

A dramatic photograph of a dark cave interior. A large, jagged opening in the rock wall allows bright light to stream in, creating a stark contrast with the surrounding shadows. The light illuminates the rough, textured surfaces of the rock. The overall mood is one of mystery and discovery.

MERE
HOPE

"I'm not afraid of death because I don't believe in it."

John Lennon

“There is no birth, there is no death; there is no coming, there is no going; there is no same, there is no different; there is no permanent self, there is no annihilation. We only think there is.”

Thich Nhat Hanh (Vietnamese Thiền Buddhist monk)

“Death is not the opposite of life, but a part of it.”

Haruki Murakami (Author)

“Death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be because death is very likely the single best invention of life. It is life’s change agent, it clears out the old to make way for the new.”

Steve Jobs

death is **meaningless**

death is **more ultimate** than life

life is less than **meaningless**

If atheism is true, it is far from being good news. Learning that we're alone in the universe, that no one hears or answers our prayers, that humanity is entirely the product of random events, that we have no more intrinsic dignity than non-human and even non-animate clumps of matter, that we face certain annihilation in death, that our sufferings are ultimately pointless, that our lives and loves do not at all matter in a larger sense, that those who commit horrific evils and elude human punishment get away with their crimes scot free — all of this (and much more) is utterly tragic.

Damon Linker

Hope is over-rated. Just get through the day and learn to recognize and appreciate the little things that present themselves, your kid's smile, a good beer, playing your guitar loud on a Saturday afternoon. The future of mankind is really not our concern. I mean we should do what we can to improve the world, but we're nothing more than a blip in cosmic time; without any lasting "meaning." If that's a "hopeless" worldview, oh well. I find it to be a very liberated perspective, I get plenty of satisfaction from it.

Atheist

"We're scared. We're on edge, unable to concentrate. We can't find focus. ... The thought of dying alone with a respiratory sickness is horrifying. The knowledge that this is what is happening to thousands of people right here, right now, is unbearable."

Simon Critchley, *New York Times* (April 11, 2020)

Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, **filling you with vain hopes**. They speak **visions of their own minds**, not from the mouth of the LORD.”

Jeremiah 23:16

When the wicked dies, **his hope will perish**,
and the expectation of wealth perishes too.

Proverbs 11:7

Such are the paths of all who forget God;
the hope of the godless shall perish.

Job 8:13

remember that you were
at that time separated from Christ ...
having no hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:12

...that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

“The reason I never give up hope is because everything is so basically hopeless.”

Anne Lamott (Novelist)

mere /mɪr/ adjective

From Latin *merus*

“pure, unmixed, undiluted ... absolute, entire, perfect ...
without the assistance of any other”

Oxford English Dictionary

THE GOSPEL

That **Christ died** for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that **he was buried**, that **he was raised** on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. **Because I live, you also will live.**

John 14:19

And God raised the Lord
and will also raise us up
by his power.

1 Corinthians 6:14

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead,
some mocked.

Acts 17:32

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead,
how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of
the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:12

And with great power the apostles were **giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**, and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 4:33

And we bring you **the good news** that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children **by raising Jesus**

Acts 13:32–33

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—
more than that, **who was raised**—who is at the right
hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Romans 8:34

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that **God raised him from the dead**, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9

And if Christ has not been raised,
your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

background
CURSE and *death*

According to his great mercy,
he has caused us to be born again...

1 Peter 1:3b

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, **in hope**

Romans 8:18–20

that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 8:21–23

For **in this hope** we were saved. Now **hope** that is seen is not **hope**. For who **hopes** for what he sees? But if we **hope** for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 8:24–25

background
CURSE and *death*

foreground
CHRIST and *resurrection*

...to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus
Christ from the dead

1 Peter 1:3c

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our
Savior and of **Christ Jesus our hope**

1 Timothy 1:1

waiting for **our blessed hope**, the appearing of the glory
of our great **God and Savior Jesus Christ**

Titus 2:13

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end

Hebrews 6:11

to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation **ready to be revealed in the last time.**

1 Peter 1:4–5

If in Christ we have hope **in this life only**,
we are of all people most to be pitied.

1 Corinthians 15:19

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without
wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

foreground
CHRIST and *resurrection*

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MERE
HOPE