



Life on Earth

Coming to grips

Youth, health, vitality, relationships, stability, life. When you're 15, you think these are permanent. By 50, you know they are temporary. Part of our success in life comes from recognising what is temporary, and coming to grips with it. The other part of our success comes from recognising what is permanent, and coming to grips with that. The Bible lays out the scenario. This world in its present form is passing away. We are like a mist that vanishes. We are like grass that withers and flowers that fall. But there is an eternal God, and he has provided eternal life. "The world . . . is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity." 1 John 2:17 (MSG).

Coming to an end

What's this world coming to? It's a common question. How do you see it? Do you think the world can heal itself? Do you believe science and education can fix our mess and get humanity to a high level? The Bible's answer is clear—Planet Earth is in a death spiral. What the world is coming to is an end—but a new and better way of life stands ready. God declares a day of reckoning, putting evil on notice. He also declares a day of renewal, putting good on alert. "Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone. . . . 'Look! I'm making everything new. Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate.'" Revelation 21:4, 5 (MSG).

Coming to joy

"This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper." These famous lines are from T S Eliot's poem called *The Hollow Men* (1925). The poem describes the despair that comes from life's emptiness. Despite our enlightenment—our knowledge, technology, high aspirations—humanity can become paralysed in what Eliot calls *the Shadow between the idea and the reality*. What's your stance? Are you living with active compassion for people in "the Shadow"? Are you living out Christ's message of hope? "I go and prepare a place for you," Jesus explained. "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:3 (NIV). This is the way the world ends! It's a message of joy for all in despair.

Coming to truth

I remember seeing a cartoon that showed a bearded man with a microphone, shouting "Don't listen to their nonsense—listen to mine!" What are you listening to? The world is filled with nonsense, but one day it will be filled with truth about Jesus. "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14 (NIV). Before we can preach it, we must know it. Do you know the Good News? Are you personally living it? "Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." John 5:24 (NIV). Now that's worth taking a microphone to proclaim.