

THE FIRST EASTER MESSAGE

Gary D. Erickson

(Acts 2:14-39)

I. THE FIRST EASTER MESSAGE (Acts:2:14-39):

- A. Setting of message: Jesus was arrested by the Roman government and crucified. When He gave up the ghost, the earth quaked, darkness covered the earth, and saints that had died rose back to life again. On the third day He rose again from the dead! For forty days He appeared to believers at various locations.
 - 1. It was 47 days after the resurrection of our Lord on the Day of Pentecost.
 - a. The city was filled with Jews celebrating the Passover season.
 - 2. Jesus had appeared at various times over a 40-day period.
 - 3. At his last appearance He commanded them to go to Jerusalem and tarry for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4-5).
 - 4. After tarrying for 8 to 10 days the Holy Spirit fell upon 120 believers gathered in an upper room. They spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
 - 5. It was this infilling of the Holy Spirit that caused everything they had been taught by Jesus to suddenly become clearly defined. This was the birth of the Christian church.
- B. The spokesman was Apostle Peter.
 - 1. It was appropriate that Peter be the spokesman since Jesus had given him special authority to wield the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:14-19).
 - a. He used the keys on two other occasions (Samaritans in Acts 8 and Gentiles in Acts 19).

II. THE CONTENTS OF THE MESSAGE:

- A. First point: Peter defended the believers against the accusation that they were drunk by proclaiming that this was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that God would pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28-29).
- B. Second point: Peter proclaimed the deity of Jesus Christ. He was the fulfillment of David's prophecy that out of David's loins He would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne (II Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:3; 36-37; 132:11-12).
- C. Third point: The innocent Messiah had been crucified, yet God had raised Him from the dead!
- D. Fourth point: Peter made application to those listening by answering their question, "What must we do?"
 - 1. Repentance:
 - 2. Water baptism:
 - 3. Receiving the Holy Spirit:

III. THE ETERNAL GREATNESS OF THE EASTER MESSAGE:

- A. The physical and emotional rigors of the arrest, mocking, cruelty, and ultimate crucifixion of Jesus are sad and shocking.
 - 1. There are great eternal messages in the sufferings of the Savior.
 - a. *The triumph of humility*: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).
 - b. *The presence of suffering in life perfects the soul*: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).
 - c. *It proves Jesus' love for humanity*: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

- d. *It illustrates the severe consequences of sin:* “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).
- B. The message is great because it is positive and gives hope to the world. Because Jesus lives we can live also!
 - 1. There are great eternal messages in the resurrection:
 - a. *Jesus has triumphed over death, hell and the grave:* “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” (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).
 - b. *He has shared His victory with believers:* “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:2, also 2 Timothy 4:8).
 - c. *If we die with Jesus we can share with Him in that resurrection power:* “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:” (Romans 6:4-5)
 - d. *It seals the ultimate victory of righteousness over evil:* “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33, also Revelation 17:14; 19:11-16).