

# “She is saved now; I have washed her of all her sins”

*Coping with Death, Grief  
and Cults in The Returned*

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In a beautiful French Alpine town, the dead return to life and attempt to slot back into their old lives. Not knowing they are dead, the returnees, or zombies, struggle to comprehend why they are back and why their families might be anything other than thrilled to see them. This essay will explore interpretations and reimagining's of the Christian faith in *The Returned* (Gobert, 2012–15): from the zombies proving the existence of God, the concept of an afterlife and a representation of the devil himself. I will examine how for some characters in *The Returned*, the zombies are synonymous with the resurrection of Christ, and yet for others the zombies cause a questioning of their faith or to even forgo it altogether and commit the perceived sin of suicide. Racked with grief, those in *The Returned* desperately seek something and someone to believe in. Both the living and the dead look to fellow zombies, Christian members of their community, cult leaders, and even a part-human-part-zombie messiah baby, in their deep need for spiritual guidance. And in doing this, both the living and dead follow their mis-held beliefs to the point of their own demise.

## *Introduction*

Over the two-season run of the Canal+ series *The Returned* (*Les Revenants*, based on the 2004 film of the same name directed by Robin Campillo), the inhabitants of the sleepy Alpine town are repeatedly forced to confront their deep-rooted beliefs and the very nature of life and death. This

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essay will explore the questions that *The Returned* posits around Christian faith, death, sin and suicide. I will examine how for some characters in *The Returned*, the zombies are synonymous with the resurrection of Christ, and yet for others the zombies cause a questioning of their faith or to even forgo it altogether and commit the sin of suicide. *The Returned* makes no pointed attempt to define or interpret Scripture, nor does it detail any historical or contemporary nuance in interpretations of the Bible (Hodkinson 2020, 399), but it does present a faith followed to varying degrees by the townsfolk as synonymous with Christianity. With that in mind, any reference to faith or religious doctrine in my exploration of *The Returned* is intended to follow traditional and generally accepted beliefs and practices of Christianity.

Previous zombie texts have been later interpreted as socio-political commentary, with many allegories remarking on the slave trade, speaking out against the atrocities in the Vietnam War (see Dillard 1987), and the rise of consumer culture in the 1970s (see Harper 2002). Films like *I Walked with A Zombie* (Tourneur 1943), *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero: 1968), and *Dawn of the Dead* (Romero: 1978) respectively, discuss these themes. In more recent zombie narratives, the end of the world took a viral turn, as the fear of societal breakdown at the mercy of deadly viruses and contagion became the central concern. *28 Days Later* (Boyle: 2002), and Zack Snyder's remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) brought rabid zombies sprinting into cinemas, and on television *The Walking Dead* (Darabont: 2010–present) presented a more complex and multifaceted exploration of the collapse of modern society and infrastructure, with discourse around the need for community, and what might happen in America should the fuel run out. Kyle William Bishop's 2010 works explore the zombie narrative as a method to understand the social and political rhetoric of the USA post 9/11. Such large-scale death, says Bishop, forces society to its limits of the definitions of citizenship. Steven Pokonorski (2014) considers *The Walking Dead* and the exploration of ethics within the show, and Angus Nurse (2014) considers *The Walking Dead* as an examination of preventative and responsive policing. For Nurse, zombie narratives expose the tension between those that need protecting, and those that are meant to protect. As the zombie text developed into viral epidemics presented on an epic scale in film (*World War Z*, Forster: 2013), Max Brooks, the author of *World War Z* the novel, pointed to the undead sweeping contemporary popular culture as being a manifestation of a society that has “apocalypse on the brain” (Brooks, qtd in Bishop 2010, 27). For Brooks, the “apocalypse” is defined by war, natural disaster and terrorism. But, what of the zombies in *The Returned*? Unlike the monsters that feature in the zombie texts as described above, the zombies in this series are not (for the most part) visually monstrous. Unlike the infected and vicious undead of Brooks' novel,

the zombies in *The Returned* mirror more closely the thousands of people inexplicably reanimated in Stockholm, in John Ajvide Lindqvist’s 2005 novel, *How to Handle the Undead*. They appear as alive, healthy and importantly, neither rotting nor rabid. The fears and questions that these zombies bring, are located deep within the souls of those that encounter them.

## *Death and Resurrection*

The notion of the undead, the walking corpse, is horrifying on the simple premise that it disrupts and violates the natural order of life and death. Once dead, a body should stay dead, and while death causes grief and pain, that the body has died there is (for those who have faith) hope that the soul leaves the lifeless form and lives on, providing a source of comfort to the bereaved. Of course, we miss the ones that pass way, but the certainty in the process of death is reassuring. Faith in the soul moving on, that a part of a person lives on in the afterlife is the crux of many beliefs, and when this is disrupted, the results are a source of horror. For the people in *The Returned*, when their dead loved ones come back to them, the reaction is at first, one of disbelief and fear. *The Returned* deals with what we might think we want the most—for dead loved ones to come back to us—but *The Returned* shows us the true horror of that situation. When the natural process of death is violated, the results are deeply disturbing. “The undead violate what we consider the most basic tenet of life: that eventually everything dies and departs” (Garrett 2015, 30). The first person to come back from the dead is teenager Camille (Yara Pilartz). One of a set of twins, Camille died in a bus crash that took many of the town’s children’s lives. Upon returning to her family, Camille’s mother Claire (Anne Consigny) is at first confused, then frightened as Camille seems unaware of what has happened. It is only when Camille comes face to face with her twin sister who has grown in the four years that Camille has been dead, is Camille horrified by what she herself has become. Her twin Lena (Jenna Thiam) is terrified by the return of her sister and cannot accept this new truth. The mother Claire had been mourning her daughter and kept a shrine of candles and photographs in the (un)dead girls’ room, hoping that her daughter’s soul was at rest, Claire has her beliefs shattered when Camille returns. While the afterlife, or even heaven, provides succor to those grieving, “there is no obvious empirical evidence for the existence of any afterlife, divine being, or spiritual substance whatsoever” (Modee 2014, 207). The unproven belief that the soul detaches from the body and moves to the next plane of existence, is a “survivalist hypothesis,” it provides a source of hope for the bereaved to cling to (Holden, Greyson and James 2003). If the

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soul leaves, but then the body comes back—like Camille and company—then this simple yet crucial crutch for Claire to lean on, is pulled from underneath her, leaving her unsure of what to believe in.

For some of the towns' inhabitants, the return of (in Season 1) Camille, Victor (Swann Nambotin), Simon (Pierre Perrier), and to a lesser extent Serge (Guillaume Gouix), he was the local serial killer after all, confirms and deepens their faith in God, Christianity and the afterlife. In *The Returned*, the zombies are synonymous with the resurrection of Christ and the power of God to raise people from the dead. God raised Jesus from the dead three days after his crucifixion and that only God can do this forms the foundation of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Christ is for Christians, a promise that God will raise the souls of all after death, that they too will be raised up and saved. That some of the town's dead have been resurrected (returned), for some this proves the power of God, and also heralds the end of times. According to Christianity, the Day of Judgement will see all faithful souls rise up to join God, in *The Returned*, Camille and company rising up from their deaths for some characters heralds the start of this process. Pierre (Jean-Francois Sivadier) in particular, is keen to understand the returnees in an eschatological way, concerned as he is with the judgement of God on his own soul.

Pierre, who runs the Helping Hand center, a Christian man with a troubled past, when encountering the returned Camille, is convinced that this is the work of God. For Pierre she directly reflects the resurrection of Christ. Pierre describes her as a miracle and asks Simon (also returned) if he believes in the resurrection. Camille further mirrors the resurrection of Christ when Frederic and his friend go to Camille's grave. In the New Testament (Matthew 28:1–20; Mark 16:1–20; Luke 24:1–49; and John 20:1–21:25) Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary Mother of James who find no body in Jesus' tomb, Frederic and company find no body in Camille's coffin, instead they find only reservoir water. In this moment, the figure of the zombie shows itself to again disrupt the order of life and death, as the Bible states in Genesis 3:19 that upon death, "thou [shall] return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Camille has not returned to dust, in her place is water, a perversion of what the natural or Christian order should be. For others, the return of Camille makes them question their faith, as in season one only Camille has come back from the bus crash. Teenager Audrey was also on that bus, and she has not returned, causing her parents to angrily ask, why Camille? Why has Camille been resurrected—at the hand of God if only God is capable of such a thing—and not Audrey, why has God forsaken their daughter? While the parents of the dead children in *The Returned* will always feel their grief, to have some of the casualties come back from the dead, to be zombies,

confuses and disturbs them as their hope that their children’s souls are at rest is called into question. The afterlife in of itself is a slippery and vague notion as New Testament scholar Nicholas Thomas Wright (2019) notes that the Bible does not specifically tell us that we may go to heaven, with heaven in fact not even listed as such. Wright notes that heaven as we understand it, and its counterpoint Hell, has been conceptualized from medieval artworks, and not actually directly from the Bible. Garrett explains that “our holy books leave a lot to be desired as authoritative sources of information about the afterlife” (Garrett 2015, 5–6). For *The Returned* then, a belief in an afterlife is already without substance or fact, and so when this already shaky grasp of life after death broken by the zombie return of some but not all of the dead, is disturbing, confusing and ultimately frightening.

The zombies in *The Returned* are comparable to those who have had a near-death experience. Both the zombie and the near-death experience are “paranormal in the sense they are difficult to explain in terms of the currently prevailing reductionistic framework” (Greyson, Holden and Lommel 2012, 445). In Season 1, Pierre is keen to know what Camille has seen in the hope it offers proof to his Christian beliefs, and Camille and Simon discuss what it felt like being dead. Esteban’s parents (a boy who also died on the bus) are very interested in what Camille experienced on the next plane of existence.

When a person has apparently died and returned, [perhaps through successful medical resuscitation], we hope that person might shine a light into the unknown and tell us something that might assuage our anxieties. We hope also to have our faith and belief confirmed [...] if a near death experience confirms what we believe it is believable, if not, it is demonic [Garrett 2015, 21].

Couper stated in *The Lancet* that “association of these events with spiritual beliefs [leads to] a subsequent strengthening of these beliefs” (Couper 2002, 2116). As both Garrett and Couper explain, a near death experience can offer us hope, reassure us that death is not the end, in *The Returned*, the physical death experience can be expanded upon in detail by the walking talking zombies. But Christian belief is tested when those zombies have no answers, or as seen with Esteban’s parents, when a false answer is given, putting too much faith in those that have returned only leads to self-destruction.

## *Suicide and Judgement*

Across the two Seasons of *The Returned*, suicide is a central feature of the narrative, with many of the characters committing suicide or they

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deeply traumatized by the suicide of another. In season one, returnee Simon died by suicide; Mr. Costa jumps off the dam; Adele tried to kill herself; Esteban's parents hang themselves; Julie nearly throws herself out of her window, and the dam engineers find that animals have drowned themselves in the reservoir. Season 2 sees many people approach their own deaths with anticipation and acceptance at the hands of the destructive Circle cult, and Pierre finally succumbs to the suicide he should have committed years before. Such a high frequency of suicide in *The Returned* demands a close examination of the connections and ramifications of the zombie to such destructive behavior. In keeping with the theme of this collection, the connections between suicide and the zombie should be approached through first looking at what the Bible and Christianity teaches about the act. Suicide features in the Bible and commonality tells us that in the Christian faith suicide is a mortal sin and that those that die by their own hand are violating God's law. There has been for centuries, a clear discordancy between what was being interpreted from Scripture, what was being practiced by the clergy, and what the common person believed. Even in Medieval times it was understood to an extent that suicide was the result of a disturbance of the mind, with clergy often treating those with suicidal thoughts (*Christian Medical Fellowship*). According to Catechism, points 2281 and 2325 state that "Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life, and that It is forbidden by the fifth commandment" (Smedes 2000). However, there are many interpretations of both events in the Bible and of later teachings. The fifth commandment states that Thou Shalt Not Kill, which Saint Augustine in 350–430 CE interpreted to also mean that one should not kill oneself, in doing so, a person has therefore committed a mortal sin—a direct violation of the fifth commandment—and so therefore would be doomed to be judged on such. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* stated three main Christian objections to the taking of one's own life. The first violated natural law, as everything and every being naturally keeps itself alive. The second violated moral law, as the act of suicide is an injury to family and community. The third, was a violation of divine law because of the fifth commandment. According to Aquinas, suicide was worse than murder, as a murder victim's soul would still rest with Christ. Because a person who committed suicide was in direct violation of God's law and so therefore to be judged, a suicide kills the person, and it kills the soul (*Christian Medical Fellowship*). The Enlightenment brought with it an understanding of psychiatry, and notions of poor mental health, views on suicide were relaxed, yet there are still strong views held inside the Greek, Roman and Russian Orthodox Church (Retterstøl and Ekeberg 2009). Despite the relaxation of the Christian Church's view on suicide it remains a grey area

for eschatological debate regarding the possibility of the act as a sin as it rejects God’s sovereignty, therefore asserting dominion over God’s gift of life to the world. While the Christian Church’s views on suicide are more forgiving in contemporary times, the depictions of suicidal actions in *The Returned* shift from an accepted orthodoxy to a heterodoxy, where the act of killing oneself is not regarded with the same potentially damning ramifications that more traditional Christian teachings might suggest.

In the examples of suicide in the Bible,<sup>1</sup> the people were spiritually bankrupt, and all were wicked and deserved their deaths (*Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission* 2014). Therefore, the zombies in *The Returned* have disrupted the order to such an extent that characters (as listed above) still make attempts on their own life despite the spiritual risks. The characters are so tormented with pain through their grief that their faith no longer protects them from themselves, nor does it offer any comfort and succor, they too are spiritually bankrupt. The act of suicide to be reunited with dead loved ones is key to *The Returned*. The possibility that the returning of the town’s dead is the work of God and proof of the afterlife is as said, pushed mainly by Pierre. Pierre encourages zombie Camille to do some good with her returned status, leading Camille to tell the parents of Esteban—a boy who died in the bus crash—that while she was in her four-year hiatus in the afterlife, that she did indeed see, meet and converse with Esteban, that he is happy and well and that he is waiting there for his loving parents. Still grieving for Esteban, his parents are overwhelmed with such hope that they will see their son again, and duly hang themselves to be with him sooner than a natural death would allow. Esteban’s parents forgo their faith and understanding that suicide might be a sin, so spiritually bankrupt as they are in their grief over their son. The zombies have disrupted the order to the extent that Camille usurps their faith and relative fear of God’s judgement and potential damnation. Pierre and later in season two Milan can take the returning dead and with them reinterpret “traditional narratives of resurrection” and develop their own “new, evolving narratives of what it might mean in the future” (Hodkinson 2020, 410). The replacing of faith or God’s word with another revelation—those souls come back in the form of zombies rather than move on to the afterlife—or the teaching of another spiritual leader, sees the people in the town susceptible to being drawn into a dangerous cult. Spiritual bankruptcy leaves a hole which can be filled by the deceptive revelations of a cult leader.

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1. Abimelech (Judges 9:50–57), Samson (Judges 16:28–31), Saul (1 Sa 31:1–4), Saul’s armor-bearer (1 Samuel 31:5), Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:17–19) and Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:3–5). Though it can be argued that Samson’s suicide was more akin to “military sacrifice” (*Christian Medical Fellowship*).

### *Faith and the Destructive Cult*

The term cult has come to be largely pejorative, conjuring images of crazed yet charismatic leaders, brainwashed followers and tragically, associations with mass suicides. These suicide or destructive cults have become associated with religion, or rather, branched off versions of a religion that take a sinister turn. Not wanting to conflate religion and cults, it is useful to turn to Ann Taves 2011 work regarding the line, or difference between cult and religion. Taves asserts that time is the key factor, for a movement to become part of the larger religious landscape, and to become recognized and legitimate. Groups that were once previously marginalized to sect or cult, like Scientology or Mormonism, see enough time pass and enough members join for them to be able to establish themselves as legitimate religion. According to Dr. Janja Lalich, Professor of Sociology at California State University, a cult rushes the members into being a fully formed and indoctrinated group, outside of the mainstream teachings of whatever branch of existing or recognized religious fraction it branched off from (Coughlin 2018). For example, Jim Jones was a Christian who began as a vehement anti-segregationist, David Koresh was an Adventist, and Heaven's Gate leader Marshall Applewhite took the End of Days Christian Scripture and twisted that into an incoming spaceship to intercept via mass suicide. In *The Returned* as we shall see, The Circle only has a thirty-five-year run, limited numbers of members and a mandatory suicide pact.

The destructive cult—the term I will adopt here to characterize the particular brand of cult that is found in *The Returned* and what the series is mirroring from actual incidents—“[denotes] a social group with socially deviant beliefs and practices” (Rodia 2019). The deviant beliefs in *The Returned* revolve around the assumption that the zombies are the work of God; that suicide will allow the living to join their loved ones; and that Victor is the devil. Real world cults have held beliefs that have ranged from an expectation of doomsday and that God is an alien and that cult members need to “level up” by suicide to join him (Heaven's Gate, 1997); David Koresh speaking directly as the voice of God (Branch Davidians, 1993); End of Days and another declaration of Christ (Aum Shinnyo, 1995); and that the Kingdom of God could be built on Earth (The Peoples Temple/Jonestown, 1978). All of these cults had key patterns and systems that united them all, which can also be found in the cult named The Circle in *The Returned*.

Henson stated that a cult is a group that is bound together by a belief and “commitment to a charismatic leader [...] it has a belief system that has the answers to all of life's questions and offers a special solution to be gained only by following the leader's rules” (Henson N.D.). The Circle



indeed fulfills this definition, and the criteria for cults set out by Henson and also by Cleaver and Balch. The Circle has a charismatic leader in Milan, whose quiet and threatening demeanor casts a spell on the spiritually bankrupt and grieving traumatized inhabitants of the town. Milan leads a group in the town across two timelines, *The Returned* takes us back to thirty-five years ago, when the dam burst and many of the townsfolk were killed. Milan led a group in the past timeline to kill young Victor who was living with Mr. and Mrs. Lewinski, as Milan believed that Victor was responsible for the dam bursting. After the plot to kill the boy fails, Milan steps into the void left in people’s souls by the loss of so many lives and tells them that they will be reunited with their loved ones when they are dead. For this purpose, then, Milan creates The Circle, and those that join it welcome their own death. Milan echoes other notorious leaders of destructive cults as he proclaims to have the knowledge to help other find the answers they are looking for to ease their grief. Children are also included, as Milan’s wife attempts to murder or as she sees it, assist the suicide of the children—echoing Jonestown and the murder and suicide of adults and children with poisoned Flavor-Aid—with a drink laced with enough sleeping tablets to kill them.

The Circle has a transcendent belief system, as Milan gives the people something else to believe, to forget what the Bible tells them, to listen instead to the word of Milan to heal their spiritual pain. Cleaver explained that “faith in Jesus is often replaced by loyalty to the founder [Milan] and to the cult [The Circle]” (2012, 167). The belief of The Circle is that once they kill themselves, they will be free from the life and death cycle, instead of dying as people normally do, killing themselves will allow them to find those they love in the world beyond and live on like those that have returned. Milan says that they all must take the next step, to kill themselves or allow themselves to be killed, echoing the actions taken by the members of Heaven’s Gate. For Milan, killing people to move on cleanses their souls, which is why he murdered Lucy Clarsen thirty-five years ago, as he explains to her boyfriend that “she is saved now, I have washed her of all her sins.” Milan has replaced God, for it is now he who judges and holds the power over life and death, as “a leader [Milan has pulled] the crown of honor and authority away from Jesus Christ and [placed] it on his head” (Cleaver 2012, 168). Milan has adopted the right to take life, and he persuades people to forgo their faith and sanctity of life. The members of The Circle would be free “from the endless cycle of death” (Balch 1980, 137).

The Circle perpetuates destructive cult systems of control and influence, and this is played out in detail in season two of *The Returned*. Pierre is fixed upon keeping the return of the dead secret and away from the authorities, much like the destructive cults as listed above keep their

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activities beyond the eyes of others looking in. Many personnel are in the town, the army are overseeing the reconstruction of the dam after the flood at the end of season one. The police are searching for those missing; their colleagues and those not accounted for after the flood. At the Helping Hand, Pierre locks up Toni, Audrey and later Julie, he refuses to let Mr. Sabini go to a hospital. He has his secondhand cult man in Frederic, who accompanies Pierre when anyone is being strong-armed into coming with them—echoing the explanation offered by Professor Janja Lalich and the “rushing” of members into the fold. Season two sees the town split in two, the living for the most part occupies one side, and across the flood water, the dead reside. In the dead part of town, Claire is hiding with her undead daughter Camille. The zombies, meanwhile, are forming their own type of cult, as they follow the will of returnee Lucy Clarsen and her plan that is tied up in the baby Nathan, a figure of intense religious importance, as the baby is born of both the undead or supernatural Simon and the alive Adele. This divide between the zombies and the living on the other part of town, is symbolic of the splitting away of cults from mainstream religion and society. Both the Circle and the zombies across the water have “split from mainstream Christianity with regard to their beliefs and behavior to the degree that the groups are considered dangerous to themselves and society” (Clever 2012, 165). The zombies have split from their loved ones and from the natural order of life and death, and The Circle want to commit mass murder/suicide in order to break away from the “usual” confines of life and death, despite the violation of the fifth commandment. The beliefs and actions of The Circle defines the group as a cult as it deviates from “the norms of Christian belief and behavior” (Clever 2012, 165). Such is the message of Milan and his cult, that it “decreases the perception of the authority of the Bible and [...] decreases the critical thinking and freedom of choice among the members” (Clever 2012, 167). The people of the town, filled with grief from the loss of so many in the flood, shelve their understanding of life and death and of what the Bible tells them, to allow themselves to believe Milan when he claims that the disaster was brought about by a diabolic little boy—Milan believes that Victor is the devil incarnate. The Circle members then let themselves be shot dead by Milan in the woods, mirroring real-life destructive cults where the leader is above and beyond the broadly accepted teachings of Christianity.

#### *Zombie Baby*

Lucy Clarsen has an obsession with Adele’s baby boy, Nathan, who was not born of the usual conception, instead he is the result of Adele

copulating with the undead, the supernatural Simon. Pregnant with a zombie’s baby, Adele is synonymous with the Virgin Mary. Adele might not have been a virgin—she already has a daughter Chloe, and we see her have sex with Simon—but she is impregnated by supernatural means. In the Bible, Mary is visited by the Holy Spirit and becomes pregnant with Jesus, the Son of God (Brown 1973). In *The Returned*, Adele’s baby shows signs that he too is other worldly, as during pregnancy he is bigger than he should be, and she is induced into labor weeks before the usual forty-week term. Adele is scared of the baby, and she takes a long time to bond with the child. During pregnancy, knowing that conception with a dead man cannot be good, she makes attempts to abort the child by throwing herself down the stairs. The baby, however, becomes a fixation for Lucy Clarsen, she seems to know something about this child, that he is special, and with the help of Simon and daughter Chloe, the baby is spirited away and into the care of the zombies across the water. Lucy thinks that the baby will save them, that he is then, a messiah for the undead. Victor, the boy who was blamed for the dam and can see the future deaths of people, is also explained as being “like Nathan”: like in that he is also born of the living and the dead. Nathan, like Victor, is the devil child, or Antichrist, being “born [to Adele] by means of conception with a diabolical spirit [Simon]” (Lerner N.D.), and he has been conceived in sin as Adele commits adultery (John 9:34). According to such interpretations of the Bible, Nathan is capable of bringing about the End of Days. A process which as we have seen, Christian believer Pierre believes has begun by the horde of the dead returning to the town.

## *Conclusion*

In *The Returned* the zombies disrupt the natural order of life and death, they are a source of horror as they remove the comfort offered to the bereaved by the notion of the afterlife and a soul that should be at peace. Zombies are for some in *The Returned*, a clear example of the work of God, but for others, the zombies demonstrate that God has forsaken them. The zombies drive people to forgo their Christian faith, or at least, reinterpret it and commit suicide at the risk of harsh judgement by God. After suffering much trauma, the zombies drive people into the arms of a destructive cult, further violating Christian beliefs by allowing the leader, Milan, to usurp the word of God with his own interpretation and revelation. The zombies in *The Returned* force people to question their faith as they form their own views on the sanctity of life and the very nature of the life and death cycle. The zombies form their own faith in their own leader and

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their desire to claim the baby Nathan, a child who is a perverted representation of the Virgin Birth, a messiah for the undead. *The Returned* hinges on disrupting elements of the Christian faith and the belief that a soul can be at peace. Instead, the troubling aspects of the lack of precise information and instruction in the Bible regarding the afterlife, is laid bare as both the zombies and those still living, negotiate a new belief system which is confusing and disturbing, yet allows for each character to develop an individual interpretation of Christianity depending on their own trauma, grief and need for salvation.

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