**References in Children of Men**

1 The **title** refers to a verse from a psalm in The Bible: Psalm 90 Verse 3 in the King James Version. This is the verse and its context:

*“[3] Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*

*[4] For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*

*[5] Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.*

*[6] In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

*[7] For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.”*

2 **Fishes** – there are a number of possible references here: the **early Christian church** symbol for itself before the Romans stopped persecuting it was a fish symbol, but it is hard to see other parallels between the violent, faction-ridden Fishes and the early Christian church.

Another is the **Maoist** concept of the revolutionary being like a fish, and the people the sea in which the fish swims.

Thirdly, there is a **Mafia** saying that a person who has suffered a Mafia hit is “sleeping with the fishes” (possibly because their corpse has been dumped at sea).

3 **London** – the cityscape is deliberately recognisable and non-futuristic (apart from the wall screens etc), but very shabby – note the piles of garbage everywhere. Why have maintenance when there will be no one to maintain things for? The idea is that the audience should feel that this is real. So there are recognisable London icons – Big Ben, St Pauls etc.

4 Music from King Crimson – ***In the Court of the Crimson King*** – lyrics drawn from fantasy & medieval imagery, & it’s basically saying that the patterns of earlier times are repeating themselves, the old evils are awake, and society is fundamentally as unequal as it was in the middle ages.

*The rusted chains of prison moons*

*Are shattered by the sun.*

*I walk a road, horizons change*

*The tournament’s begun.*

*The purple piper plays his tune,*

*The choir softly sing;*

*Three lullabies in an ancient tongue,*

*For the court of the crimson king.*

*The keeper of the city keys*

*Put shutters on the dreams.*

*I wait outside the pilgrim’s door*

*With insufficient schemes.*

*The black queen chants*

*The funeral march,*

*The cracked brass bells will ring;*

*To summon back the fire witch*

*To the court of the crimson king.*

5 Reference to **religious sects** – the demo Theo drives through on his way to the Art place, his conversation with Jaspar about Renouncers and Repenters – evocative of earlier religious sects in British history: Levellers, Shakers etc.



6 **The burning cattle** – strongly associated in the minds of the British with plague and disaster. The reference is to the Foot and Mouth epidemics of the recent past.

7 References to ***La Pieta*** *-* There are unexplained references to events elsewhere – in New York and in Madrid – that are catastrophic. Theo’s art collecting cousin laments the smashing up of this statue. Later in the film, as the army moves to crush the uprising in Bexhill, a woman weeps over the body of a man in a pose deliberately reminiscent of this piece.

8 **Photographs** – at Jaspar’s house on the wall there is a collection of photos & news clippings, some of which echo contemporary news stories, e.g. the torture headline referring to what happened to Jaspar’s wife. These reference recent media stories about the use of torture and illegal detention by the US and its allies in the “war against terror.”

9 **Ruby Tuesday** – modern cover version of a late 60’s song by The Rolling Stones. The lyrics are as follows:

*She would never say where she came from*

*Yesterday don’t matter if it’s gone*

*While the sun is bright*

*Or in the darkest night*

*No one knows*

*She comes and goes*

*Goodbye, ruby Tuesday*

*Who could hang a name on you?*

*When you change with every new day*

*Still I’m gonna miss you...*

*Don’t question why she needs to be so free*

*She’ll tell you it’s the only way to be*

*She just can’t be chained*

*To a life where nothings gained*

*And nothings lost*

*At such a cost*

*There’s no time to lose, I heard her say*

*Catch your dreams before they slip away*

*Dying all the time*

*Lose your dreams*

*And you will lose your mind.*

*Ain’t life unkind?*

*Goodbye, ruby Tuesday*

*Who could hang a name on you?*

*When you change with every new day*

*Still I’m gonna miss you...*

10 **Shantih shantih shantih** – this is a Sanskrit word meaning Peace. In the film it is used by Miriam when she is burying Julian, by Jaspar when he figures out how to get Theo, Miriam and Kee to the *Tomorrow,* and at the very end of the film after the credits have finished rolling. It is also a quote from a poem by T S Eliot, *The Waste Land.*

11 Jaspar’s character is itself a reference to **the hippy era** – long hair, little round glasses, drug culture etc. Michael Caine based the character on John Lennon.

12. Some of the background music during the Bexhill sequence is a direct reference to **the Holocaust** – a song called *Arbeit Macht Frei* (the Nazi slogan written on the gates of the Auschwitz death camp):

*Roll a*

*Gasper*

*The guard said he could stay alive but he shovelled and burned his friends to die*

*People to die*

*Oh the gate read*

*Arbeit macht frei*

*In her rollers*

*And a gasper*

*She cleaned the steps of a mean street where no policeman walked the beat*

*Her old man*

*He don't like blacks or queers*

*Yet he's proud we beat the Nazis...*

*How queer*

*Arbeit Macht Frei*