

Resurrection Day! – 2022

Abraham Lincoln, Events in History:

- Elected to a second presidential term in 1864, the war was clearly near its end. Nowhere can one find a more Christian analysis of the Civil War than in Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address: "Both (North and South) read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes." Even more to the point was his reply when a minister from the North told the president he hoped "the Lord is on our side." Responded Lincoln: "I am not at all concerned about that... But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side." After a year in his second term as President, the war ended. On April 9, 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant. On the night of April 14, while attending a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, Lincoln was shot by assassin John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln died the next morning. He is buried in Springfield, Illinois, and remains a beloved symbol of union and democracy and trust in God.¹

Mark 12:18–23 (NIV84)

- ¹⁸Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.
- ¹⁹"Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.
- ²⁰Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children.
- ²¹The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third.
- ²²In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too.
- ²³At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"
- This question (v. 23) revolved around the so-called *levirate law*, which God gave to ancient Israel. It was designed to provide descendants for a man who died childless so that his family line could maintain its property. It is explained in the book of Deuteronomy:²

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (NIV84)

¹ D.P. Amsler, "[Lincoln, Abraham](#)," ed. J.D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort, *Who's Who in Christian History* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992), 426.

² R. C. Sproul, [Mark](#), First Edition., St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2011), 311.

⁵If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her.

⁶The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

- The purpose of *levirate marriage* was to keep inheritances within the tribe. It only applied when the surviving brother was single; he was not to divorce his existing wife, nor marry his deceased brother's wife in addition to his own. The principle **predates the Mosaic law**, as the story of Onan (Gen. 38:6–10) indicates.³

Genesis 38:6-10 (NIV84)

⁶Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar.

⁷But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death.

⁸Then Judah said to Onan, "Lie with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to produce offspring for your brother."

⁹But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he lay with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from producing offspring for his brother.

¹⁰What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight; so he put him to death also.

- The Sadducees created a scenario in which multiple brothers all marry the same woman but die before having children.

The Sadducees thought that, given the scenario they have just proposed, any resurrection will demand that God tolerate *polyandry*, or one woman having multiple husbands. This was repugnant to any Jew.⁴

The question was "designed to make the literal view of life that the Pharisees and Jesus held, that there is life after death, seem absurd."⁵

- They intended to discredit Jesus by attempting to ask Him a question that He would be unable to answer.

Mark 12:24–27 (NIV84)

²⁴Jesus replied, "**Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?**"

³ John MacArthur, [Mark 9–16](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015), 189.

⁴ Douglas Mangum, ed., [Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament](#), Lexham Context Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), Mk 12:18–27.

⁵ John MacArthur, [Mark 9–16](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015), 189.

²⁵When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

- The dead that arose would not be “angels” but be “as angels” or “like the angels” in regard to sex and marriage. “Just as the children of the resurrection no longer die (in heaven), so also they no longer need marriage to replenish the race.”⁶
- How many times have you heard someone say of a loved one that passed away, “There’s another ‘angel’ in heaven”?

²⁶Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?

²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

- *Mistaken* = *πλανᾶω planáō* = a wandering. To cause to wander, lead astray: to wander, go astray.⁷
- The Sadducees were lead astray due to their ignorance of the Scriptures. They wandered from the truth into error.

Anyone can wander from truth if they don’t know the Scriptures. You know the Scriptures by *reading* and *listening to* the Scriptures. It does not come through osmosis.

- Jesus quoted God as saying, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”
He did not say that He *was* the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- The Sadducees ran on a false premise that in the other world the same conditions prevail that [exists] in this world. Where does the Old Testament teach anything of this?⁸
- One danger in portraying the resurrection life to come is that our image tends to match our wishes for an earthly utopia.

The Sadducees derived their illustration from those who painted pictures of the resurrection life in worldly terms.

Most envision the resurrection body as a spruced-up version of our physical bodies; we visualize heaven in earthly terms that suit our own desires. We can see this tendency in contemporary cartoons that depict people floating on clouds, still occupied by the same concerns that they had on

earth.

- Many Christians who believe in the resurrection also view it from a defective anthropocentric (*man-centered*) point of view. They visualize the afterlife as a great reunion of family and friends—a continuation of life on earth without all the problems that hamper our happiness. Just analyze gospel songs that describe what heaven is like to see the truth of this statement.

The problem is that the idea of meeting God takes a backseat.

The major danger in trying to portray the resurrection life is that our image more often than not matches our wishes for an earthly utopia, and human beings wind up as the center of this life rather than God.⁹

John 11:23-26 (NIV84)

²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

- Jesus is the resurrection and the life; do you believe this?
- Do you believe this? You should be able to say, “Yes, Lord, I believe it. I believe all that is written in your Book.
- “I believe in one great God, who has made this earth and has placed me upon it. I believe that I am sinful. I believe that this same God in love and wisdom sent the Lord Jesus Christ to die for me that I might be saved. I believe that Jesus existed with God and as God from the beginning, that he became man, that his death was a substitutionary death for me by which my sin has been removed as far as the east is from the west and on the basis of which it will be remembered against me no more. I believe in Christ’s historical, literal, and bodily resurrection, by which God has demonstrated that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is acceptable to him as an all-sufficient atonement for the sin of his people and in which he has also given a foretaste of the coming resurrection of all who believe on him. I believe in the person and power of the Holy Spirit. I believe that he opens blind eyes to see Christ and moves rebellious wills to embrace him to their salvation. I believe that he illuminates the written Word of God so that those who are saved can understand it and obey it. I believe in the fellowship of

⁶ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 530.

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 528–529.

⁹ David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 473.

the saints. *I believe* in the church. *I believe* in God's providence, by which nothing enters the life of the Christian that is not the product either of God's direct or permissive will. *I believe* that God chastises his children. *I believe* that he is determined to perfect the character of Jesus Christ in all who are united to Christ by faith. *I believe* that Jesus will one day return from heaven even as he was seen to go into heaven—bodily and in time. *I believe* that in that day there will be a final resurrection of believers to the life of heaven and of unbelievers to judgment. In hell there will be suffering. In heaven there will be a life of blessing prepared in advance by God for those whom he has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.”

- “Do you believe this?” You should be able to echo the teaching of the written Word in answer to the question of the living Word, rounding it off with a hearty, “Yes, Lord, I believe all that is written in your Book.”¹⁰

1 Corinthians 15:1–23 (NIV84)

¹Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of **first importance**: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

¹¹Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

¹²But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even

Christ has been raised.

¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

¹⁵More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

¹⁹If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

²⁰But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

²³But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

- Jesus did not appear to only a few people. He appeared to over 500 people (1 Cor. 15:6), including many women, His own apostles, His brother James, and to Saul of Tarsus (the chief anti-Christian of the day).

Jesus did not simply appear on a few occasions.

He appeared on at least 12 different occasions. These were spread over a 40-day period of time (Acts 1:3) and in many different geographical locations.¹¹

Job 14:5, 14 (NIV84)

⁵Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

¹⁴If a man dies, **will he live again?** All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come.

- *Will he live again?* has been on every person's mind since death entered the world.
- The Christian has the greatest hope in the historical resurrection of Christ Jesus, for it points to a time when they will be resurrected!
- One reason the early church fathers faced martyrdom so valiantly was that **they were absolutely convinced of the future resurrection**. Many were eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection.

They *weren't* transformed into brave martyrs,

¹⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 853–854.

¹¹ Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 462.

when Jesus performed many miracles.

They *were not* transformed into brave martyrs, when Jesus was crucified. They *all* either ran or denied Him.

They *were* transformed from fearful cowards to brave martyrs, when they witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Death was not the final blow.

- Death is just a transition, for **Christ**, the firstfruits, **is our guarantee**.

Firstfruits. Two basic meanings: *best* as seen in Jas 1:18, where Christians are called the “firstfruits” of God’s creation. The remaining uses all emphasize the shade of meaning of the “**first part of a larger harvest**.”¹²

- The abundant life begins at regeneration in the heart of every believer, and *physical* death cannot end it.

Revelation 1:9–18 (NIV84)

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

¹⁰On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,

¹¹which said: “**Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.**”

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

¹³and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.

¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “**Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.**

¹⁸**I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.**

¹² A. Boyd Luter, “*Firstfruits*,” ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

- The One who is the Resurrection and the Life has the key to unlock the grave and the power of death, so that believers have nothing to fear from it.

This is at the heart of the Christian faith.

- *As long as there is life and death, Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, is the most relevant person to have ever walked the earth.* – R.C. Sproul

Hebrews 9:27-28 (NASB)

²⁷And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

²⁸so **Christ** also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin**, to those who eagerly await Him.

- Jesus *appeared* the first time to bear the sins of many (note: *many* not *all*) by being an offering (sacrifice) for sin.

In the Old Testament, the High Priest would *appear* the first time to bear the sins of the people.

He bore the sins by entering the Holy of Holies. If he did anything wrong and failed to follow God’s precise instructions, he would die.

The High Priest would *appear a second time*, when he came out of the Holy of Holies. This showed that **God had accepted the sacrifice**, and the sins of the people were atoned for.

The High Priest’s *second appearance* had nothing to do with sin; it did not deal with sin. The sin was taken care of. His second appearance signified the forgiveness of sins *without reference to sin*.

- V.28, “without *reference to sin*,” Jesus Christ came the first time to bear the sins of many (His elect). This second time, He will come **not having anything to do with sin**.
- Jesus’ second appearance (after His resurrection) will confirm that His sacrifice has been accepted and that He has secured the blessings of salvation for those whom He represented. **Jesus’ resurrection assures us that our sins have been taken away once for all!** The justice of God has been completely satisfied.

Hebrews 7:27 (NIV84)

²⁷**Unlike the other high priests**, he (*Jesus*) does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins **once for all** when he offered himself.

- The Old Testament High Priest offered a sacrifice *apart from himself* into the Holy of Holies.

This sacrifice *cost* the High Priest *nothing*. It was brought to him by the people.

The High Priest did not shed his own blood.

- The New Testament High Priest, Jesus Christ, did not offer a sacrifice apart from Himself, **He offered Himself** as the sacrifice for the elect's sins once for all!

The blood offered in this sacrifice was His!

When *blood* is mentioned in a sacrifice, it did not mean blood coming from a wound; it meant that a life had been sacrificed.

Hebrews 9:11–14 (NIV84)

¹¹When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

¹²He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but **he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.**

- When did Jesus enter the Most Holy Place once for all?

When He was resurrected.

¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

¹⁴How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

- The animals in the Levitical system were brought involuntarily and without understanding to their deaths.

Christ came of His own volition with a full understanding of the necessity and consequences of His sacrifice. His sacrifice was not just His blood, it was His entire human nature.¹³

- The sacrifices of the old covenant only cleansed the flesh (v. 13). They only *covered* sin. Christ's sacrifice, however, cleanses the conscience as well.¹⁴
- Christ's sacrifice transforms our lives and hearts and makes us clean on the inside.¹⁵

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Heb 9:14.

¹⁴ John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Heb 9:14.

¹⁵ Bruce B. Barton et al., *Hebrews*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 137.

Hebrews 10:1–18 (NIV84)

¹The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it **can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect** those who draw near to worship.

²If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.

³But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, ⁴because it is **impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats **to take away sins**.

⁵Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;

⁶with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.

⁷Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.’”

⁸First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them” (although the law required them to be made).

⁹Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second.

¹⁰And by that will, **we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

¹¹Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, **which can never take away sins**.

¹²But when this priest had offered for all time **one sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God.

¹³Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool,

¹⁴because **by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever** those who are being made holy.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

¹⁶“This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”

¹⁷Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” [Jeremiah 31:33-34]

¹⁸And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

- The Old Testament sacrifices never *took away* sins; they *covered* them.
- Only the New Testament sacrifice of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ *takes away sin forever*.

- V. 10, 14: We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. By one sacrifice he has *made perfect forever* those who are being made holy.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ showed that **God the Father approved and accepted the sacrifice**; the Father's wrath has been totally appeased, and Jesus Christ will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin* to those who eagerly await him (Hebrews 9:28).
- Jesus' great sacrifice and resurrection *took away* our sin! We've been *made perfect forever* by His precious blood and can now stand before God Almighty without fear of condemnation.
- **“What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!”**