

No time to die

by Barry Robinson

Who is your favourite Bond? Like Doctor Who, there have been so many of them, it's getting difficult to choose. Everyone has an opinion, but for me Sean Connery is the quintessential Bond that everyone else has to live up to. He was suave, balancing wry humour and effortless charm with physical prowess and a dynamic magnetism.

Critics have argued that the current Bond, Daniel Craig, is the one who stays true to Ian Fleming's original intent and is the one Fleming himself would have chosen. This may not make him the world's favourite Bond, but maybe it makes him the best. We have, perhaps, only one more film with Craig as Bond in order to make up our minds, as the latest Bond film to be released—*No Time to Die*—is reportedly his last in the role.

No Time to Die is an intriguing title for a film. After all, is there ever a right time to die? That's a question the followers of another hero of mine, Jesus Christ, must have considered when they saw hardened Roman soldiers nail him to a cross. They must have felt that this was no time for their revolutionary leader to die.

There had been other revolutionary zealots before Jesus, like Judas of Galilee who led Jewish resistance to a Roman census for tax purposes in AD6. They had come to nothing, and now there was high expectation that Jesus of Nazareth would be the one who would defeat the Roman occupiers and establish the long-awaited kingdom of God. But instead of defeating Rome, Rome killed what appeared to be just another potential messiah.

Surely this was no time to die if Jesus of Nazareth really was the Messiah Israel had longed for.



His closest followers were distraught and depressed, and giving up on yet another charismatic leader's failed attempt to rescue them, they returned to their former lives. It was all over, or was it? Something happened that changed those early followers of Jesus from being defeated and dejected into people who would boldly claim that Jesus of Nazareth is in fact God's Messiah. But why would they do that, especially when it risked and eventually cost their lives? What made it different this time?

Their own eyewitness testimony is that they saw Jesus alive after his crucifixion, literally raised from the dead, and Jesus himself explained that this was his time to die so he could free them from a greater oppression than Roman occupation: our own death and separation from a God who loves us.

Did Jesus of Nazareth rise from the dead, and is he alive today? If not, there needs to be another plausible explanation for why the fledgling Jesus movement didn't just die out and why millions of people continue to believe he is the risen Saviour. James Bond, whether he is portrayed by Connery or Craig, completes his mission by escaping death. The claim of the worldwide Christian movement is that Jesus Christ completed his mission by dying and coming back to life again. Next Sunday at a nearby church might be a good time to investigate that claim so you can make up your own mind.