

Incredible?

The day we call Easter is celebrated because of the belief in the historicity of an event that unbelievers and scoffers of the Bible ridicule and say is incredible.

Incredible: a thing seeming too unusual or improbable to be believed.

A few years after the first Easter morning a man was on trial for his life and his “crime” according to the Jewish authorities was that he was causing great harm because he was preaching that Jesus of Nazareth had actually risen from the grave and that he had personally seen Him and that his life had been radically changed because now he knew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ because of His resurrection according to the Scriptures. That man on trial was the Apostle Paul.

Acts 26:1-8

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 2 "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3 especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. 8 Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

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

Acts 26:8

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God raises the dead? When you woke up this morning did you think about dying?

Probably not, and neither did the four teenagers who were killed on Friday think that was the last day of their life. We live and we die. Then what?

The Bible teaches a resurrection of the dead. Read John 5:25-30, part of Jesus' sermon on His deity, where He talks about a spiritual resurrection in regeneration and a physical resurrection at the last day. When your body comes forth from the grave where will your soul be? Spiritually alive with Christ or spiritually dead in hell?

The hope of the believer is eternal life with Christ.

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27

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This Easter morning I want to ask and answer three questions:

1. What does Easter mean?
2. Why did Jesus die on a cross?
3. What is so special about Jesus' resurrection from the grave?

First, What does Easter mean?

In our English Bibles word “Easter” is translated from the Greek *pascha* which is (“Passover”).

The KJV translates *pascha* in Acts 12:4 as Easter.

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people.

The NKJV and all of the other thirteen English translations that I checked translate *pascha* in Acts 12:4 as **Passover**.

4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after **Passover**.

The English word Easter, which parallels the German word *Ostern*, is of uncertain origin. One view, expounded by the Venerable Bede in the 8th century, was that it derived from Eostre, or Eostrae, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility.

As to the question, “What does Easter mean?”

And then what has Easter to do with Passover?

Passover was and still is a Jewish celebration that commemorates the exodus of the Hebrews from their bondage in Egypt. The tenth and last terrible plague that God brought against Pharaoh and the Egyptians was to kill the firstborn in every household that did not have the blood of a lamb sprinkled on the doorpost.

When Jesus of Nazareth was crucified it was just before Passover and Jesus died at the exact time the Passover lamb was slain, literally, “between the evenings” or between 3 and 6 pm as we reckon time. {Cf. Exodus 12:6}

So Easter is based on the Jewish Passover and although Passover is celebrated by the Jews today, the Jews deny that Jesus is Messiah and are thus ignorant of the true meaning of the Exodus Passover.

For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. {1 Corinthians 5:7}

And so Easter is a special day on which Christians are to celebrate Passover but with the New Testament revelation that Jesus Christ died and that He arose from the grave according to the Scriptures.

The date of Easter and its controversies

Fixing the date on which the Resurrection of Jesus was to be observed and celebrated triggered a major controversy in early Christianity in which an Eastern and a Western position can be distinguished. The dispute was not definitively resolved until the 8th century.

In Asia Minor, Christians observed the day of the Crucifixion on the same day that Jews celebrated Passover, that is, on the 14th day of the first full moon of spring, or 14 Nisan. The Resurrection, then, was observed two days later, on 16 Nisan, regardless of the day of the week.

In the West, the Resurrection of Jesus was celebrated on the first day of the week, Sunday, when Jesus had risen from the dead. Consequently, Easter was always celebrated on the first Sunday after the 14th day of the month of Nisan. Increasingly, the churches opted for the Sunday celebration, and the Quartodecimans (“fourteenth day” proponents) remained a minority.

The Council of Nicaea in 325 decreed that Easter should be observed on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21). Easter, therefore, can fall on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25.

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An email has been circulating with some Interesting Facts about Easter.

This year is the earliest Easter any of us will ever see the rest of our lives! And only the most elderly of our population have ever seen it this early (95 years old or above!). And none of us have ever, or will ever, see it a day earlier!

1) The next time Easter will be this early (March 23) will be the year 2228 or (220 years from now). The last time it was this early was 1913 (so if you're 95 or older, you are the only ones that were around for that!).

2) The next time it will be a day earlier, March 22, will be in the year 2285 or (277 years from now). The last time it was on March 22 was 1818. So, no one alive today has or will ever see it any earlier than this year!

That is enough about the technical details of Easter.

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Indulge me for a few minutes while I talk about special days.

There are many special days on the calendar, both secular and religious.

We remember birthdays and anniversaries. Humans are finite beings and we are aware of time. Time is of this present age and has no relevance in eternity.

We celebrate Christmas to rejoice in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and some people actually remember that the Christmas season is about Jesus, the Son of God, who is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity: **the Word made flesh.**

And we have the same expectation and hope that many recognize that this day called “Easter” is remembered to commemorate that Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ arose from the dead after three days and three nights in the grave.

Easter when correctly celebrated in the Christian Church is the most revered day of the year for the believer in Jesus Christ.

And so we have special religious days such as Easter and Christmas.

Please hear me in the spirit in which I speak. For me personally I am not impressed with one day over another. That said I do not **despise** you if you regard one day as more religious than another day.

Matters of conscience are those things that are not specifically addressed, yea or nay, in the Bible. In the early days of the Christian church there were questions about eating meat that had been offered as a sacrifice to dumb idols and especially about days and festivals. The first century church included Jews who had their traditions of holy days and sabbaths. But the Gentile Christians in the same local church had no such traditions. Were the Gentiles required to follow the traditions of the Jews? No, and Paul answers the question about matters of conscience in Romans, chapter 14.

As to **special days** Paul writes:

Romans 14:5-8

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

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So if Easter is a special day to you I say the Lord bless you.

As for me the way to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to make every effort to meet with the church every Sunday and not only on special days. Attend a church that honors Christ and preaches the Gospel of repentance and faith.

That answers the first question, “What does Easter mean?”

It means a special day to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave according to the Scriptures.

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The second question is, “Why did Jesus die on a cross?”

The simple answer is that the OT Scriptures prophesied that the Christ [Messiah] must suffer and die for the sins of His people, but that He must die in a specific manner.

Jesus scolded the two on the Road to Emmaus because they were ignorant of what the Scriptures taught about the suffering and death of Christ.

Luke 24:13-27

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Then a little later:

Luke 24:44-49

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus told these two that the Scriptures, correctly understood, revealed that He would suffer and actually die and that He would rise from the dead after three days.

The Scriptures, viz. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Zechariah 14 et al plainly and clearly told the Jews that Messiah would be terribly misunderstood and maltreated and abused and that He would be **hung on a tree**.

Paul in Galatians 3:13 quotes Deut 21:23

13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Why was Jesus accursed?

Because as the sinless Man He took on Himself the sins of His people and suffered the wrath of God on their behalf. My sin, and yours if you believe, is charged to Christ. His righteousness is freely given to the sinner who believes.

If you are not a genuine believer at this very moment you are under the wrath and condemnation of a holy God who must punish sin.

A genuine believer is one who agrees with God that they deserve to be sent to hell but they have placed their entire hope of eternity in heaven in what Jesus Christ has suffered for them. If you do not agree that you deserve to go to hell you are still trusting in your own righteousness and not in the sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Where will your sin be punished? Every sin will be punished in either a worthy Substitute or in the sinner. And God will not punish the same sin twice.

And so it must be that Christ die according to the Scriptures {Cf. 1 Cor 15: 1-4}

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Everything! The place of His birth, His being born of a virgin, His sinless life, and the His vicarious death, and yes, His resurrection from the dead was “according to the Scriptures.”

That answers the second question, “Why did Jesus die on a cross?”

Because if He had not died “hung on a tree” He would not have been the Christ.

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The third question to ask and answer is, “What is so special about Jesus’ resurrection from the grave?”

My desire this morning is to preach to you what many think to be an incredible story.

In the Book of Job, the oldest book of the bible, Job asked a pregnant question.

Job asked: **“If a man dies shall he live again?”** [Job 14:14]

What can be more decisive than words of Jesus?

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

The resurrection of the literal body of Jesus Christ is the most fundamental article of faith of Christianity. The virgin birth we celebrate as Christmas had to be attested to by the resurrection. The veracity of all OT prophecy depended on its fulfillment in the resurrection.

If you will carefully study the Book of the Acts of the Apostles you will learn that it was the resurrection of Christ that was the theme of every sermon preached.

Just a few examples from Acts:

On the Day of Pentecost

29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the **resurrection** of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Acts 2:29-33

When the lame man at the Gate Beautiful of the temple was healed.

Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. 12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made

this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God **raised from the dead**, of which we are witnesses. Acts 3:11-16

As Peter preached in the temple.

Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the **resurrection** from the dead. Acts 4:1-2

Away from Jerusalem.

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and **rise again** from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." 4 And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

5 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

Acts 17:1-6

And on we could go through the entire Book of Acts. Now I encourage you to do this as an exercise; read the Book of Acts and see for yourself that it was the resurrection of Christ that proved the authenticity of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ. That was the message that "turned the world upside down."

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The Lord Jesus Christ declared that everything in the writings of Moses, the prophets, and in the Psalms all pointed to His vicarious suffering for sinners and His triumph over death.

In order to emphasize this point, viz. that the resurrection of Christ was the fulfillment of the promises of God made through the OT prophets we will look at two passages in the NT where the Apostle Paul preaches Christ as the promised Messiah from the OT.

As I said, the veracity of all OT prophecy depended on its fulfillment in the resurrection of Christ.

I will trust the Holy Spirit to apply His word as I read and make a few comments.

Acts 13:26-52

26 "Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. 27 For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. 28 And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.

29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead. 31 He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32 And we declare to you glad tidings — **that promise which was made to the fathers**. 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus.

As it is also written in the second Psalm:

'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'

34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'

35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm:

'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'

36 "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from

all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

41 'Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.'

42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. **And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Do you see it?

32 And we declare to you glad tidings — **that promise which was made to the fathers.** 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus.

The promise made to the fathers was fulfilled in the resurrection and those who believe in Jesus Christ are their children.

Do not look for some future fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when the apostle tells us they were fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ.

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Then in Acts 26:1-11 Paul makes his defense before King Agrippa. King Agrippa is a Jew and is knowledgeable of the Scriptures.

While in Caesarea Paul is arrested because he is causing a disturbance by preaching that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfillment of what was written in the Law and the Prophets [Acts 24:14].

Festus, who will succeed Felix as governor, comes to Caesarea. The Jews want Paul sent to Jerusalem and they had a plot to kill Paul as he was being transferred. But Festus said to keep Paul in Caesarea.

Then King Agrippa and Bernice arrive. [Bernice was Agrippa's wife but she was also his sister] and with great pomp Festus arranges a hearing [Acts 25:23].

Acts 26:1 ff

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 2 "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3 especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. 4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

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

9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

12 "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.

14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. 21 For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — Cf. Acts 3:12-26

23 that the Christ would suffer, Cf. Isaiah 53; Psalm 22;

that He would be the first to rise from the dead, Cf. Psalm 16:10

Ps 16:9-10

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.

10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Isaiah 49:6

6 Indeed He says,

'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,

And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;

I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles ,

That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

24 Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

25 But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. 26 For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

29 And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains." 30 When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; 31 and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." 32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

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This is the message of Easter: The resurrection of Christ is not "incredible" i.e. something impossible to believe. Your hope of eternal life depends on the resurrection of Christ.

Romans 10:5-13

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." 6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, "'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

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As we close this message today I am going to prove to you the hardness of the human heart. In this audience today there are some who have heard the message of Christ crucified for sinners; that Christ was approved of by God the Father in that He raised Him from the dead. You have heard that your sin and guilt justly places you under the wrath of a holy God. You have heard the command to repent and believe the Gospel and yet you are unmoved.

"You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

But you will not come to Christ that you may have life.

Or, will you?

The invitation is for you to repent and believe the Gospel.

And I commit your response to the invitation to repent and believe the Gospel to the Holy Spirit.