

TODAY IS A SPECIAL DAY

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Under the Law of Moses, the Jews observed many special days. But that law was done away, as the Lord “took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col 2:14). Therefore, God says, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col 2:16-17). Under the New Testament, the Law of Christ, there is one day that is esteemed above all others, and that is Sunday, the first day of the week. Why? Jesus Christ “was risen early the first day of the week” (Mark 16:9; see also Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). It is for this reason that every Sunday is “the Lord’s day” (Rev 1:10). There is no special time designated to commemorate the Lord’s birth into this world. His death is to be memorialized every first day of the week when Christians assemble on the Lord’s day (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Thus, the day of our Lord’s resurrection is *the* special day given by the Lord, as it is Christ’s resurrection from the dead that gives us hope that we will also one day be resurrected and be given a glorious incorruptible spiritual body.

Christ’s flesh rested in hope of the resurrection

Psalm 16:8-10 contains a great prophecy of Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead: “I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: *my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*” The word “hell” in his prophecy is the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which refers to the grave, and the unseen world beyond the grave. This word is translated by the Holy Spirit as the Greek word *Hades* in the quotations of the prophecy in the New Testament. “Hades” is the unseen world where the spirits of the dead go to await the end of this world, when Christ returns, which is the day of the “resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). Hades is divided into two parts, on one side the wicked are tormented, and on the other side the righteous are comforted in Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:19-31). When Christ died, his spirit went to the place where the righteous are, known as Paradise. As he was dying on the cross, the Lord told the repentant thief dying next to him, “Verily I say unto thee, *Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*” (Luke 23:43). Christ’s physical body was placed in a tomb, but was not there long enough to see corruption. On the Day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Christ’s crucifixion, the Apostle Peter preached that God raised Christ from the dead, “*having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it*” (Acts 2:24). He then quoted the prophecy in Psalm 16 in verses:25-28, and explained in verses 31-32, “*He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*” The

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Apostle Paul also quoted Psalm 16 when preaching in Antioch in Pisidia, and was applied to Christ's resurrection in the exact same way as in Acts chapter two (Acts 13:26-37). On the third day after his crucifixion, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead!

Our hope in Christ's resurrection

Psalm 116:10 says, *"I believed, therefore have I spoken."* This verse is quoted in 2 Corinthians 4:13: "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." This comes after the inspired apostle Paul had spoken of the afflictions he and the other apostles had suffered, including the continual threat of death. But Paul believed that, even if he were killed, he would be resurrected one day as Christ was:

"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor 4:14). Paul believed in the resurrection, and therefore spoke about it. Paul's faith in the resurrection, of which he speaks in 2 Corinthians 4:13-14 is based in the resurrection of Christ. God has *"begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (1 Pet 1:3). Our hope for an eternal inheritance in heaven is based in the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet 1:3-5), because *"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Cor 15:50). We cannot go to heaven unless we are resurrected with an incorruptible spiritual body (1 Cor 15:35-58). But if Christ were not raised as the firstfruits of this resurrection, then we have no hope of having such a resurrection ourselves (1 Cor 15:1-34; Php 3:10-21). But since Christ *was* resurrected, we *do* have a *living hope* to be raised like he was. Philippians 3:20-21 says, *"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* First Corinthians 15:50-58 says, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*