



discover rescue

*Uncover the epic rescue plan for planet earth
and how we can be part of the rescue*

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Hardly a year passes without another end-of-the-world film of one sort or another, such as - *2012*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Dr Strangelove*, *The Road*, *Miracle Mile*, *War of the Worlds*, *I am Legend*, *Twelve Monkeys*, not to mention the *Left Behind* series.

Why? Is it fear because we now have the capability to annihilate ourselves, even accidentally?

THE SCIENCE AND THE END

Dr. Stephen Hawking - who holds the chair at Cambridge University in England that Isaac Newton once held, and is considered the greatest scientific mind since Einstein - has warned about the ultimate destruction of life on earth. One of his biggest fears, he said, is global warming. Meeting with college students in China, Dr. Hawking warned that our planet *might end up like Venus, at 250 degrees centigrade and raining sulphuric acid.*

In 2010, he said, *Life on Earth is at the ever-increasing risk of being wiped out by a disaster such as sudden global warming, nuclear war, a genetically engineered virus or other dangers. ... I think the human race has no future if it doesn't go into space.*

Foreign Policy - a prestigious journal of international politics - ran an article called *The End of the World*. The article began like this: *While the apocalypse is pretty unlikely to come in 2012, it does have to happen sooner or later. Here are five possible scenarios for the end of the world.*

The top five were:

1. Asteroids
2. Climate disaster
3. Nuclear War
4. Plague
5. The Unknown Unknown - something we haven't yet thought about but that could, indeed, kill us all.

Once the *End of the World* theme was a religious topic. Today, it's a scientific dogma - offering little hope.

OUR OWN END

Even if we forget about anything as big and dramatic as the end of all life on Earth, we always live with the spectre of the end of our own life on earth, or the life of those we love. And this is an ending that, as we know, can come at any moment, an ending that we can't avoid. Death is, surely, a case of not if but when.

And most of us, and with good reason too, find that thought greatly disconcerting. Even though we all know that we are going to die, we try not to think about it too much. As difficult as life can be now, dwelling on our death would, no doubt, make it that much worse.

THE DILEMMA OF BRYAN MAGEE

Bryan Magee taught philosophy at Oxford. He had been a Member of the British Parliament, a successful music and theatre critic, an author, and

a professional radio and TV broadcaster. By his own admission, his life was great.

One slight problem: ... *in the middle of it all I was overwhelmed, almost literally so, by a sense of mortality. The realisation hit me like a demolition crane that I was inevitably going to die. ... Death, my death, the literal destruction of me, was totally inevitable, and had been from the very instant of my conception. Nothing that I could ever do, now or at any other time, could make any difference to that, nor could it ever have done so at any moment in my life.*

Magee wrote eloquently about his struggle with meaninglessness - the realisation that no matter what he did, or all the success he had, whether he wrote great books, or became Foreign Secretary, whether he married or not, whatever - *none of it would make the slightest difference to me or to anyone else when all of us were nothing, as everyone was going to be, including everyone not yet born; that it could therefore make no difference when I died, and would have made no difference if I had never been born; that I was in any event going to be for all eternity what I would have been if I had never been born; that there was no meaning in any of it, no point in any of it; and that in the end everything was nothing.*

Toward the end of the book *Confessions of a Philosopher*, he wrote that, after all these years of seeking, *I am as baffled now by the larger metaphysical questions of my existence as I was when I was a child - indeed more so, because my understanding of the depths and difficulties of the questions themselves is now so much greater.*

Not surprising either, because the one place - the only place - that has the answers he was looking for, was the one place that Bryan Magee rejected, and that was - faith.

WHAT CAN WE HOPE?

If we deny the epic struggle of good against evil, involving forces seen and unseen, in which we find ourselves, or if we buy the idea of naturalism that assumes all there is to reality is the physical, material, natural world - then there is no logical or reasonable conclusion to come to other than what Hawking and Magee expressed.

We have seen that violence, sickness, suffering and death - the very things that make life here so hard - are not what God planned. All this is fallout from the cosmic battle - a battle in which, through no choice of our own, we are all involved. It's a conflict, though, that God promises to bring to an end.

The only real choice we have is whose side we choose to be on. Neutrality, by default, puts you on the wrong side, the side whose ultimate demise has already been made certain.

Amid all this, we have also made an amazing and incredible claim. We said that Jesus, though the Creator of the Universe, came down, took upon Himself our humanity, and bore in Himself the full brunt of all the evil in the world.

Look at these texts:



Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of

death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:5-9

His victory on the cross - and what may seem like a defeat - was in fact the pivotal victory that will liberate the world.

However amazing this claim is, one big problem remains - we're still here amid this great controversy. Sure, it's great that Jesus died for us, but how do we cash that in? What great hope does it offer for us in a world that ultimately offers us nothing but pain, disappointment, suffering and death?

The answer is simple - the Second Coming of Jesus - the promise that, indeed, this world as we know it is going to end.

Science, even Hollywood, have it right. This world will end for sure. It's just not going to end the way that they say it will. Instead, there is hope - this world, as we know it, will end with the Second Coming of Jesus.

THE PROMISES

The New Testament refers over and over to the Second Coming of Jesus. One scholar estimated that one out of every thirty verses in the New Testament talks about Jesus' return.

What are some of these promises?

Just before His death, Jesus said to His disciples:



Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.

John 14:1-4

I - will - come - again. How simple, clear and encouraging is that!

After Jesus was taken up to heaven in the sight of His followers, two angels appeared to them and said:



Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

Act 1:11

... in like manner. You saw Him go to heaven - you'll see Him return from heaven.

The apostle Paul believed in Christ's return:



Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1Thessalonians 5:23

Here he is again:



For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

1Thessalonians 2:19

Again:



We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:12-13

And again:



Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

These are just a few of the many texts that speak unambiguously about the Second Coming of Jesus. It's, in fact, hard to make sense of the New Testament, or even the Bible as a whole, without it. That's how important this promise is to the entire Christian faith.

THE FIRST COMING

Indeed, not only do we have this promise, we have great reasons for believing it too. And, without question, one of the greatest reasons to trust the promise of the Second Coming is the first coming.

What does that mean?

Here's what the Bible says:



... the Son of Man (a name for Jesus) **did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**

Matthew 20:28



For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

According to these verses, Jesus came to give His life as a *ransom*. A ransom is a payment for something that you want, something that you are willing to pay a price for.

Imagine a child is kidnapped, held for ransom. The parents pay the ransom - a great sum of money - but then don't come and retrieve the child they paid the ransom for. That's kind of ridiculous isn't it?

In the same way, only so much more, who can imagine Jesus coming the first time, paying a ransom for us, and not coming back to get what cost Him so much?

Here's what Peter writes, showing the cost of our redemption:



... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

1 Peter 1:18-19

We were redeemed by the *precious blood of Christ*. The idea of redeemed carries with it the same idea as *ransomed*. Christ paid for our redemption with His own life - that is what the cross was about. That's why He died. What could be more ludicrous then, for Him to have done that, to pay such a great price, and yet not come back and get what had cost Him so much?

And that is what the Second Coming is - Jesus returning to get what He Himself had paid for at His first coming. The main purpose of the first coming was to pay the ransom for sin. The ransom paid in full prepared the way for the Second. What Jesus accomplished at His first coming will not be fully realised until His Second Coming. If Jesus doesn't come back, then everything He did at the first coming - His incarnation into human flesh, His sinless life, and His death - all becomes a waste, nothing more.

Thus, just as we are absolutely sure that Jesus died for our sins at the cross - that He paid the ransom for us - we can be absolutely sure that He will return. The surety of the first coming is our guarantee of the Second, a guarantee *sealed in the precious blood of Christ*. Peter 1:19

Someone once paid 104 million dollars for a Picasso from the famous Sotheby's in London. One hundred and four million dollars! Now, could you imagine whoever paid that money not coming to get what cost so much? And yet, are we not worth more than a painting to God? Our worth can be seen in what was paid in order to ransom us.

That's why Jesus is coming back, and that's why we can be certain about it too.

LEFT BEHIND

Jesus will return. That's a guarantee. The question, however, remains: *What will happen when He does? What will it be like? What will happen to us, each of us individually, when He does?*

Years ago, a popular set of books was made into movies - *The Left Behind* series. The series depicts the Second Coming of Jesus as a secret event in which faithful Christians are quietly taken to heaven. Those left behind are wondering where their loved ones have gone.

The Bible, however, gives a radically different depiction of the Second Coming. As you read the texts, ask yourself what kind of event is being depicted - something secret and quiet, or something very public and open?



For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Mathew 24:27



Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him.

Revelation 1:7



For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1Thessalonians 4:16-17

These few texts alone reveal that, whatever else we should believe about Jesus' Second Coming, it's not a secret and quiet event. On the contrary - read those texts again. Christ's return will be like lightning across the sky. Every eye shall see Him. Even more unmistakably, the dead in Christ shall be raised. All of Christ's faithful followers from the beginning of the world - those *dead in Christ* - will be brought back to life in physical bodies - certainly an event that one can't miss, especially when it says that those who are alive when He comes will be taken up in the air with Him. This is going to be a one-of-a-kind, world-shattering blowout of epic proportions, with nothing ever the same again!

With all due respect, the Second Coming, as depicted in these verses, is not the event so imaginatively scripted in the *Left Behind* series. It's not even close.

THE LAST ENEMY

Here's Paul, with more about the events at the Second Coming:



Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15: 51-53

The dead in Christ shall rise. Corruption shall - must - put on incorruption. Mortality shall - must - put on immortality. The point here, and we shouldn't miss this, is that - according to the Bible, death does not have

the last word. Death is not the end. Instead, one day death itself will be destroyed.



The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:26

The movies and the scientists are right. This world will not last forever. On the contrary.



But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

2 Peter 3:10

If that doesn't sound as if this world will be toast, what does?

And notice, He comes like a thief - not quietly like a thief - but unexpectedly like a thief. That's because no one knows when He will return. *But of that day and hour no one knows ...* Matthew 24:36

And, in a sense, Hawking was correct too when he said that we need to get off the planet in order to survive. But rocket ships blasting off into space aren't going to do the trick.

The solace, the comfort, the hope, is found in Jesus, and in the promise of His return - a promise made certain by His first coming.

In the epic struggle between good and evil - this great controversy - the second coming of Jesus is a pivotal point. Planet earth will never be the same again. There are those who point to the pain and suffering in the world and ask: *If this God is a God of love, why doesn't he do something about all the pain and suffering?* It's a good question. The good news is

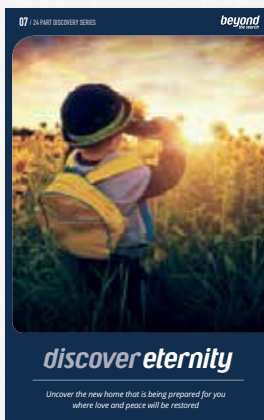
He will; and His Second Coming is when the clean-up begins. He comes to end all that's wrong and establish all that is good and right.

Now that's a hope worth living for.

And this is where the epic story becomes personal. How should we live now in anticipation of that event? How can we prepare? It's our choice where we will stand at that time.



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*Uncover the plans for our new home
where love, peace and security will be restored*

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