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The Second Coming of Christ

Luke 21.25-38

25 Strange things will happen to the sun, moon, and stars. The nations on earth will be afraid of the roaring sea and tides, and they won't know what to do. 26 People will be so frightened that they will faint because of what is happening to the world. Every power in the sky will be shaken. 27 Then the Son of Man will be seen, coming in a cloud with great power and glory. 28 When all of this starts happening, stand up straight and be brave. You will soon be set free. 29 Then Jesus told them a story: When you see a fig tree or any other tree 30 putting out leaves, you know that summer will soon come. 31 So, when you see these things happening, you know that God's kingdom will soon be here. 32 You can be sure that some of the people of this generation will still be alive when all of this takes place. 33 The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will. 34 Don't spend all of your time thinking about eating or drinking or worrying about life. If you do, the final day will suddenly catch you 35 like a trap. That day will surprise everyone on earth. 36 Watch out and keep praying that you can escape all that is going to happen and that the Son of Man will be pleased with you. 37 Jesus taught in the temple each day, and he spent each night on the Mount of Olives. 38 Everyone got up early and came to the temple to hear him teach.

Luke writes[[1]](#footnote-1) of the end of the world.[[2]](#footnote-2) Written 2,000 years ago, it is a long time in human history but when compared to the creation of the universe, some 13.8 billion years ago,[[3]](#footnote-3) in that respect, 2,000 years is *next-to-nothing.*

However, in that 2,000 years since the death and resurrection of Christ, there has been the death of all the disciples, the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews and approximately 500 human wars but still **no** *Second Coming*[[4]](#footnote-4) *of Christ*: **no** new heaven and, **no** new earth.[[5]](#footnote-5)

It seems like a jigsaw puzzle in the wrong box but to put it into perspective we take note of Edwin Hubble and Georges Lemaitre. In 1924, Hubble made two extra-ordinary discoveries: **1.** The Milky Way isn’t the only galaxy but it is said to be billions of them. **2.** The galaxies are constantly moving away from each other and expanding – hence *‘the big bang theory’*.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**FIRST:** *The God of Hope.*

Sin[[7]](#footnote-7) started with Adam – for practical reasons I prefer to use the words *‘moral failure’*.[[8]](#footnote-8) Given a choice to trust God or face the consequences of his own choices – he sinned once and morally failed for the rest of his life:

the flow-on effect is that **all**[[9]](#footnote-9) humans ever since[[10]](#footnote-10) live with *‘failure’*[[11]](#footnote-11) and the consequences of their choices.[[12]](#footnote-12)

An example from biblical history. The prophet Isaiah[[13]](#footnote-13) lived in a pivotal time in history – the second half of the 8th centuryBC which was a time of predatory and vicious Assyrian Kings[[14]](#footnote-14) who uprooted and transplanted whole populations with hideous reprisals for resistance.

As a prophet of God, Isaiah offers the King of Judah a choice[[15]](#footnote-15) between a quiet faith or joining in with desperate military alliances. The King’s decision was to stake all his hope, *not on God*, but on Assyria which drastically failed and exacted a very heavy toll on them.

Isaiah[[16]](#footnote-16) was for a quiet trust in God and speaks assuredly that, *“if it is God who decides the destiny of nations, security is for God to grant and for humans to deserve.”*[[17]](#footnote-17) The later Psalm puts it, **“be still and be assured, I am God.”**[[18]](#footnote-18)

Isaiah[[19]](#footnote-19) describes the future coming of Jesus as the *‘Prince of Peace’* upon which their hope would be soundly based and, at one and the same time, **He will be** no less than the Son of God, but Jesus himself preferring the title, the *‘Son of man’* who bears the sins of the world.[[20]](#footnote-20)

That title *"Son of man"* occurs 81 times in the Greek text of the four gospels and used only in the sayings of Jesus.[[21]](#footnote-21) In Hebrew it appears over 100 times in the Torah.[[22]](#footnote-22) So, just as the title *‘Son of God’* refers to Jesus’ divinity, it is argued that *‘Son of Man’* refers to Jesus’ humanity.

**Second:** ***Peter the Apostle of Hope***

About three years before his death, the apostle Peter, to whom Jesus gave *“the keys of the kingdom of heaven”*[[23]](#footnote-23) wrote his second letter[[24]](#footnote-24) as a kind of *last will and testament* of the hope that christians ***would not*** be swayed by *cynics and scoffers* who scoffed at any hope in the return of Christ after His death on the Cross.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Peter uses strong words against them[[26]](#footnote-26) stating they were, *“bold and willful (and) not afraid to revile against (believers).”*

He describes these cynics as being *”like irrational animals, creatures of instinct … reviling in matters of which they are ignorant … forsaking the right way … and have gone astray”*.

Were they agnostics or atheists?[[27]](#footnote-27)

**Atheists** do not believe in God. Full stop. **Agnostics** can be lost in their diffidence about God and creation – Christ and His coming again! Their urgency of attack from cynical-hostile fear. How ironical is their attack on christians for their irrationality!

The proverbial Spanish idiom of the *‘pot calling the kettle black’*.

From Adam to Christ[[28]](#footnote-28) there was increasing and development in human understanding of the universe that has been, remarkable especially in the 700 years prior to birth.[[29]](#footnote-29)

In **750**BC the [Mayan astronomers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_astronomy) discover an 18.7 year cycle in the rising and setting of the [Moon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon). In **6th century**BC Greece used *this* knowledge to predict [eclipses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eclipse). In **585**BC [Thales of Miletus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thales_of_Miletus) predicts a [solar eclipse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eclipse_of_Thales). In **467**BC [Anaxagoras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaxagoras) correctly explain the [eclipses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eclipse): the Sun as a fiery mass larger than he [Peloponnese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peloponnese) and were the first to explain the Moon reflecting light from the Sun. In **400**BC The Babylonians used the [zodiac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zodiac) to divide the heavens into twelve equal segments of thirty degrees each.

In **387**BC [Plato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato) promotes the idea that everything in the universe moves in harmony and that the Sun, Moon, and planets around Earth move in perfect circles. In **270**BC Aristarchus of Samos, proposes [heliocentrism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heliocentrism) as a better alternative and places the Sun at its centre, with Earth as just one planet orbiting. Then in **240**BC the earliest recorded sighting of [Halley's Comet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halley%27s_Comet) is made by Chinese astronomers. On April 17th **6**BC the Persian [Magi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magi) signified the birth of the Hebrew King – Jesus born two years later.

This was ***all*** science and I wonder if Jesus linked any of it in His teaching about God in the Temple where *“everyone got up early and (went) to … hear him teach.”* Luke adds another tantalising statement, *“he spent each night on the Mount of Olives.”* *Why did he mention that?*

Looking to the end of time, both Luke and Matthew[[30]](#footnote-30) write of solar events affecting the sun, moon, and stars,[[31]](#footnote-31) and Matthew writes of earthly events such as false Christs with false messages appear with the persecution of christians and global conflict.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Luke writes that *“people will be so frightened they will faint because of what is happening to the world … every power in the sky will be shaken*[[33]](#footnote-33)  *then the Son of Man will be seen, coming in a cloud with great power and glory.”*

A sudden and large-scale alteration to our natural habitat to which Jesus comforts, “*The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will not pass away.”*[[34]](#footnote-34)

I commend to you an *easy to read* document prepared by scientists at **NASA** called Global Climate Change, Vital Signs of the Planet[[35]](#footnote-35) and also, from the **National Snow and Ice Data Centre**, that ice coverage on earth appears to have declined from 8m per km2 to 5m per km.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Scientists know that greenhouse gases[[37]](#footnote-37) warms the atmosphere by trapping heat in the troposphere[[38]](#footnote-38) which could have catastophic results.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Christ resurrected from the dead 2,000 years ago, and the long delay in His return, is related to time as it is measured on earth. What does this mean?

**First:** Peter[[40]](#footnote-40) is adamant that 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. ... as you look forward to the day of God.”* **A loving delay.**

**Second**. in the letter to the Hebrews, thought to be written around AD70,[[41]](#footnote-41) the writer[[42]](#footnote-42) stresses the **sacrificial offering of Christ** as priest to God – His role of *King of Kings* is yet to come and those who follow Him should be patient in any suffering in-waiting. **A loving faith.**

**Third**. God is not controlled by time as human are with watches and clocks everywhere. Peter wrote[[43]](#footnote-43) *“… dear friends, do not forget this one thing: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*[[44]](#footnote-44)Again those assuring words of Jesus*, “The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will … ”* [[45]](#footnote-45)

In the Genesis story, humans are created out of the *dust of the ground* – and whilst this may appear to be a *secondary creation* it is a very close and intimate one[[46]](#footnote-46) because humans, are created in the very image of God.[[47]](#footnote-47)

How *good* is that!

On the early pages of Genesis we find that God, by His very nature of love **is** - *creative.* And so the entire universe and all life in it, especially humanity as the mirror image of God, is the very pinnacle of it.[[48]](#footnote-48) [[49]](#footnote-49) And so, God invites His angels, *“let us make man in our image”.* [[50]](#footnote-50)

Genesis, the book of creation, also teaches us ethics[[51]](#footnote-51) and gives an historical explanation of *why* the world came to be: it is not a scientific or complete detailed account of creation[[52]](#footnote-52) but rather, it is a theological hymn of praise for God who put His love into His creation – especially humanity as the mirror-image of Himself.[[53]](#footnote-53)

So, at the fullness of time – when the earth and the planets, stars, moons, and whatever else melt as they burn, we await for a new and everlasting heaven and a new and everlasting earth in which righteousness dwells forever. [[54]](#footnote-54) World without end. Amen

And so what can we make of this list of unimaginable events that cause people to faint with fear and foreboding as the power of the heavens are shaking?

Quite simply the *‘cyclical’* concept of history is where life goes on and on without God in which agnostics and atheists are wallowing, it comes to nothing – Luke does not mention the wallowing but the distress, the perplexity, the fainting, the fear and the foreboding – absolutely everything against life as God designed and created it to be.

The biblical writings teach history as a **‘linear’** movement towards a specific goal: where God is driving history to a loving end – from birth to death and to eternal[[55]](#footnote-55) - transient just like the universe but eternal like God Himself.

CONCLUSION

John on the Isle of Patmos is given “the revelation of Jesus Christ … the first born of the dead … who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom of priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.” …”.[[56]](#footnote-56)

John sees in his vision Christ *“coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him … everyone who pierced him; all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him … his eyes were like a flame of fire (and) his face was like the sun shining in full strength.”* [[57]](#footnote-57)

In a later vision, he writes, *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I heard a great voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold the dwelling of God is with men … they shall be his people[[58]](#footnote-58) and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear … and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying no pain…, for the former things have passed away. And he who sat on the throne said, “Behold I make all things new.” He also said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” [[59]](#footnote-59)*

Jesus spent most of his last hours of life on this earth with his much loved disciples in the Upper Room before giving Himself into the hands of hideous and brutal men of the world.

To the very end, He taught His disciples of the love of the Father for the world[[60]](#footnote-60) and after His death – most of them went on to die extremely unpleasant deaths in their devotion to Him and of His promise for a new world to come.

1. . Luke wrote his gospel in 60AD or late as 90AD. We do not know for sure where it was written but that Luke, an educated man (2 Tim 4.11) and physician (Col 4.14) also wrote the book of Acts. Luke was a close friend of the Apostle Paul and who cared for him in Rome (2 Tim 4.11). Luke gives a comprehensive history of Jesus. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Known as ‘the eschatological discourse’ it basically means ‘last things’. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Scientists do not know the exact age of the universe, but they estimate it to be around 13.7 billion years - give or take a billion years. Astronomers estimate the age of the universe in two ways: (a) by looking for the oldest stars; and (b) by measuring the rate of expansion of the universe and extrapolating back to the Big Bang. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . E. Earle Ellis, American Biblical Research Professor (1926-2010) wrote in 1966 that Jesus predicted *“an indefinite interval before the end.”* Commentary on Luke. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . The kingdom of God involves two great moments: fulfillment within history, and the consummation at the end of history. It is precisely this background which provides the setting for the parables of the Kingdom. A Theology of the New Testament. George Eldon Ladd. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1974, . page 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . Georges Lemaitre used Hubble’s discoveries to deduct that the expanding universe was once contained in a tiny ball that exploxed and fragmented. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . “Sin is the transgression of the law of God; disobedience of the divine will; moral failure.” Karl Menninger, Whatever Became of Sin. Hodder & Stoughton, 1973, p18. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . Genesis 1.31. “And God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good.” Sin entered the world through Adam and Alexander Pope (1668-1774) satarist, in his “Essay on Man”,coined the phrase, “to err is to be human”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . The apostle Paul is matter-of-fact in his letter to the christians at Rome, *“the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law … through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”* Taken from the broader passage in Romans 3.19-26 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . Modern society with many options and choices creates ‘decision fatigue’ which comes from the demands of having to make many decisions. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . The Hebrew for sin is *chet* which means to *‘miss the mark’*, or Greek *harmartia* which means error as in to *‘take the wrong options in life’*. These two words *chet and harmartia* (and several others) are used approminately 1,200 times in the Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . Stress affects the brain: poor and inaccurate judgments from early learning experiences and criticisms, illogical interpretations, lack of contextual intelligence, indecisiveness for fear of failure, orientated to self focused or emotional results [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . Isaiah lived through a pivotal period of Israel’s history – the second half of the eighth century BC, which saw the rise of written prophecy in the work of Amos, Hosea, Micah and himself but also the downfall and disappearance of the greater part of Israel, the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom. Derek Kidner, The New Bible Commentary Revised, IVP, London, 1970, p588. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . This was a time of predatory Kings of Assyria: Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II and Sennacherib who were ruthless in their ambitions for empire. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. . At the time, over 2,700 years ago, the Assyrians exiled these ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel – they might have returned had they not been encircled by the legendary river, the Sambatyou and were assimilated by other people – they disappeared but a belief persisted that one day these ‘lost’ tribes would be found and it would be a “new” time and would be “new in nature” as in better. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. . Isaiah 65.17-20. *"… I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. . Isaiah held the daring view that the best defense is no defense. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. . Psalm 46.10, “Be still and know that I am God.” [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. . Isaiah was best known as the Hebrew prophet who predicted the coming of Jesus Christ to salvage mankind from sin. Isaiah lived about 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. . John 9.35, 12.23, 12.34. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. . For centuries, the [christological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christological) perspective on Son of man ("man" referring to [Adam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam)) has been seen as a possible counterpart to that of [Son of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_of_God). In other words, just as Son of God affirms the divinity of Jesus, the Son of man affirms his humanity. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. . The Torah is the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Torah has central importance in Jewish life, ritual and belief. Some Jews believe that Moses received the Torah from God at Mount Sinai. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. . Matthew 16.19 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. . Commenting on Peter’s second letter, 3.6-14. Michael Green in his Tyndale Commentary, IVP, 1968, p13 writes, “This epistle has had a very rough passage down the centuries. Its entry into the Canon was precarious in the extreme. At the Reformation it was regarded as second-class scripture by Luther, rejected by Erasmus, and regarded with hesitancy by Calvin.” On pp30-33, Green summarises his careful and meticulous study, “The solid worth of 2 Peter, so manifestly superior to anything (against it) I am inclined to maintain its Petrine authorship.” [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. . He also warns the scoffers that the ‘day of the Lord’, would be like a thief in the night. 2 Peter 3.4-10 cf Matthew 24.43. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. . 2 Peter 3.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. . Athiests do not believe in God. Agnostics neither believe nor disbelieve in God but assert it is impossible to know anything about how the universe was created. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. . According to Luke 3.23 there were 76 generations from Adam to Jesus. As summarized with some disappointment by A. Des Vignoles (1649–1744), director of the Academy of Sciences in Berlin, in 1738, “I myself have gathered more than 200 different calculations, of which the shortest counts only 3483 years from the creation of the world to Jesus Christ, and the longest counts 6984”. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. . In this message there is geological informaton which constrains the time-fame for liquid water existing on earth from approximately 3.8 billion years ago. See Encyclopedia of Astrobiology. Springer, Heidelberg. ISBN 9783642278334, pp1-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. . Matthew 24.1-14 concludes with “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached … as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come”. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. . In this topic, there are some puzzling exegetical problems, notably those posed by part of the address seems to apply to the end of the world and part to the destruction of Jerusalem. Leon Morris, Commentary on Luke, Tyndale, IVP, London, 1974, p295. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. . The origin of water on Earth is the subject of research in the fields of [planetary science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planetary_science), [astronomy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astronomy), and [astrobiology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrobiology). [Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) is unique among the [rocky planets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrestrial_planet) in the [Solar System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_System) in that it is the only planet known to have [oceans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ocean) of liquid [water](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water) on its surface which is necessary for life as we know it and continues to exist on the surface of Earth because the planet is at a distance, known as *the*[*habitable zone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitable_zone)where it remains liquid. In 2009, the [University of Münster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_M%C3%BCnster) shows that the molybdenum isotopic composition of the Earth's mantle originates from the outer Solar System, likely having brought water to Earth. The explanation is that [Theia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theia_(planet)), the planet said to be involved in the [giant-impact hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant-impact_hypothesis) collided with Earth 4.5 billion years ago and forming the [Moon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon), may have originated in the outer Solar System rather than in the inner Solar System, bringing water and carbon-based materials with it. https://science.jpl.nasa.gov [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. . 2 Peter 3.10. “the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth … will be burned up.” [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. . Luke 21.33. Leon Morris writes it was “the only time Jesus addresses him as *Peter*. DW. ..underlining his tenderness of assurance to a normally brash Peter? [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. . Webpage can be downloaded from https://climate.nasa.gov [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. . According to the *National Snow and Ice Data Centre*, "since 1979, winter Arctic ice has decreased about 4.2 percent per decade". The overall average ice coverage appears to have declined from 8 million km2 to 5 million km2. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. . The Industrial Revolution was the transition to new manufacturing processes in Britain, continental Europe and the United States between 1760 to 1840 and so on.

    Greenhouse Gases that warm the atmosphere are generally, cardon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and certain synthetic chemicals. Epa.gov/report-environment/ecological-condition. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. . The troposphere is the lowest of four layers, extending from the surface of the earth to a global average height of 12 km. The term aptly describes the extensive vertical mixing and stability changes of this layer - commonly referred to as the weather sphere. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. . See bbc.com/news/science – environment – 12378934. Antarctia has fossilised forests estimated to exist 100million years ago in the “age of the dinosaus”. Professor Jane Francis of the University of Leeds has spent 10 field seasons in Antarctia and believes it has not always been a frozen wilderness with the ice caps arriving in more recent times but was once covered with “lust rainforests similar to those that exist in New Zealand today. Royal Holloway. Howard Falcon-Lang, London 8th February 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. . Chapter 3, verse 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. . No mention is made of the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD or of the persecution of Nero would give it earlier in AD64 to 68, however, some scholars preferred a later date of

    AD80-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. . It is not known who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews and within, it gives no indication of the location or identity of the readers – it is believed to have been written to Jewish christians to warn them of apostasy. Writers has been attributed to Paul as suggested by Jerome and Augustine; Thomas Aquinas and Calvin suggested Luke and others have suggested Barnabas, Apollos and others have suggested Aquilla and Priscilla – the latter being dominant. All fail for various reasons, not the least, is the late suggestions made in the third century. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. . 2 Peter 3.8. New International Version. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. . The Bible stresses not the abstract continuity of time but rather the God-given content of certain moments of history – linear as distinct from cyclical. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. . Hebrews 11.3 writes that *”the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which do not appear.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. . Ephesians 4.4-6. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you are called to one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, on God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christs’ gift. The work of creation and the redemption of man are both hidden **from** man and attributed to all three persons on the trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. . God's purposes for creation is to reveal His nature and so humanity’s living and use of creation must promote rather than to compromise Him. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. .The words “cosmos” and “universe” are used synonymously as they refer to the same concept which is the world or nature. ... “Cosmos” is a whole harmonious and orderly system that is governed by natural law while “universe” is everything that exists including time and space, matter, and the laws that govern them. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. . Also the stunning arrangement of animals, birds, fish and the many luminaries and, indeed, the very universe which, in all probability, is stunning to all scientists. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. . The Old Testament implies that angels were the joyful witnesses of, though not necessarily active participants in God’s act of creation. Job 38.7. In the New Testament they are closely associated with the giving of the law – Acts 7.53, Gal 3.19, Hebrews 2.2, and it is not inconsistent that they should be coupled with final judgement – Matt 16.27, Mark 8.38; 13.27; Luke 12.8f; 2 Thess 1:7 etc. It may be their special task to carry the righteous dead into Abraham’s bosom – Luke 16.22f. Little is attempted by way of direct description of the angelic form. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. . The world is not run by a set of capricious a-moral deities for their own benefit, but by one Holy and Righteous God who controls all things good and desires the good of His supreme creation, man. Genesis 1 is not so much a scientific or historical. explanation of how the world came to be or how it will end but a theological hymn of praise to the Creator for His bounty bestowed on mankind. As to the end, Jesus says, “be brave” [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. . The size and complexity of the universe is beyond the imaginings of the ancient generations, yet they worshipped and adored the creator of the little world they knew. How much more should modern man be awestruck by the wisdom and power of God who can create and sustain the universe revealed by modern science, and be amazed by His love for mankind created in the divine image and redeemed by grace. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. . New Bible Dictionary, Third Edition, IVP, Nottingham, England, *Creation*, p241, 1996. T Jacobsen, H Blocher, G J Wenham, E Beachamp and E C Lucas. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. . Peter’s second letter, 3.12 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. . Mathew Levering, University of Dayton, Linear and Participatory History. A 2011 analysis of the structure of Augustine's City of God. “Building on Augustine's identification of the five parts of his work (in a letter he wrote to Firmus), I suggest that these five parts show Augustine to be undertaking a transformation of pagan understandings of history and its gods. Whereas the Romans worshiped gods who, like the Romans themselves, sought linear-historical goals such as fame and pleasure, Platonic philosophers rejected linear history and sought instead a participatory ascent to the transcendent God. Neither view of history would do for Augustine, who instead offers in the final three parts of City of God a demonstration of the interconnected linear and participatory aspects of history in relation to the Creator God who calls us to eternal life.” http://jstor.org/stable/26421423. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. . Revelation 1.1ff [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. . Revelation 1.4-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. This is clearly in the singular sense. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Revelation 21.1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. . Washing the disciples feet. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)