

1 Why Look for the Living among the Dead?

2 Introduction

- For as long as humans have been looking at the stars, we've wondered if there's life on distant planets.
- In our imagination, we picture distant worlds where aliens exist—aliens who either look very much like us, or who look very much unlike us.
- These are creatures whom we might one day get to know, or, if a lot of science fiction is correct, we may get to run screaming from.

3 Introduction

- NASA, of course, is always on the case.
- With new technology like the Kepler Space Telescope, astronomers have been looking deeper into space for more signs of potentially habitable, perhaps life-sustaining, planets that look more like our own.
- Recently, they found one such cousin to Earth approximately 500 light years away.
- Given that light travels 5.88 trillion miles in one year—this planet is a long way away!

4 Introduction

- NASA has named the planet Kepler-186f, and its discovery "is a significant step toward finding worlds like our planet Earth," says Paul Hertz, director of the space agency's Astrophysics Division.
- Kepler 186f is in what scientists call the "habitable zone" in relation to its closest star, or about the right distance to sustain life as we know it without frying or freezing it

5 Introduction

- Kepler 186f orbits its star every 130 days and receives one-third the energy that we get from our sun, meaning that when the sun is at high noon it is only about as bright as it is here about an hour before sunset.
- In other words, you can probably leave the sunscreen behind.

6 Introduction

- Like with most of these discoveries, however, the scientists don't yet know if Kepler 186f harbors any life, or if it could sustain life as we know it, since they haven't learned much about its atmosphere.
- Although the planet is about the size of Earth, its mass and composition aren't known, either

7 Introduction

- Previous research leads experts to believe that the surface is rocky, just like every other planetary body we know about except Earth, whose surface area is 71 percent water—the basic building block of life.
- The chances for life to grow on places like Kepler 186f are very slim, but we keep looking for life among the dead stones and craters of those distant worlds.

8 Easter Sunday

- The women who came to the Jesus' tomb early on Easter Sunday morning were moving among the rocks too.
- Unlike scientists who are always hoping for new discoveries, these women weren't expecting to find anything new.
- They had seen death before, had returned to the tombs many times, and always found the same thing.
- For them tombs were not a "habitable zone!"

9 **Not Expecting to Find Life**

- That's why they came with spices that morning.
- Jewish burial rites at the time meant anointing the dead body with spices to hasten decomposition and cut down the smell.
- Then, a year later, they came back among the rocks and gathered the remaining bones and put them in a box—called a ossuary, which would then be placed in the back of the tomb.
- The same tomb would be used in the same way many more times.

10 **Why Look . . . among the Dead**

- What they did find, however, were "two men in dazzling white clothes" standing beside them, a sight so alien that the women bowed their terrified faces to the ground.
- The men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! (Luke 24:5–6 NIV)

11 **Why Look . . . among the Dead**

- They had expected to find the same old thing—the dead among the dead, the stones undisturbed and yielding nothing but cold reality.
- What they discovered, instead, was the hope of life.

12 **Empty Tomb = Life**

- Tombs aren't usually a "sign of life," but an empty tomb surely is.
- It was a sign that something new has broken into our world.
- When Jesus rose from the dead, it signaled the beginning of a new creation, a new world coming.
- It signaled the ultimate defeat of death itself.
- The kingdom of God is not a distant world but the reality of what is coming and is starting to happen already.

13 **First Fruits**

- In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says that Jesus' resurrection was the "first fruits" ("prototype") of what will happen to us in God's future.
- We don't have to look for life "out there" because it's coming here and, indeed, is here and available for us right now.
- The One who was dead is now alive, and, because he lives, we, too, can live as people of hope.

14 Why Look . . . among the Dead

- I don't know if you caught this or not, but it seems that when the angels asked the three women why they were "seeking the living among the dead," they seemed to be in reality asking the question, "why didn't you believe?"
- Several times Jesus explained to his disciples in detail what ultimately would happen to Him.
- Apparently, it went in one ear and out the other.

15 Jesus Predictions

- After Peter's Confession - From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. (Matt 16:21 NIV)
- After the Transfiguration — As they were coming down the mountain (Transfiguration), Jesus instructed them (Peter, James, and John), "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." (Matt 17:9 NIV)
- When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief. (Matt 17:22–23 NIV)

16 Jesus Predictions

- Before going to Jerusalem for the last time - Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!" (Matt 20:17–19 NIV)
- The angels at the tomb - He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words. (Luke 24:6–8 NIV)

17 Questions

- Was Jesus not clear on his instruction about his future?
- Why didn't His disciples or these three women expect His resurrection.
- The chief priests and the Pharisees seemed to have more faith than Jesus' disciples because they went to Pilate to have the tomb made secure. [See Matthew 27:62–64]
- They remembered Jesus' words more than His disciples.
- No doubt this goes to show us that when we go through trials and our hopes and expectations seem lost, we can easily freak out and forget the promises and goodness of God.

18 Assurance of Faith

- When Jesus died on the cross, He was paying the ransom for the redemption of our souls.
- When He was resurrected, it showed that the righteousness of His sacrifice was accepted by the courts of heaven and by the Father Himself.
- But also, both of these events were predicted events by Jesus, which means we can trust Him and His words always.

19 Other Promises of Jesus

- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16 NIV)
- Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; (John 11:25 NIV)
- There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. (John 12:48 NIV)

20 Other Promises of Jesus

- In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:2–3 NIV)
- But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7 NIV)
- And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matt 28:20 NIV)

21 Empty Tomb

- The empty tomb is a sign of not only the resurrection of Christ, but also that everything that Jesus has said and promised is also true.
- You can’t be a Liar or Lunatic and give detailed information about your death and resurrection and then it happens just as you said.
- You have to be LORD of lords and KING of kings!

22 Conclusion

- So then, when our world around us goes crazy and things trouble our hearts and make us anxious, let us remember Jesus’ other promises to us as well.
 - He has gone to prepare a place for us . . . and will return for us very soon.
 - Meanwhile, He has promised that He will never leave or forsake us and all those who place their hope in His word and trust Him with all their hearts.
 - Therefore, let us not fret about tomorrow . . . it only leads to evil. [See Psalm 37]

- Instead, let us delight ourselves in the goodness, grace, and power of our Lord for He cares for the sheep of his pasture (us).

23  **Communion**