

What if the World Isn't Destroyed in the End Times?

When individuals study the end-time passages from the Bible, many are drawn to intense verses with images of blood, war and conflict. Since so many are obsessed with the notion of cataclysmic destruction, they readily embrace verses that seemingly foreshadow violence and devastation.

People have always had a difficult time understanding apocalyptic imagery and the way that language was used among the ancients. They don't understand Old Testament symbolism like *"stars falling from the sky."* Many interpret metaphors like this literally instead of seeing them as depictions of changing governments and shifting covenantal realities (Gen. 1:16; Gen. 37:9-11).

While I certainly don't have a problem with the outworking of God's judgment, I want to point out that there are other passages that express a more optimistic ethos.

Undoubtedly one of my favorites is the following verse from Hosea. Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophet boldly affirmed the following:

"Afterward the children of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come in fear to the Lord and to His goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3:5).

I don't know about you, but I'm thrilled with the idea of coming into God's blessings in the *"last days."* I never imagined that the fullness of time would be a season of great abundance and joy. I get so incredibly excited about that!

Another passage I've reflected on is Isaiah 2:2-4. Here this

prophet also confirms that the “last days” will be an era of international peace and worship. According to this passage, the culmination of time won’t be filled with guns and war. It will be a wonderful season of grace and love:

“In the last days, the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall go and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more” (Is. 2:2-4).

Swords being hammered into plowshares is some rather comforting imagery, don’t you think? Why aren’t we talking more about that?

What would happen if the North American church began to more actively reflect on hopeful passages such as these? Might outsiders be more interested in what’s being offering? I know many have heard messages about disaster, but I don’t think anyone has ever told them about God’s heart for restoration.

I might be wrong, but I’m convinced that the masses are eagerly waiting to hear about the Lord’s blessing. What would transpire if we changed our tone? Would people respond differently if we actually offered them hope?

It is amazing to imagine what could happen if the church finally decided to preach “Good News” to the nations. {eoa}

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