

CHILDREN OF MEN



- How plausible was the vision of the future found in *Children of Men*? What made it believable? What kind of emotional impact did this have on you?
- Why do you think the Government is dealing with refugees in such a brutal fashion? What do you think it would take to bring us to such a situation? How does the film echo or refer to our current situation?
- How would you describe Theo's character in the early part of *Children of Men*? What would you say his goal was? What did his goal become? Why?
- *"Everything is a mythical cosmic battle between faith and chance. . . . Theo's faith lost out to chance. So, why bother if life's going to make its own choices?" (Jasper)*
What do you think Jasper means by this? Do you agree with him? Jasper puts the emphasis on the faith itself, not on the object of that faith. What difference does it make to life when it is based on genuine faith in God rather than on faith in political movements or vague spirituality?
- *"At the end I cannot dictate a sense of hope for anybody because a sense of hope is something that's very internal. We wanted the end to be a glimpse of a possibility of hope, for the audience to invest their own sense of hope into that ending. So if you're a hopeful person you'll see a lot of hope and if you're a bleak person you'll see a complete hopelessness at the end."* (Director Alfonso Cuarón)
Do you see hope or hopelessness at the end of *Children of Men*? Why? Where do you see signs of hope in our world? What do you think of the Christian conviction that, ultimately, hope is found in God alone and his promise that Jesus will return again to establish perfect justice and peace?

Children of Men presents a bleak picture of our future. Most disturbing, perhaps, is that such a future doesn't seem that far-fetched. Director Alfonso Cuarón's vision of the year 2027 is eerily familiar to us today—security checkpoints fortify office buildings, war rages incessantly, unwanted refugees are brutally mistreated. In the film, like today, there are places of refuge from the desolation. As a viewer, I let out a sigh of relief when Theo first retreats to Jasper's hidden house in the woods. I'm comforted that such a haven still exists. I think: "Maybe humanity hasn't completely lost all sense of independence, restfulness and joy." I wonder if my own places of freedom and refuge—my house, my relationships, America—will always be available to me? Or will they someday be compromised and viciously violated like Jasper's forest home?

When it comes to hope, I tend to shuffle between both extremes. If I stay busy with day-to-day tasks, avoid the newspaper and stay firmly planted in my comfortable routine, then it's easy to be hopeful by default. But if I really dig deep in my relationships or listen to stories from people around the world or simply notice the sad, tired people I meet every day, then hopelessness starts to creep in. During these moments, I fear that I will wake up one day and the world will be unfixable; we'll be constrained, afraid and sad and no one will be around to help us. All of our safe havens—those places of peace and laughter—will be gone.

But deep down, I know this will never happen. While it's easy to recognize the despair all around me, I also see glimpses of light and hope. I believe in a good, powerful God who passionately cares about our world and promises to never leave us. Wherever there is generosity, love, freedom, peace, truth, or growth, I see God breaking through the darkness and working to make the world whole again. He asks us to help Him in this task—healing our sick world through service and love. Ultimately, we're told that our hope in God will prevail. The world will not be despoiled and destroyed; rather, it will be redeemed and restored. Living out this hope means resting in the confidence that God is currently at work in the world for good. Instead of being filled with anxiety, apathy or desperation, we can "Be strong and take heart [because we] hope in the LORD." (Ps. 31:24)

ABOUT CINEMA & SPIRIT: Damascus Road uses movies as a connection point to discuss spiritually meaningful topics. We enjoy watching movies and processing them together, discovering how God's truth may be revealed through their themes or characters. Since movies are a part of our popular culture, they can be a helpful common ground when discussing spiritual topics. We try to show high-quality, appealing movies about once a month.