

Live Once vs. Live Forever

Clash of Kingdoms #3

Matthew 28:1-20

April 9, 2023

Introduction

Business Today Magazine A former Google engineer and prominent futurist, Ray Kurzweil, has made a bold prediction that humans will achieve immortality in the next seven years, thanks to the help of nanorobots. Kurzweil...believes that with the current advancements and expansions seen in genetics, robotics, and nanotechnology, "we'll soon have nanobots running through our veins." He claims that these microscopic robots will fend off aging and illness and repair our bodies on a cellular level, ultimately leading to everlasting life...by 2030.

This is Nothing New

- 1940's Heinrich Himmler sought the Holy Grail, believing it would give eternal life
- Middle ages Europe, The Philosopher's Stone that could turn things into gold. People would drink gold to make them "live forever"
- 1492, Pope Innocent VIII injected with children's blood
- 300s BC China, Qin Shi Huang, first emperor to unify China. Historians say that as he grew older, was obsessed with "the elixir of life." Was scammed, died of mercury poison
- Ancient Egyptian mummies to help live into
- The oldest writing we have, The Epic of Gilgamesh, is about the quest for immortality

Christian Claims

- God created all things good
- Humanity messed things up real bad
- Jesus offers us forgiveness
- Jesus offers us inner well-being
- Jesus offers us immortality

Jesus' Bold Claim

John 6 ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 11 ²¹ Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." ²² Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ "Your brother will rise again," Jesus told her. ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if

he dies, will live. ²⁶ Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world."

**Claims like this is what made the religious leaders so angry with him | crucifixion at the human level*

***For his followers, it looked like a crushing defeat, like all the claims of Jesus were false*

One Sunday Morning

Matthew 28 ¹ After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb.

- Other Mary = the mom of James and Joseph (Zebedee's sons v56)

² There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men. ⁵ The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

- *Jesus told them all many times, "I'll die and rise again" but they had such a hard time hearing*

⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.' Listen, I have told you." ⁸ So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news. ⁹ Just then Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there." ¹¹ As they were on their way, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² After the priests had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money ¹³ and told them, "Say this, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him while we were sleeping.' ¹⁴ If this reaches the governor's ears, we will deal with him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ They took the money and did as they were instructed, and this story has been spread among Jewish people to this day.

- *To this day, there are many theories and "explanations" about what happened to Jesus' body*
- *Not what I'm talking about today, but there are good explanations from scholars*
- *Christians believe that Jesus is really, truly, bodily alive*

¹⁶ The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted.

- *Encouraging to know that even the very first disciples had some difficulty with the resurrection?*

¹⁸ Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Human Quest for Immortality

Pathway 1: work hard

- Health, beauty, elixir of life, philosopher's stone, nanobots
- 4,000 years from Epic of Gilgamesh, nobody's got it yet

Pathway 2: be important

- Money, power, "my name will go down in history"
- A *form* of immortality, but...still dead

Pathway 3: be right

- Self-righteousness and fundamentalism, both religious and progressive

Pathway 4: feel good

- "Well I can't live forever, so I'm going to get as much pleasure as possible" | YOLO
- Two problems: 1) inner emptiness, 2) pleasures can lead to shortened life

Pathway 5: give up

- Record numbers of despair and anxiety and depression

Jesus says...

...You don't need to work hard, I have completed the work of everlasting life for you

...You don't need to make yourself important, I will share my eternal riches with you

...You don't need to always be right, I was perfectly righteous on your behalf

...You don't need to pursue earthly pleasure, in my right hand are pleasures forever

...You don't need to despair. Take heart, I have overcome death itself

Gospel Response

- Acknowledge your sin and repent
- Believe the offers of Jesus
- Get baptized
- Live forever with God