaved" neighbors must perish in flames?

In this chapter, scripture will teach us we have a choice of whether prophecy is fulfilled peacefully (Christ-like) or violently (satantically). We'll learn how to read the scriptures' spiritual language so we can discern which option is God's and which is Satan's. Using actual scripture in an easy to understand and logical format provides the reader with the perfect means to undermine the heresies of hate and doom. We'll begin with three passages indicating the perspective God prefers we use when reading prophecy in the Bible...

Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses;

**This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you
that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
Now choose life, so that you and your children may live..."**

Hosea 6:6;

**For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."**

John 6:63, Jesus;

**The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.
The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."**

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus cited Hosea 6:6 in verses 9:13 and 12:7. Twice in one book. While most Christians are taught a bloody "Armageddon" is required to fulfill God's prophecies, as a general rule, prophecy is almost completely misunderstood. Prophecies of doom are warnings, presenting choices of equally valid paths. They *will* be fulfilled, but it's the manner in which they are fulfilled that really counts. When read figuratively using spiritual language, prophecies are fulfilled peacefully. When read literally, the destruction means worldwide death and devastation. Part of our individual test is which choice we wish God to manifest, and which outcome we work toward. How we respond determines the form of fulfillment—whether it be life, or death. This principle was explained by God to the prophet Jeremiah in what I call "Jeremiah's Law"...

Jeremiah's Law

Jeremiah 18:7-11 (NIV);

**7 If at any time [including Revelation]
I [God/Creator] announce [directly or through prophets]
that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed,
8 and if that nation I warned repents of its evil,
then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.**

**9 And if at another time
I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted,
10 and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me,
then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it."**

Verses 7-8 say if we heed God's prophecy of doom and repent (destroy our pride and change what we're doing wrong, as in our foreign policy) God will spare us, but verses 9-10 say if we ignore God, we'll be destroyed literally. Verse 11 sums up the situation: it's our choice...

Jeremiah 18:7-11, cont.:

**11 "Now therefore
say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem,
'This is what the LORD says:
Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you.
So turn from your evil ways, each one of you,
and reform your ways and your actions.'"**

God gave this Law to Jeremiah and ordered him to warn his people of impending doom if they didn't repent. Jeremiah lived about 600 B.C., at the time of the Second Babylonian Empire. Perhaps Jeremiah's Law was meant only for that time? No! The Book of Jonah carries the same message. Jonah was a prophet who lived a hundred years earlier, around 700 B.C., at the time of the Assyrian Empire (the most powerful empire in the Middle East). God sent Jonah to Nineveh, Assyria's capital city, to deliver a message to the Assyrian king. The message, or prophecy, was that God was going to destroy Nineveh in forty days because of the evil the king and his nation were committing.

Jonah 1:1-2;

- 1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai:**
- 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it,
because its wickedness has come up before me."**

Instead, Jonah tried to run away from his mission. He set sail on a boat, got thrown overboard, and was swallowed by a fish for three days and lived to tell about it, but that's another story. When he got back on dry land God spoke to him again;

Jonah 3:1-10;

- 1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:**
- 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh
and proclaim to it the message I give you."**
- 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh.
Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days.**
- 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed:
"Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned."**
- 5 The Ninevites believed God. ..."**

What follows next is very important. Not only did the Ninevites believe God, they took appropriate action. They repented of their evil, and God responded with mercy. Jesus referred us to this example twice, as you'll soon see. But first, the remainder of the passage from Jonah...

Jonah 3:1-10, cont.:

5 cont.: "...They [*the people of Nineveh*] declared a fast,
and all of them, from the greatest to the least,
put on sackcloth [*humbled themselves*].

6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh,
he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes,
covered himself with sackcloth [*like everyone else,*] and sat down in the dust.

7 Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:
Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything;
do not let them eat or drink.

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth.
Let everyone call urgently on God.

Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.

9 Who knows?

God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger
so that we will not perish."

10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways,
he had compassion
and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened."

This account of God's mercy is in full agreement with what God told the prophet Joel (about 830 B.C.), over a hundred years before Jonah, and more than two hundred years before Jeremiah. Please note in Jonah 3:9 above and Joel 2:14 below the use of the phrase "Who knows?" and the nearly identical wording of the accompanying message. God is showing us this message is an essential part of understanding how to read His prophecies.

Joel 2:13-14;

13 Rend your heart and not your garments.

Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

14 Who knows?

He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing—..."

Back to the lesson of Jonah and the Assyrians...

Jonah 4:1-2;

1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.

2 He prayed to the LORD,

"O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home?

That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish.

I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God,

slow to anger and abounding in love,

a God who relents from sending calamity."

Jonah knew Assyria would later destroy Israel. And he knew of the principle of peaceful destruction via repentance because it was a part of the religion.. He didn't want to warn them and risk having them repent and be spared., so he tried running away to avoid warning the Ninevites. It seems Jeremiah's Law (and Joel's and Jonah's) was good for at least two hundred years and two empires. Does that prove we can apply it to Revelation and Armageddon? Good question. Let's ask Jesus.

Luke 11:29-30, 32, Jesus;

29 ..."This is a wicked generation.

It asks for a miraculous sign,

but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.

30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites,

so also will the Son of Man be to this generation."

[Jesus applied this rule to a generation 2000 years ago, but it still applies today.]

11:32 The men of Nineveh

will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it;

for they repented at the preaching of Jonah,

and now one greater than Jonah is here."

For emphasis, this saying was repeated in Matthew 12:41;

12:41 The men of Nineveh

will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it;

for they repented at the preaching of Jonah,

and now one greater than Jonah is here."

Jesus knew Jeremiah's Law still applied. He was referring to it when he cited Jonah. Jesus knew the Father's mercy is ever-present. That's why he pointed twice to Jonah as a sign regarding repentance for a nation not obeying the Law of Moses in the spirit God intended. Jesus verified Jeremiah's Law covered a period of at least 800 years. Not once did he say it was cancelled. So, it remains in effect for Christians today.

It's part of the Qur'an's teaching for Muslims, too, as Muhammad (S) also affirmed this principle;
Sura 10:96, 99;

96 Neither be those
who charge the signs [*prophecies*] of God with falsehood,
lest thou...perish...
99...any city [*that's right, any city*], had it believed,
might have found safety in its faith.
But it was so only with the people of JONAS [*Jonah*].
When they believed, We delivered them from...shame...
And provided for them for a time."

Believing, the Ninevites repented of their policies of violence and oppression, and were spared literal devastation.

Use of Figurative Language to Peacefully Fulfill Prophecy

The prophet Hosea (about 750 B.C.) provided a superb example of how figurative language can fulfill Doomsday destruction in prophecy;
Hosea 6:5-6;

5 Therefore I [*God*] cut you in pieces with my prophets,
I killed you with the words of my mouth;
My judgments flashed like lightning upon you.

6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

The phrase "burnt offerings" is "holocausts" in the New American (Catholic) Bible. Jesus twice cited Hosea 6:6 in the two passages following, proving he knew and recommended usage of figurative forms of destruction in scripture. He was pointing to them:

Matthew 9:13; **But go and learn what this means:
'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'..."**

Matthew 12:7;

**If you had known what these words mean,
'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'
you would not have condemned the innocent. "**

The verse to which he referred was Hosea 6:6;

6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

Just like the Father, repentance is Jesus' preferred manner for fulfilling prophecies of destruction. He highlighted the Old Testament's finest example of figurative destruction as he criticized a literalist, worldly theology that contradicted the spirit of God's Law. Let's take a further look at use of figurative language in scripture, beginning with this next passage by Jesus: John 16:25, Jesus;

Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language [figurative speech] but will tell you plainly about my Father."

Muhammad taught the same... Sura 3:7;

**[Allah] it is who hath sent down to thee "the Book. [Qur'an]"
Some of its signs are of themselves perspicuous [literal];
...and others are figurative."**

Paul taught the same thing, too...

1 Corinthians 2:13-14, Paul;

**13 This is what we [the Apostles] speak,
not in words taught us by human wisdom [conventional definitions]
but in words taught by the Spirit,
expressing spiritual truths in [figurative] spiritual words.**

**14 The [literalist] man without the Spirit
does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God,
for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,
because they are spiritually discerned."**

Colossians 1:9, Paul;

**For this reason, since the day we heard about you,
we have not stopped praying for you
and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will [prophecy]
through all spiritual wisdom and understanding [figurative usage]."**

The "spiritual" words the "man without the Spirit does not accept" are figurative words. The "man without the Spirit" who rejects use of figurative language denies Jesus and the Bible when he insists on using a one-sided harsh "literal" interpretation. As Jesus said...

John 16:25, Jesus; **"...I have been speaking figuratively..."**

Mark 4:33-34; 33

**With many similar parables
Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.**

34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. ..."

John 6:63; **"...The words I have spoken to you are spirit
and they are life [not death—literal]."**

Here are two examples demonstrating how a literal interpretation seems to turn Christ into Satan and provide corrupt individuals a tool to use God's Word to promote war. We'll start by providing figurative, spiritual definitions for "fire", and then "killing".

Matthew 13:41-42, Jesus;

**41 The Son of Man [Jesus] will send out his angels...
they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin
and all who do evil.**

**42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace,
where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

[This sounds like human sacrifice!]

Luke 12:49, Jesus;

**"I have come to bring fire on the earth,
and how I wish it were already kindled!..."**

[God save us! Has Jesus gone mad? It sounds like he's talking about arson!]

Mark 9:49, Jesus: **"Everyone will be salted with fire."**

If literal, this is terrifying! Has Jesus forgotten how to forgive?

Thank God for Jeremiah and the figurative, "word of God" form of "fire";
Jeremiah 23:29, God;

"Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD..."

Jeremiah 5:14, God;

...the LORD God Almighty says:

**"Because the people have spoken these words,
I will make my words in your mouth a fire
and these people the wood it consumes."**

This matches Hosea 6:5-6 below. Jesus referred to this passage twice in Matthew, verses 9:13 and 12:7 (see bottom of page 62). Jesus was emphasizing that both he and the Father desired whatever killing take place be through fiery, figurative, spiritual language.

Hosea 6:5-6;

**5 Therefore I [God] cut you in pieces with my prophets,
I killed you with the words of my mouth;
My judgments flashed like lightning upon you.**

**6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."**

Remember, Jesus said: John 16:25, Jesus;

"...I have been speaking figuratively,...",

But many Christians have been lead astray and taught to read scripture in literal terms only. Ironically, they ignore Jesus' literal words that he spoke figuratively. These people are the ones Paul referred to in the next verse...
1 Corinthians 2:14, Paul;

**"The man without the Spirit
does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God,
for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,
because they are spiritually discerned."**

The previous passages indicate much of Jesus' gospel (including in Revelation where he spoke with John) is likely meant figuratively, not literally. Note also in Matthew 13:42 on the previous page evil people thrown into the "fiery furnace" are still alive. They may be suffering, weeping, and gnashing their teeth, but they're not turned into charcoal. Why choose to read it literally if it doesn't make sense that way? Figurative, spiritual, logical reading of prophecy permits a much more gentle fulfillment of Armageddon through repentance. Christ's gospel requires Christians to support the merciful option, not the gory one.

In reality, this is a core test of salvation. It clearly exposes the desire of our hearts—whether it's Christ-like love and mercy for others, or satan's choice of death and condemnation for God's children. According to Jesus, Old Testament prophecy is also subject to this rule...John 5:19;

John 5:19, Jesus; ... **"I tell you the truth,
the Son [meaning himself]...can do only what he sees his Father doing,
because whatever the Father does the Son also does."**

If the Father didn't use figurative language, neither would Jesus. Note clearly—in spiritual, figurative, holy scripture God "kills" us with words—not bombs. Now, a word from Peter about repentance--figurative destruction.
2 Peter 3:8;

**8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends:
With the Lord a day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are like a day."**

**9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.
He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,
but everyone to come to repentance."**

In verse 8 Peter reminds us of God's figurative use of time, and in verse 9, he tells us figurative, spiritual words are meant to guide us to repentance.

There are many forms of repentance needed in the world today. If we change our course to a godly path, we "destroy" the ungodly road to destruction we've been traveling. In this way we can fulfill Doomsday prophecies in the peaceful, figurative, manner God desires. Following are two more prophecies in figurative language which literalists distort into a savage spectacle of "death and gore", i.e., "Left Behind" theology where they're "saved" and everyone else dies...

Spiritual "Metal", "Elements", and "Grass"

2 Peter 3:10-13;

**10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.
The heavens will disappear with a roar;
the elements will be destroyed by fire,
and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.**

**11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way,
what kind of people ought you to be?
You ought to live holy and godly lives**

**12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.
That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire,
and the elements will melt in the heat.**

**13 But in keeping with his promise
we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth,
the home of righteousness."**

Here are spiritual, figurative definitions for "metal" and "elements".
Jeremiah 6:27-30, God;

**27 "I have made you a tester of metals and my people the ore,
that you may observe and test their ways.**

**28 They are all hardened rebels, going about to slander.
They are bronze and iron; they all act corruptly.**

**29 The bellows blow fiercely to burn away the lead with fire,
but the refining goes on in vain; the wicked are not purged out.**

30 They are called rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them."

Rather than choosing to read the Bible in a way requiring death for others, let's choose life! Let's read the prophecies in a godly way that's compatible with Jesus' gospel of love, not as the murderous final act of Christ's ministry predicted by apostate literalist doomsayers. The following passage means the entire planet must be scorched if read literally, without the Spirit...

Revelation 8:7;

The first angel sounded his trumpet,
and there came hail and fire mixed with blood,
and it was hurled down upon the earth.

**A third of the earth was burned up,
a third of the trees were burned up,
and all the green grass was burned up."**

Now we'll supply figurative, spiritual definitions to "earth", "trees", and "grass", straight out of the Bible:

THE EARTH

Isaiah 11:4, God;

but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked."

[Note how God's "breath" slays "the wicked". The "rod of his mouth", is God's words. It's the iron "sceptre" found elsewhere in the Bible.]

Isaiah 45:22, God;

"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other."

Ezekiel 35:14, God;

This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate."

TREES

Jeremiah 5:14, God;

Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says:

"Because the people have spoken these words,
I will make my words in your mouth a fire
and these people the wood it consumes."

Isaiah 11:10, God;

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;
the nations will rally to him,
and his place of rest will be glorious."

Jeremiah 23:5, God;

"The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."

GRASS

Psalm 90:5-6, Moses;

5 **You sweep men away in the sleep of death;
they are like the new grass of the morning—**

6 **though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered."**

Psalm 103:15-16, David;

15 **As for man, his days are like grass,
he flourishes like a flower of the field;**

16 **the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more."**

Isaiah 40:6-8;

6 **A voice says, "Cry out."**

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

**"All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.**

7 **The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.**

Surely the people are grass.

8 **The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God stands forever."**

"Surely the people are grass." In Revelation 8:7, on the previous page, in the phrase, "**all the green grass was burned up**" "grass" represents people, in this case Muslims. Muslims use the color "green" to represent Islam. Muslims have their own version of Armageddon, too. Muhammad prophesied: Sahih Muslim #6927;

**...Out of a family [*indicating civilians*] of one hundred,
only one man will survive,
so how could he enjoy the booty or divide any inheritance?..."**

If the destruction is meant literally, according to the Bible (Revelation 8 & 9), three quarters of humanity dies alongside Muslims. Looking at the Middle East today, it's easy to see how Revelation's and Muhammad's prophecies could come to pass literally. Thankfully, incinerating the whole planet doesn't please God. He desires mercy and provided us a positive spiritual interpretation. Muslim prophecies may be fulfilled by figuratively "killing" 99% of Muslims. They'll be *figuratively* "burned up" by learning Jesus is Jibreel and they must acknowledge he gave the Qur'an to Muhammad. That's not all. Muhammad also prophesied the Second Coming of Christ...

Sunan Ibn-I-Majah p.386 #4078

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported on the authority of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,
**"The (Last)* Hour will not come until 'Isā, son of Maryam ",
 descends (from heaven)* as a just judge and the just ruler."**

The prophecy declares that Allah's will at the Second Coming is for the entire Muslim community to obey Jesus. By and large, Muslims give lip-service to Jesus being a prophet., but do little or nothing to learn what he preached in the Bible. This, despite Muhammad telling them they must in the following verse. Jesus' expanded role in Islam won't set well with many Muslims, which is why they'll be **"all...burned up"**. Here's the verse that says Muslims must abide by the Bible; Sura 5:68;

SAY: "O people of the Book!

[Muhammad was addressing a crowd of Muslims at the time]

Ye have no ground [in your theology] to stand on,

Until ye observe the Law [Old Testament] and the Evangel,

["Evangel" is the Gospels, which Jesus extended to include the New Testament],

And that which hath been sent down to you [Muslims, Qur'an] from your Lord."

Muslims have a reluctance to employ the Bible, the very foundation of Islam. The Bible sets the context for understanding the Qur'an, This reluctance is only a modern-day manifestation of a condition present before Muhammad was born; Sura 41:2-3, 44;

2 A Book whose verses (signs) are made plain

—an Arabic Koran, for men of knowledge;

3 Announcer of glad tidings and charged with warnings!

But most of them withdraw and hearken not:

4 And they say,

"Our hearts are under shelter from thy teachings,

and in our ears is a deafness,

and between us and thee there is a veil.

Act as thou thinkest right: we verily shall act as we think right."

44 Had We made it a Koran in a foreign tongue,

they had surely said,

"Unless its signs be made clear...!

What! in a foreign tongue? and the people Arabian?"

* Words within parentheses are the translator's, not Muhammad's.

Sura 41 expresses peoples' reluctance to seriously listen to and heed sacred messages delivered to other people. Muslims aren't any different than people of other faiths in this regard. How many Christians have read the Qur'an? How many follow its teachings? So it is with Muslims. Muhammad told them what was coming... Sura 4:157;

**"There shall not be one of the people of the Book
but shall believe in Him [*Jesus*] before his death,
and in the Day of Resurrection, He will be a witness against them."**

Jesus will be a witness against them. For Muslims, this will be the "straw that broke the camel's back", which figuratively "kills" virtually all of them. In chapter 2, "The Many Names of Christ", it was revealed that Jesus Christ is the angel Jibreel (Gabriel). Jesus Christ, who is downplayed by Muslims, turns out to be the one chosen by Allāh to present the Qur'an to Muhammad. Sura 2:97;

**Say: "Whoso is the enemy of Gabriel--
For he it is who by God's leave
hath caused *the Koran* to descend on thy heart,
the confirmation of previous revelations, and guidance,
and good tidings to the faithful--"**

Muslims who ignore Sura 5:68 and reject the Bible will not pass this test, because evidence Jesus Christ is Jibreel (Gabriel) is found in the Bible in Daniel, Matthew, and Revelation, not the Qur'an. Unwittingly, by downplaying Jesus' significance, Muslims diminish the importance of the Qur'an itself! Allah swt knows how to make the finest tests! But, Christians make the same mistake. They claim to love Jesus, yet they say the Qur'an is the work of the devil. As we now know, Christ as Jibreel (Gabriel) gave the Qur'an to Muhammad. That means they're calling Jesus the devil. Oh my! That's a very bad thing for believers whose salvation rests upon this same person. When Christians accuse Muhammad of being Satan's servant, they tarnish Christ *and* his representative at the same time! Virtually everyone has failed the test. Psalm 14:2-3, David;

**2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.
3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt;
there is no one who does good, not even one."**

We're all in need of mercy. Praise God for arranging virtually all prophecies to be fulfilled peacefully through repentance and peaceful political action.