

PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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ALIVE! Affirming Resurrection Hope

By Dr. Don Bierle, *FaithSearch* President

Ask any Christian who has lost a believing loved one to the tragedy of death. The resurrection of Jesus is their source of comfort and even joy. Jesus Himself assured us: *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies..."* (John 11:25).

Wondering

People wonder whether we will recognize our loved ones in heaven. I think the New Testament teaching and Jesus' example support this:

- The apostle Paul offers comfort and hope that we will be reunited with loved ones in the Lord's presence forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- The disciples of Jesus recognized Him in His resurrection body (John 20:11-18; 21:12) and we will be like Him (1 John 3:2).
- Paul expected to recognize the Thessalonian believers in heaven when Jesus comes (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).
- The rich man and Lazarus still have the same identities in heaven as on earth (Luke 16:19-31).



People also wonder what the resurrection body will be like. *First*, what are the similarities?

Jesus was the same person before and after His resurrection. The disciples were so sure of His identity that they were willing to die for that belief.

How was he recognized?

- His voice and mode of speaking (John 20:16)
- His mannerisms, e.g. breaking bread (Luke 24:30-31)
- His miraculous activity (John 21:4-7)
- His characteristic thoughtfulness (John 21:9-12)

In the resurrection, it will be us, our personhood. Also, the tomb of Jesus was empty; thus, our glorified and eternal body is a re-creation of our earthly body.

Second, what are the differences?

- His appearance was changed as evidenced that His identity was not immediately recognized by Mary in the garden (John 20:15); by His disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-31); and by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:3-4).
- The physical properties of His body were changed. He had "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) and could eat a meal (vv. 41-43) yet He also could enter a room without opening the door (John 20:19) and disappear at will (Luke 24:31). He appeared in places miles apart with no reference to normal travel.

We conclude, then, that the resurrection body will be **continuous** with the old, but **not identical** to it. In our new bodies we will not die again, nor be subject to disease, pain, or aging (Romans 6:9; Revelation 21:4).

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FOR REFLECTION

The Eyes Have It!

Charles Darwin, in his book *The Origin of Species*, acknowledged that he had some serious apprehension about proposing that the human eye arose by chance evolution.

To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.

Indeed! The human eye can see **10 million colors**; can adjust to see stars in space and a microscopic cell under a microscope, and can **repair and maintain itself** for a lifetime of use. **It is more complex than Darwin imagined in 1859.** His claim is even more absurd when the **entire animal kingdom** is considered.



Diagram of the Human Eye

"Chance" not only had to come up with the human eye, but also the advanced engineering for diverse eyes in creatures with vastly different needs. There are eyes for high altitudes, freshwater, saltwater, nighttime, daytime, and even underground. Eyes vary in size from one hundredth of an inch in some insects to the size of large dinner plates in the giant squid (for scouring the ocean depths).

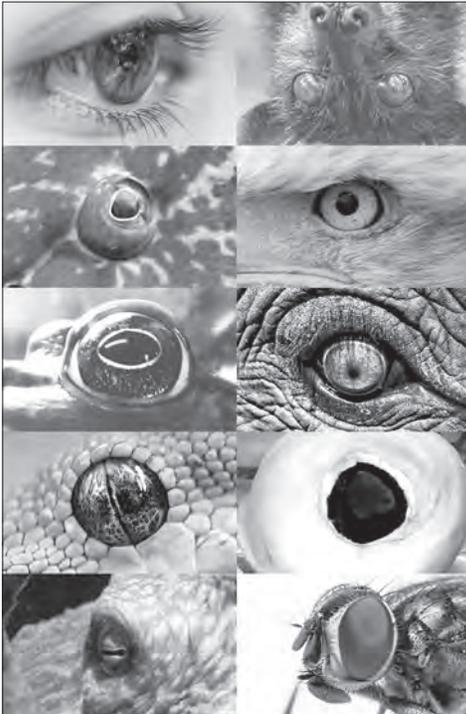
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The Eyes Have It!

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The theory of evolution postulates that the diverse vision systems evolved over time from simple to complex. Yet none of the four vision systems is imperfect or primitive—each is a different optical design to work for different purposes. The photoreceptor cells of earthworms are all they need for their underground existence. The compound insect eye actually has 30,000 separate eyes, each with its own cornea, lens and photoreceptor cells. They point in many directions at once to avoid being vulnerable to attack. (That’s why it’s so difficult to swat a fly!)

An eagle’s eyes take up more space than its brain. They have a concentration of light sensitive cells for focusing and the brain dedicates 80% of its sensory input to the eyes. This results in the ability to spot a rabbit moving two miles away!



Eyes (left to right, top to bottom): human, bat, fish, eagle, frog, elephant, snake, giant squid, octopus, and fly.

Instead of chance evolution, it should be obvious that such intricate engineering as found in the eyes of insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds is the result of intelligence – a Creator who is perfect in wisdom and skill. King Solomon got it right: “*The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made both of them*” (Proverbs 20:12).

Source: *Answers Magazine*, November–December, 2019; Vol. 14, No. 6; Pages 48-56

IN THE NEWS

Neo-Pagan Religion

It is clear that many in the climate-change movement are not thinking from a Christian worldview. Religious fervor, perhaps, but God is mostly excluded from the discussion. As an illustration, Union Theological Seminary in New York City held a chapel service where students confessed and prayed to potted plants as part of a class offering “liturgical responses to the state of the climate.”

They released a report:

Today in chapel we confessed to plants. Together, we held our grief, joy, regret, hope, guilt, and sorrow in prayer; offering them to the beings who sustain us but whose gift we too often fail to honor. What do you confess to the plants in your life?



This is elevating “nature” to the position of “God,” a view condemned by God Himself: “*For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator...*” (Romans 1:25).

- Who do we thank for the gift of plants? **God!** (Genesis 1:29)
- Who sustains us? **God!** (Genesis 8:22; Psalm 23:1-2)
- To Whom do we confess our sins? **God!** (Psalm 32:5)
- Who *alone* is worthy of our praise and worship? **God!** (Revelation 4:11)

This is the proper biblical worldview focus for our thanksgiving, confession, praise, and worship. 

Sources: *World Magazine*, November 9, 2019 (Vol. 34, No. 21), p. 16. *Answers Magazine*, January–February, 2020 (Vol. 15, No. 1), p. 43.

ALIVE!

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Affirming

Is Jesus really God who died and rose again? Three prophetic statements affirm this.

1. Zechariah 12:1, 10 – “*Thus declares the Lord... they will look on Me whom they pierced...*” **When was God pierced?** (John 19:33-34, 37) Jesus, speaking as God in the Old Testament, prophecies His own crucifixion.
2. Revelation 1:8, 17-18 – “*I am the Alpha and Omega,*” says the Lord God, “*who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. ...I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.*” **When did God die?** Jesus, who had claimed to be God during His ministry (John 5:18; 19:7) here speaks as God to recall His own sacrificial death and resurrection.
3. Psalm 16:10 – “*For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.*” **When was God put in the grave?** The New Testament makes clear that this prophecy is in reference to Jesus, who as God was put in the grave and resurrected (Acts 2:24-32).

“*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? ...but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Romans 15:55, 57)

Jesus is risen. He is risen indeed! 



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