

ALIVE FOREVER

Part 36 of Foundations 260. Revelation 1:18.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. November 2, 2025.

Dismiss the Middle School

THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

The saying used to be, “Nothing is certain except death and taxes.” Now, ultra-wealthy investors are trying to eliminate the certainty of death.

According to a 2023 article in Time Magazine:¹

Bryan Johnson is working on what he calls “the most significant revolution in the history of Homo sapiens.”

The article goes on:

Johnson, 46, is a centimillionaire tech entrepreneur who has spent most of the last three years in pursuit of a singular goal: don’t die. During that time, he’s spent more than \$4 million developing a life-extension system called Blueprint, in which he outsources every decision involving his body to a team of doctors, who use data to develop a strict health regimen to reduce what Johnson calls his “biological age.” That system includes downing 111 pills every day, wearing a baseball cap that shoots red light into his scalp, ...

Johnson thinks of any act that accelerates aging—like eating a cookie, or getting less than eight hours of sleep—as an “act of violence.”

While the drive to live forever — or at least for a lot longer — is understandable, it’s a problem that has already been solved. The immortality code has been cracked. We read about it in last week’s Foundations 260 readings in Revelation.

¹ <https://time.com/6315607/bryan-johnsons-quest-for-immortality/>

REVELATION 1:18: BACKGROUND AND TEXT

The Book of Revelation was written in the mid-90s of the first century by the apostle John. He was the last surviving apostle of Jesus Christ. He spent many years overseeing churches in what was called Asia Minor, now Turkey. However, when persecution broke out under the Roman Emperor Domitian, he was exiled.

Revelation was written to encourage persecuted believers who were under pressure to return to paganism. The central theme is Jesus wins. Stand firm in Jesus because he has conquered death, the devil, and Rome. Christ is King forever.

John was exiled to the island of Patmos. The authorities sent him to a god-forsaken rock in the middle of the ocean, but Jesus never forsakes his people. One Sunday, he received a vision from Jesus Christ of **“*what must soon take place*”** (Revelation 1:1).

Revelation answers the question many Christians are asking: What happens after we die? Those early believers needed assurance that martyrdom was not the end, but the beginning of something extraordinary.

The verse that says it all is Revelation 1:18. Let's read it now.

OUR FOCUS TODAY: REVELATION 1:18.

Revelation 1:17-18 (CSB) 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid. I am the First and the Last, 18 and the Living One. I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades.

JESUS HAS CONQUERED DEATH

The secret to immortality is that Jesus has conquered death, so Christians live forever. He didn't just delay death for a decade or two; he abolished it.

Jesus conquered death.

Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried. But on the third day, he rose from the dead. Jesus said it:

"I was dead, but look - I am alive forever and ever" (Revelation 1:18).

*2 Timothy 1:10 (CSB) ... our Savior Christ Jesus, who has **abolished death** and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Christians live forever.

We don't need to pop 111 pills every day. Jesus has abolished death for Christians. Jesus is the source of immortality or eternal life. Jesus told his friend Martha, who was grieving after her brother Lazarus died:

John 11:25 (CSB) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live.

Then, in our passage, Jesus revealed to John:

"... and I hold the keys of death and Hades" (Revelation 1:18).

In the ancient world, the key to the city's gates was given to the governor, who had the authority to open and close them. Because Jesus defeated death at the cross and rose from the dead, he has the "key" to **death and Hades (Hades, in this context, is the Greek word for the grave)**. So, the risen Jesus has shut the gate to death for his people.

Let's talk about that. What happens when a Christian Dies?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN DIES

Wait, Peter, you said that Jesus abolished death and Christians live forever. Now you're saying we're going to die. What's going on?

Great question. Death for Christians is a transition from one kind of life to another. So, in that sense, we do not die but go on living forever.

Four things will happen to us after our biological death.

1. Christians live with Christ immediately.

Philippians 1:23-24 (CSB) I long to depart and be with Christ — which is far better — 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

For the Christian, death is not an extinction of consciousness but a change of address. One writer noted that, “Our death is not extinction, it is departure.”²

2 Corinthians 5:8 (CSB) In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Our biological body dies, but our spirit goes to be with Christ immediately (Luke 23:43). We will be **at home** with him.

Where is that home? Well, it's two places, one after the other. First ...

² <https://davidroseberry.substack.com/p/and-then-what-what-happens-after>

2. Christians will live in heaven for a while.

John describes a vision of heaven in Revelation 4. He saw believers who have died around God's throne:

Revelation 4:4 (CSB) Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones sat twenty-four elders dressed in white clothes, with golden crowns on their heads.

The 24 thrones and the 24 elders stand for the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of Jesus. They represent all of God's people pre- and post-Christ. It's a way to tell us that all God's people are in heaven with God.

And they are alive, fully conscious, not asleep, not in a waiting room, but in heaven, around God's throne, with millions of angels and "living creatures," worshipping him. Our loved ones who died in Christ are there in a massive crowd around the throne.

Revelation 7:9 (CSB) After this, I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

Think of this: the church on earth today worships God, along with the church in heaven. Worship on earth is not an isolated act but an opportunity to join in an ongoing, massive celebration—worldwide and heaven-wide.

A traditional prayer recognizes this union between heaven and earth:

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name: Holy, holy, holy, Lord...³

But living in heaven without bodies is not forever.

³ Book of Common Prayer (2019). Anglican Liturgy Press, 2019.

3. Christians will receive resurrection bodies.

When Christ returns, he will raise us into resurrection bodies like his own. He does not repair our broken bodies; he transforms them into perfect bodies.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (CSB) For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (CSB) So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; 43 sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; 44 sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (CSB) Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53 For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality.

Philippians 3:21 (CSB) He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

When I conduct a funeral service and we're standing at the graveside, I am so grateful to speak the traditional words of hope and comfort:

We have entrusted _____ to God's merciful keeping; we now commit their body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died, was buried, and rose again for us and our salvation. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

So, we will be raised by Christ in beautiful bodies. Then, we will move to our permanent, eternal home on the new earth ...

4. We will live in heaven on the new earth forever.

God's plan of redemption culminates in the new creation.

Isaiah 65:17-18 (CSB) For I will create new heavens and a new earth; the past events will not be remembered or come to mind. 18 Then be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating... (See also, 2 Peter 3:13; Romans 8:21)

We will live forever on the new earth in our magnificent, immortal, spiritual bodies. It's going to be a beautiful, sinless, God-saturated experience.

The final chapters of John's vision reveal what the new earth will be like:

Revelation 21:3-4 (CSB) Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

Revelation 21:22-24 (CSB) I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Revelation 22:1-5 (CSB) Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, 3 and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

That's the final destination of everyone who is Christ by faith. Heaven on earth forever.

It won't be boring. We won't be floating on clouds, strumming harps. Randy Alcorn says:⁴

Revelation 22 says His servants will serve Him; well, that's redeemed work and redeemed rest and redeemed eating and drinking. If all that, and we know all that, why not redeemed culture, redeemed agriculture, redeemed music and arts and science and play and writing and reading and redeemed exploration of the world, all to the glory of God. If the current universe declares the glory of God in His handiwork, how much more in a universe that's no longer under the curse?

⁴ <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/heaven-and-the-new-earth-from-the-bible-and-c-s-lewis/>

CHRISTIANS KNOW THE SECRET TO IMMORTALITY

Billions of dollars have been invested in longevity research.⁵ I can understand why billionaires want their extraordinary lives to go on forever.

But what are a couple of decades longer in this life when compared to what Jesus offers? Even if the billionaires live to 120, they will only have delayed death, not defeated it.

But Jesus has defeated death; he has abolished and conquered it. And he promises his people eternal life—life with God forever—an amazing life of meaning, joy, and worship.

Christians know the secret to immortality. It's not cryogenic storage, it's Christ. It's not our brains in a jar on life support. It's not the storing of consciousness on a computer chip. The secret is something so much more glorious.

The secret to immortality is the risen Christ raising his followers in incorruptible bodies to live with him in heaven on earth forever.

Does that fill you with hope and comfort today? Christians are forever. So, be courageous. If you lose everything for the sake of Christ, the glory of heaven will more than make up for it. If you're martyred, you'll be with Jesus and your believing loved ones immediately.

Romans 8:18 (CSB) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

⁵ <https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/11/16/1063300/billion-dollar-mega-rich-live-forever/>

If you're exploring the Christian faith, the hope of eternal life is an excellent reason to take the next step and turn from yourself to trust in Jesus Christ.

I'd love to answer any questions you may have. Come and talk to me after the service.

Let's pray - see over...

Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer (2019)

Almighty God, grant us, with all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, the fullness of life in your eternal and ever-lasting glory, and, with all believers, to receive the crown of life promised to all who share in the victory of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's November 2nd teaching and study guide. For more resources, visit www.famousgod.com/small-groups.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

- How does Jesus' victory over death in Revelation 1:18 change the way you view your own mortality and the deaths of loved ones? How does it feel to know that your believing loved ones are alive and well in heaven?
- In light of the promise of eternal life, how much time, money, energy, and mental bandwidth should we invest in extending our lives here and now?
- How do you feel about knowing that the church on earth is united with the church in heaven in prayer and worship? Does it matter? Explain.
- What questions or doubts do you have about death, eternal life, or the resurrection? How can the group support you in finding answers?

Prayer Focus

- Pray for grace to live in light of eternity and the victory of Christ over death.
- Pray that Cornerstone Church would always offer comfort and hope through its profession and preaching of eternal life in Christ.