



discover restoration

*Uncover the epic plan that overthrows death
and assures us that death does not have the last word*

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Years ago, a Harvard biologist went to Haiti to investigate the phenomenon of, believe it or not - zombies!

Zombies? Like in the movies, such as *American Zombie*, *Swamp Zombies*, *Tokyo Zombie*, *Zombies Gone Wild*, *Vampires v. Zombies*, and so forth?

Not exactly - but closer than most of us might have thought.

Though a lot of myth and folklore in Haiti exists regarding zombies, there might also be something to them. In the 1980's, E. Wade Davis, an ethnobiologist, investigated the many reported sightings of zombies, people who had apparently died but then were reported to have later been seen alive. The most famous case was that of Mr. Clairvius Narcisse, who had been pronounced dead at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Deschapelles, but then turned up alive and well 18 years later, claiming to be an escaped zombie - or a *nzambi* - as zombies are called there.

What Wade claims to have discovered is that people are given a very powerful drug, extracted from the deadly puffer fish, that in just the right amount - too much leads to death - can make them appear dead, even to physicians. These people are buried, then quickly excavated, revived, and kept under drugs as slaves in a vast underground secret society known as the Bizango sect.

There's even a word for this - Zombification.

COMRADE LENIN

After the founder of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Lenin, died, some leaders - having a magical faith in the power of science - wanted to embalm Lenin, believing that eventually through Soviet science he would be brought back to life. The first key to this eventual resurrection was preserving the body. Despite their best efforts, though, the corpse kept decaying, and only by intensive work and constant attention was it preserved. Many claim much of it is just wax.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, some wanted him buried and done with. Others from the older generation wanted to keep him on display, which he still is. However, Lenin requires a lot of work. The corpse gets an extreme makeover every year and a half. The mausoleum is closed for two months, and the body is immersed in a bath of glycerol and potassium acetate for 30 days. Though it's said that Lenin now looks younger than he did for decades, no one is talking any more about him being resurrected.

Whether the context is supposed zombies, or the scientific resurrection of Comrade Lenin, there's no question that, as human beings, we live with the spectre of death. No matter who we are, how much money, position, or power we have, none of us are immune to death, which sooner or later always wins, despite our best efforts.

Thus, part of our own story, our own journey, is dealing with death. Not just the prospect of our own, which is bad enough, but with the death that we see all around us, the death that touches us, the death that scares us, that threatens us - and that is so hard to understand.

What we do understand, though, is that we are in the midst of a great controversy, a real battle between good and evil. And we have seen that sickness, suffering, and death are all part of this struggle.

At the same time, we have repeated the central claim of Christianity, which is 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, in order to finally end that evil once and for all.

And one of the most central of all evils is death. Hence the promise:



The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:26

But, until then, we have to live with death, the most alien of intruders for beings such as ourselves who were never meant to die to begin with.

DEATH AS A SLEEP

As we have seen, contrary to popular notions, death for the Christian does not lead to an immediate soaring off to heaven. Instead:



The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

Psalm 115:17



For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.

Ecclesiastes 9:5



His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalm 146:4 KJV

These are just a few of many texts that show the dead are asleep, in an unconscious state.

However, is not this idea of death as an unconscious sleep similar to what atheists and secularists believe? What hope can we have if that is the fate of the dead?

RESURRECTION

In the last century, a man named Edmond Gurney lost three sisters in a boating accident on the Nile. Afterwards, he became obsessed with death, and realised that if death ended everything, life itself was hopeless and not worth living. He wrote: *... if I found in myself and all around me an absolute conviction that the individual ceased with the death of the body ... I should desire ... the immediate extinction of the race.*

Though a bit over the top, he still had a point, which is the pointlessness of this life were it to end permanently at death, and there was nothing more. God's promise, however, is that death is not the end, and that the grave does not have the final say. As we have seen already, Jesus came to give us eternal life:



For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Eternal life - that is something radically different from the sleep in the grave. If the grave were the end of the story, then Hitler's end was no different from that of Mother Teresa's, and what kind of justice would that be?

Instead, as we have seen, the grave is only a temporary stop - a rest - until the Second Coming of Jesus, when those who have died in Him receive immortal bodies in a whole new existence.

Look at these texts, and especially look at what they promise.



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 verses are talking about the resurrection of the dead in Christ, which happens at the Second Coming of Jesus. As we also said before - for the dead, the moment they close their eyes, the next thing that they will know is the return of Jesus and the gift of eternal life.

In fact, as far as the dead are concerned, there is no delay in the Second Coming. Whether for Adam, who died thousands of years ago, or someone who dies a day before Jesus comes back, it's all the same. The promise of eternal life, as far as their own personal experience goes, comes instantly!

No wonder Jesus could say almost two thousand years ago:



And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

Revelation 22:12



He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20

And that's because, for all of us, the Second Coming of Christ is no longer than our own individual personal lifetimes. The Second Coming, and the resurrection of the righteous dead, is really never but a moment longer than our own span of existence here. No matter how long we live, we close our eyes in death, and as far as we are concerned, Jesus Christ returns a moment later.

As far as the dead are concerned, then, the Second Coming is instant. It's we - the living - we are the ones who are still waiting for it. But even then, especially considering how quickly our life passes by, the Second Coming isn't delayed at all. Thus, Jesus' words about how *quickly* He is coming ...

THE MESSAGE OF THE STARS

Look at these texts:



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. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54

What these verses are teaching is something radically different from what science, rationality, and our own experience say to us. Those dead for thousands of years will be resurrected, *changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye* - given immortal bodies?

In this context, the following text in Hebrews becomes especially pertinent:



Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

Of course, we have to *hope* for the resurrection. It's our only hope. Without it, we are no different than road-kill as far as our eternal destiny goes. And yet, at the same time, the resurrection is something that we have not seen or experienced, and something that goes powerfully against what modern science tells us.

That's all true, but we have been given reasons to believe in it anyway.

Firstly, the Bible tells us that it will happen, and if we trust the Bible then we can trust in this promise.

Secondly, a young man had become a new Christian and came to understand that the dead sleep until the first resurrection when they will be raised from death and given immortality. But, having been a secularist,

he found it hard to believe in something so incredible, something so far beyond anything science or experience had ever shown him.

One day he walked into a bookstore and picked up a science magazine. It had a photo of a galaxy, and it said that there were hundreds of billions of such galaxies, and that each galaxy contained hundreds of billions of stars.

At that moment, his wavering about the resurrection vanished. The existence of billions and billions of stars - much more than the number of people who ever lived on earth - though not proving the resurrection of the dead, proved only that God had power and potential so much greater than the human mind could imagine. If God could create all these stars and sustain them, the young man thought, then certainly He had the power to resurrect the dead!

Though probably not what the Psalmist was thinking, these verses become relevant here:



The heavens declare the glory of God.

Psalm 19:1

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

And finally, we have the resurrection of Jesus. As we have studied, there is powerful evidence for His resurrection. In fact, His resurrection is really the only logical and sensible explanation for the events that followed His death. And, according to Paul, the reality of His resurrection is what gives us the assurance of our resurrection.



But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is

empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:13-20

Paul calls Jesus the *firstfruits of them who have fallen asleep*. That is, Christ was resurrected before we will be, hence the *firstfruits* - the first part of a harvest offered to the Lord. And in the certainty of His resurrection, we have the certainty of ours.

THE SECOND RESURRECTION

Because the dead sleep, the great hope for believers in Christ is found in their bodily resurrection, which happens at the Second Coming. This is what the Bible calls the first resurrection.



Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:6

But another resurrection comes later. We have studied the Millennium, and saw that this thousand years begins with the Second Coming, when the righteous dead are resurrected and brought to heaven, where *they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years*. And, as we saw, for those same thousand years the earth sits desolate and empty of human life.

However, that isn't the end of the story.

Look at these verses:



But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. ... Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

Revelation 20:5,7-9

Firstly, it says that *the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished*. Who are these *rest of the dead*? They are those who weren't in the first resurrection. That is, they are the lost, those who did not accept the gift of eternal life in Jesus, those who chose to do it their own way.

Next it says that they did *not live again* until the thousand years ended. Considering the state of the dead, this can only mean that they slept in the grave until they were resurrected at the end of the thousand years.

They are not in hell fire or limbo or anywhere else - they sleep the sleep of death till they are awakened by the great Life-giver. This is the resurrection of condemnation that Jesus talked about.



Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

John 5:28-29

These are two different resurrections, but as far as the lost dead are concerned, this resurrection will seem - as with the saved - to come the moment after death, because there is no consciousness of time in death.

GOG AND MAGOG

These above texts in Revelation also talk about Satan being released from his prison - that is, as we saw, the desolated earth - after the thousand years. He then sets out *to deceive the nations*, and again we see the great deceiver at work. These *nations* are the lost, those who have been resurrected after the thousand years end. Thus Satan is released from prison at the same time the lost are raised from the dead. The number of these people is depicted *as the sands of the sea*. They are also called *Gog and Magog* - an Old Testament symbol of rebellion against God. See Ezekiel 38.

What do they do? The texts say that Satan, deceiving them as he had done while they lived before, gathered *them together to battle against the camp*

of the saints and the beloved city. This must be referring to the heavenly Jerusalem, shown as coming down to the earth:



Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Revelation 21:1-3

Satan leads these hordes in an attack against God and His people in the New Jerusalem, one final assault in the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

What happens?



... and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

Revelation 20:9

This same idea is captured, in different imagery, in these texts, which come a few verses later:



Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:14-15

There is much more to study, and we will flesh this out more in the next booklet. What the Word of God shows us here, though, is a final judgment that will bring to an end, once and for all, the great controversy. Indeed, right after the depiction of the heavenly Jerusalem coming down, which is then attacked by Satan and the lost, we are given these words - words that clearly imply the final resolution of all that we have all gone through - words filled with hope for beings like us who have known only sin and death and the tears they bring:



***And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes;
there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.
There shall be no more pain, for the former things have
passed away.***

Revelation 21:4



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