

# **EASTER = HOPE**

## **ADVANCEMENTS IN CULTURE BUT...**

- A. **Three key areas of advancement**
  - 1. Education / Technology / Science-medicine
- B. **But age old problems are still in play**
  - 1. We have not been able to educate prejudice away
  - 2. We are communicating more, connecting less and still lonely
  - 3. Science has not solved depression / anxiety / death
- C. **Spiritual problems require spiritual answers - faith / hope and love are powerful**
  - 1. Easter = hope (favorable expectation) **(1 Peter 1:3 NIV)**
    - a. Beyond science/tech is a person and the power of God

## **THREE GROUPS AT THE CROSS**

- A. **Those who rejected Jesus** **(Luke 23:33-37 NKJV)**
  - 1. The soldiers who saw Jesus as weak - Romans did not respect the conquered
  - 2. Religious leaders - could not intellectually accept Jesus
    - a. He disrupted their plans and challenged their power
  - 3. Their theme song - Prove it to me and I'll believe
- B. **Those disappointed and sad about Jesus** **(Luke 23:48 NLT)**
  - 1. Jesus was their ticket to a better life - freedom from Rome / restoration of Israel
    - a. Tried to fit Jesus into their plans
  - 2. Their hopes ended at the cross - the sorrow of it's over
- C. **Those who recognized and responded to Jesus** **(Luke 23:39-43 NKJV)**
  - 1. The thief on the cross - who started off mocking Jesus
    - a. He had the humility to adjust and admit guilt
    - b. He showed humility to acknowledge Jesus as Lord
    - c. Faith to believe death was not the end - there was a life beyond
  - 2. Jesus gave him a promise - that he would be with Jesus in the next life

## **EASTER = HOPE FOR ALL THREE GROUPS**

- A. **Hope for those who rejected Jesus**
  - 1. He could have, but did not, doom them for eternity - He forgave them
  - 2. Have you seen Jesus as weak / intellectually compromised / disruptive
  - 3. You may have rejected Him, but He has not rejected you - door's still open
    - a. But He will not prove anything to you
- B. **Hope for those disappointed and sad**
  - 1. They thought it was over but the resurrection revealed it was not
  - 2. Their thinking was limited - God's plan bigger than Israel's freedom / restoration
    - a. God's plan was freedom from sin & it's effects and restoration to God
  - 3. Have you said it's over? The resurrection proves it's not **(Acts 26:8 NKJV)**
    - a. Not too much for God to raise dead dreams, emotions, finances, marriages
    - b. Ask what His plan for you is - bigger / better with an eternal effect
- C. **Hope for the humble, those who recognize and respond to Jesus**
  - 1. The humility to adjust and admit wrong before God
  - 2. The humility to recognize Him as Lord
  - 3. The faith to believe that this life is not all there is **(John 3:16 NKJV)**
    - a. This promise is available to us today!

**1 Peter 1:3 NIV**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

**Luke 23:33-37 NKJV**

33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

**Luke 23:48 NLT**

48 And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow.

**Luke 23:39-43 NKJV**

39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

**Acts 26:8 NKJV**

8 Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

**John 3:16 NKJV**

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.