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YOU'LL NEVER DIE



What's the closest thing you've seen to a "fountain of youth"?

QUESTION #1

The resurrection of Jesus makes our own resurrection possible.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Oh, the things we will do to live longer! We all know that a healthy diet and exercise improve our bodies and, therefore, help us live longer. Beyond that, though, researchers have discovered a few more things that might increase your life span.

- ▶ **Live on top of a mountain.** People who live at high altitudes live longer.
- ▶ **Learn a new language.** Being able to speak multiple languages slows the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's.
- ▶ **Live on a reduced-calorie diet.** One of the longest-living people groups limits their daily intake to 1,200 calories.
- ▶ **Work harder.** Serious and persistent workers tend to live longer than the carefree employee.¹

You could try all these, and while you *might* increase your life span, you can be sure of one thing: *you're still going to die.* Jesus told us the only way not to die is to believe in and follow Him. And He made that possible when He died on the cross and rose from the dead.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

John 11:25-27

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

As John 11 opens, we see “Lazarus from Bethany,” a man who was sick and at the point of death. Jesus Himself was only days away from His crucifixion and death. Lazarus was a beloved friend to Jesus (vv. 3,11), yet Jesus intentionally delayed making the trip to Bethany to heal His friend. Jesus delayed, and Lazarus died (v. 14).

When Jesus finally arrived in Bethany, He sought to comfort Lazarus’s grieving sisters, Mary and Martha. He told Martha, “Your brother will rise again” (v. 23). Martha did not disagree; she accepted the popular view taught by the Pharisees that there is an afterlife, and the Jewish people would experience a resurrection someday. But Jesus was referring to something a lot more immediate!

To explain the miracle He was about to do, Jesus gave one of His seven I AM statements; this one carried a great claim of Deity.² “I am the resurrection and the life.” Implied in this statement is the truth that Jesus is the One true God; He is not just any god, but one that can resurrect Himself. He did not say He would bring about the resurrection or He would be the cause of the resurrection; Jesus said He *is* the resurrection.

Resurrection and the promise of eternal life are so closely related to Jesus that we can only find them in a relationship with Him. That relationship begins with believing. Jesus went on to say “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”

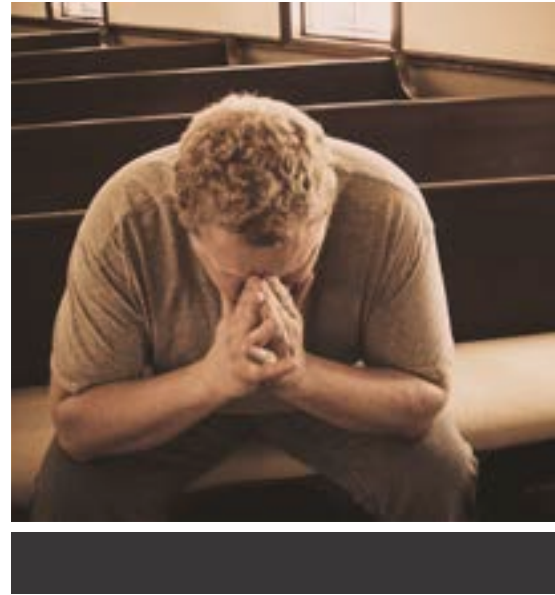
How would you describe Jesus’ claims in these verses?

QUESTION #2

Wait. If I'm dead, doesn't that mean I'm not alive? Yes, your physical body will die, but you will not cease! For those who believe in Jesus, they are and will remain spiritually alive in Christ—and they will be resurrected to a new glorified body. Jesus promised us a life with Him in heaven (John 14:2-3).

What brings this truth about Jesus into our lives is the word *believe*. This verb means far more than acknowledging something. The Greek word carries the idea of placing our confidence and trust in that which we believe. And in this context, we are to believe in Jesus.

This great truth of Jesus as the resurrection calls for a response. Jesus asked Martha, “Do you believe this?” She affirmed her belief and trust in Jesus as “the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.” She had seen His miracles and heard Him teach; now she came to the only conclusion: Jesus is the Messiah.



John 20:24-25

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

The resurrection can be a difficult reality to grasp. It’s hard to think that two thousand years ago a man loved us enough to give His life for us—and it seems even more fantastic that He would come back to life. Yet that very truth is the cornerstone of our whole belief system. No other religion can claim the resurrection.

What obstacles often hinder people from believing in Jesus?

QUESTION #3

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

Draw some symbols or write some expressions that best represent resurrection to you. You can also create a word cloud that describes resurrection.

"But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name!"

— JOHN 20:31

Can other religions claim death? Sure, every religion can point to their founder's death, but *only Jesus died and came back to life. Only Jesus is the resurrection.*

The disciples had no doubt Jesus had died. The duty of a Roman soldier assigned to a crucifixion was to ensure the victim died. Should a criminal escape death, the soldier paid for it with his own life. The women had seen where Jesus was buried, so there was no question they went to the right tomb—which was empty (24:1-3). And now the disciples had seen Jesus alive for themselves!

The resurrection was surely a hard reality for the disciples to believe at first, considering the shockingly hard reality of Jesus' death. Yet here He stood in front of the disciples.

Except Thomas. John did not tell us why Thomas was not with his fellow disciples, but he did give us Thomas's reaction to the news. Thomas, most likely in awe and confusion, demanded to see Jesus' scars and wounds before he would believe. This is where we get the phrase "doubting Thomas," an unfair distinction for Thomas. He wasn't the only one who doubted. The other ten disciples initially refused to believe as well (Luke 24:11).

It's hard to believe without seeing. It's far easier to believe when evidence and proof are right in front of us. The Christian life is one of faith, but that faith has to be grounded in something solid. Otherwise, it's just blind faith, something we hope might be true. Faith is only as good as its foundation.

So how can we have faith in the resurrection? Like Thomas, up to this point, we haven't seen the physical, resurrected body of Jesus. Thankfully, God has given us ways to trust with confidence.

John 20:26-29

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

John gave us “the rest of the story” when Jesus appeared again to the disciples. “The doors were locked,” indicating the disciples were still scared. They may have worried that the Jewish leaders who had wanted Jesus dead were after them too.

Into this locked room, Jesus appeared. With His presence, Jesus gave His disciples the peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7), the peace that only He can give, the peace the world will never understand unless they are followers of Christ (John 14:27). This is yet another reminder that Jesus is our peace.

Jesus then turned His attention to Thomas. He did not rebuke Thomas for his disbelief. Jesus met Thomas with reassurance, compassion, and grace. We might wonder if Thomas fell to his knees weeping as he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” This was his clear confession of his belief. Through seeing the scars in Jesus’ hands, Thomas found a new faith in Jesus—a faith that no longer included doubt or fear.

Thomas and the other disciples got to see firsthand what we can’t see today: Jesus’ ministry at work. Jesus knew many believers like you and me would come after Him, who would be unable to experience what the original disciples did. So, He told Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

So why do we believe? We trust the words and witness of those who did see Jesus alive. Disciples like Thomas. Paul underscored the witness of those who saw Jesus.

We don’t simply believe the resurrection of Jesus happened, but it is an event that we can trust to be life changing. Jesus IS the resurrection, and life only comes through Him. If you want eternal life, trust the truth of the resurrection, follow the words of Jesus, and believe.

What do you find encouraging about Jesus’ appearance to Thomas?

QUESTION #4

How can our group make clear our belief in Jesus as Lord and God?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

We can do nothing on our own to have eternal life. All we need to do is repent, believe, and follow Him. Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Believe.** Jesus is alive, and He invites you to follow Him. If you have never trusted in Christ, place your full faith in Him. Read the inside front cover of this book to learn how you can do this. Talk to someone in your group about your desire to believe and trust in Christ.
- ▶ **Investigate.** Look into the truth of the resurrection for yourself. Many books address the resurrection, such as *Buried Hope or Risen Savior: The Search for Jesus' Tomb* by Charles Quarles or *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel.
- ▶ **Share.** Who has God put on your heart to hear the truth of the resurrection? Ask God to put someone on your heart who needs to hear about His resurrection and eternal life.



God's not against healthy living; He's for it! But let God be the source of your joy. Joy is found in Him and the sure hope of His resurrection.

My thoughts

1. Jenny Green, "10 Unusual Ways to Live Longer," *ListVerse*, May 12, 2012, <https://listverse.com/2012/05/31/10-unusual-ways-to-live-longer/>.

2. The seven "I AM" statements: (1) I am the bread of life – John 6:35; (2) I am the light of the world – John 8:12; (3) I am the door of the sheep – John 10:7; (4) I am the good shepherd – John 10:11; (5) I am the resurrection and the life – John 11:25; (6) I am the way, the truth, and the life – John 14:6; and (7) I am the true vine – John 15:1.