

Theme: Resurrection Celebration

Title: Time Divided, Hope Provided – Luke 24:1-12; I Peter 1:3-21

Aim: Christ's coming, death, resurrection divided history/brought hope.

Intro: W/out a doubt, today is the most important day on the calendar for the Church – not Easter (celebration of Spring), but Resurrection Sunday, celebrating the triumph of Jesus Christ, His resurrection from the dead. The birth of Christ was certainly important – the incarnation, the Word becoming flesh & dwelling among us, God becoming man in order to redeem man - vital. Obviously, His death on the cross was vital as well, taking our sin upon Himself & dying to pay the penalty we deserve. “He paid a debt He did not owe; I owed a debt I could not pay. [Christ Jesus came & died] to wash my sins away...” (my paraphrase). But if Christ had not been raised from the dead, His coming & His dying would have been for nought. His resurrection was the Father's stamp of approval on Christ's atoning work; His acceptance of the decree, “paid in full.” And His resurrection is the foundation of our reconciliation w/God &, our new life in Christ & the hope of eternal life w/Christ in His kingdom. Because He was raised, we who are in Christ are made alive spiritually & will also be raised to life w/Him when He comes again, even if we die. Luke's account of the resurrection (24:1-12) was read earlier. Now I want to read Peter's reflection on what the resurrection means for us who believe. I Peter 1:3-21 Has it ever occurred to you that the coming to earth of Jesus Christ & His redeeming work, including the resurrection of Jesus, divided time? There have been numerous ways of counting years throughout history, but in AD 525 a monk named Dionysius Exiguus (Dennis the Small) devised the way of counting time as BC & AD. It took a while but this way of marking time became widely accepted in the 9th century AD under Roman Emperor Charlemagne. BC stands for “Before Christ,” tho Dennis the Small's calculations were seemingly incorrect – Jesus was most likely born

around 4 BC. AD stands for the Latin term, “In the year of our Lord,” marking the years following Christ’s birth. Now, this is not recognized/accepted by all; it is commonly replaced, beginning in AD 1715 by BCE (before the common era) & CE (Common Era). That’s ok; it’s a matter of preference, but it doesn’t change the facts. The fact remains that the divide of time/history centers on the person of Jesus Christ. BCE is still the time before Christ & CE is still from the coming of Christ onward, “In the year of our Lord.” Jesus is the lynch pin/hinge of history. And, if Christ had not lived & died to provide redemption, & had not been raised from the grave to conquer sin & death, 1st of all there would be no church & no reason to divide history in such a way. BC – Before Christ – all were in sin, w/no hope of reconciliation w/God & no hope of eternal life, all were headed for death & judgment. The world was under the curse of sin. Since Christ, God has been revealed thru the Living Word, Jesus the Son. Redemption has been provided by His righteous life, His death & resurrection, for all who believe in Him – faith being life response. The world is still under the curse of sin & bound for judgment, but there is salvation in Jesus Christ, for whosoever will come to Him by faith. Before Christ, all were/are in sin, w/out God & w/out hope. Because of Christ hope has been provided – living hope. The “outcome of our faith,” Peter says, is the “salvation of our souls.” We were “ransomed...w/the precious blood of Christ.” ***“He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead & gave Him glory, so that your faith & hope are in God.”*** History is divided by Jesus Christ. And, our lives can be divided by BC & AD as well. For me, 57 years ago, on March 10, 1968 (do the math – I’m 71), I came to faith in Christ & my relationship w/God & journey as a disciple of Christ began. On April 14, just a month later, I publicly confessed Christ as Savior/Lord in the

waters of baptism on Resurrection Sunday. My life before that was BC – before Christ, dead in sin; sinner w/no hope of being right w/God on my own. The last 57 years have been my AD – in Christ. Not an easy road, but instead of a sinner w/out hope, I am a redeemed child of God, not perfect by a long shot, but forgiven & given life in Christ & a living hope. I have ***“an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, & unfading, kept in heaven for [me & all who believe] who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*** The resurrected Christ ascended into heaven to sit at the Father’s side & to prepare a place for us; & He is coming again to gather together His elect to be w/Him forever in His eternal kingdom. For Kristine, tho she came to faith in Christ some years ago, today marks a dividing line of sorts for her as well, between Before Christ & in Christ, as she publicly confesses Christ as her Savior/Lord. What about you? Are you still BC – Before Christ? Or are you living AD, in the years of our Lord – in Christ? Mind you, that dividing line is not a division between sin & sinless living. We still struggle w/the pull of sin & will until Jesus comes & makes all things new. But it is a dividing line between sin marking our lives before God & righteousness before Him. When Jesus died & rose again, there was an exchange made. II Corinthians 5:21 expresses it – ***“For our sake He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus the Son) to be sin (The Father placed our sin upon Christ on the cross), who knew no sin (lived a life of perfect righteousness, was totally innocent & obedient), so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Christ’s righteousness credited to us who believe).*** Jesus Christ is the dividing line between condemnation & justification, God declaring that we are as if we had never sinned. He is the dividing line between w/out God & w/out hope & Emmanuel, God w/us, God w/in us by His Holy Spirit. He is the dividing line between enslavement to sin & freedom from sin’s penalty & power, the Holy Spirit working w/in us to transform our lives

little by little, line upon line – sanctification. He is the dividing line between brokenness & wholeness, which is a process which can only be realized in Christ. Is your life divided by Jesus? Come to faith in Christ. Resurrection Sunday is a great time to be reconciled to God & a great time to return to God. Why not today? It's in Jesus that time is divided & hope is provided.