

## Resurrection Hope

Spring is here! This season we all have been waiting for through the long, cool winter. First, we have the crowning of the "March Madness" college basketball champion this weekend. Then we also have the opening of the 2010 major league baseball season. But the best and far more important event of this weekend is the Easter holidays, the three-day commemoration of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

March Madness brings hope among basketball fans that their favorite team will win the national championship. Major league baseball action breeds die-hard hope among baseball fans that their favorite team will win their league pennant and even the World Series. But the Easter story of the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ brings much greater hope, the hope of deliverance from the eternal punishment of sin in hell, and the hope of new and everlasting life in heaven. This hope that exceeds all other hope is known as the "blessed hope."

Need I remind you that this special spiritual hope came to us from Israel? The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ took place 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem, the Holy City located in the ancient Jewish state of Israel. Jesus Himself told us way back then in His own words that "salvation is of the Jews."

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is called, the Gospel. And the Gospel simply means, "Good News" The "Good News" in a nutshell is: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This past weekend at the local Forestville Baptist Church, a total of about 4,000 people witnessed five wonderful dramatizations of the Easter story, entitled, "Why?" More than 300 people of the church participated in these special dramatic and musical presentations. And about 115 people responded to the invitation to place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Of course, this is what the Easter Story is all about - the "blessed hope" of forgiveness of sin and of everlasting life.

The story of salvation started way back in the Garden of Eden, when Satan deceived Adam and Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, bringing sin and death upon all mankind. But God in His love and mercy implemented His plan to forgive men of their sin and to offer them salvation from sin's punishment and the freedom of eternal life. That plan sent God the Son, Jesus, into the world, where he was born into human flesh as a baby in Bethlehem's manger.

But God's plan led Jesus to live a sinless life, to proclaim the coming of a New Covenant of faith, and then to give His life as the perfect and ultimate sacrifice for the sin of all mankind.

All of those events took place historically in Israel. All were true and factual events that really happened. And they all happened for a purpose, that you and I today by our faith in the Savior might receive the promised salvation and everlasting life.

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The Forestville dramatic presentations concluded by emphasizing a three-step process for one today to receive this salvation and new life. The first step is to Believe.-You must sincerely believe the Gospel, that Jesus Christ gave His life and shed His blood for you and in your place. And if you will sincerely believe this in your heart, you can be saved.

The second step is to Repent. The Bible says that "the wages of sin is death," and that "without repentance there is no forgiveness of sin." Repentance means more than for you just to be sorry, but also for you to make a genuine decision in your heart to turn away from your sin.

The third step is to Commit. After you have believed in Jesus as your Savior and repented of you sin, you must then positively and fully commit your heart and life to Jesus, to enthrone Him as the Lord of your life. You must commit to live for Him and to obey and honor Him in all that you do.

Thanks to Israel, we have this wonderful Gospel of Salvation available to mankind of all time and of all the world. Thanks to Israel and God's choice of the Jewish people as the channel for His plans, we have the Gospel available to us here in America today.

Thanks to God for the 115 people who made first-time decisions to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior at Forestville last weekend. And thanks to God for the sure future promise of everlasting life for all today who believe the Gospel, repent of sin, and commit their heart and life to Him. Thanks to God for the "blessed hope" of the Easter Story.

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