

(South Sudan) He Is Alive: 2025 UBF South Sudan Easter Conference (By PADIET DENG)

Lk. 24:23 "but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive."

Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for abundantly blessing the South Sudan UBF Easter Bible conference. God sent an average of 55 participants and about thirty children on Sunday. The preparation for the Easter conference started with fasting for two days. The conference was held in Juba UBF Bible house for three days. God answered our prayers perfectly despite various challenges, such as insecurity and hot weather. Weeks before the conference, we were fearful due to insecurity in Juba, due to fighting between two rival armies. One belonged to the government, and the other belonged to the opposition, which led to the first vice president being put under house arrest by the president of the republic. One day during the preparation, we were forced to stop and reschedule our Bible study for the same reason: our messengers couldn't start drafting their message on time. We were praying that nothing would happen to interrupt our meeting. Yes, indeed, God answered our prayer that there have been no clashes between the two groups till now. God answered our prayers by cooling down the heat during the three days of the conference. As well as more than fifty participations and good spiritual Bible studies and messages.

The conference started on Friday, 18th April, in the afternoon. Though it was raining in the morning, we were afraid that the rain would impact the first-day meeting negatively, but to our surprise, God sent 53 adults despite our expectations. The first day commenced with an opening message based on Philippians 3:10-11, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship in his suffering," delivered by shepherdess Kimo Philip. This message paved our hearts to know and to participate in Jesus' suffering and the power of his resurrection.

Then, Dr. Oyor Moses, Sh. Johnson Deng, Sh. George Mario, Sh. Philip Angelo, and Sh. Padiet Deng led five five-group Bible studies. Shepd.Polis Apar delivered the first main message based on Luke 23:1-25. "Jesus trials in our place." The message helps us to believe that Jesus

was on trial in our place to take away our sins. Because Jesus was found innocent by the governor, Pilate, and Herod. Yet, he was sentenced to death. Sh. Polis had to prepare this message at a critical time when his younger son was very sick. But through this, he could learn how to participate in Jesus' suffering as his servant.

The second day commenced with the group Bible study. Shepherd Taban Moses delivered the main message II, according to the book of Luke 23:26-48. "Father, forgive them." The message challenged us to examine our hearts toward our fellow brothers and sisters in the church and outside citizens. South Sudan is dominated by hatred and violence of tribalism; based on this, it is rare to find peace and peaceful people. That is one of the most difficult norms that needs to be addressed urgently. Satan used to escalate the war and division among us because of the spirit of tribalism. This message helps us understand that we must forgive our brothers and sisters and everyone, even our enemies, based on Jesus' love and power for forgiveness, which is the only way to restore peace and receive God's blessing in our nation. I pray from the bottom of my heart that one day, South Sudanese will change, and we will embrace each other in peace and love so that South Sudan will change into a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The second program was Bible testimonies written and shared in the group. The prayer of Jesus' Father forgiving them influenced many people's lives. Many attendees wrote about the importance and significance of forgiveness and how we should implement and apply it in our daily lives as Jesus' disciples. One of them confessed and forgave one of her enemies who had hurt her before.

Easter Sunday was mainly ceremonial and a festival of Jesus' resurrection. The day was full of joy and excitement for Jesus, who overcame the power of death and sin. The message was delivered by Dr. Elia Peter, who returned recently from Cairo, Egypt, after successful medication. He applied for a master's degree at Cairo University. We will send him as a missionary one day at God's right time. The message is based on Luke 24:1-14, which was the conference's theme, "He is alive." Sh. Elia testified that he was occupied by the fear of death and failure, like those women who went to the tomb early in the morning to say goodbye to the dead Jesus. But surprisingly, Jesus was not a dead body. He was alive. After establishing a house church in 2020, he overcame a fear of not being able to bear children since he was

found sick with varicocele at the same time, and his work contract with the UN was terminated; however, by God's grace, he could find help and went to Cairo for medical treatment. The hope of bearing children popped up in his life when his wife, Nancy, found out she was pregnant, but after one month, she was bleeding badly. He thought it was an abortion, and he became paralyzed and fearful. Fortunately, the doctor told them the child was not affected. Last November, God blessed their house church with a baby boy, Achier. Praise the living God. The fear of death dominates each one of us in life, especially when we face some challenges and difficulties in this dark world, especially in Africa and, in particular, South Sudan, where there is no hope for a better life. The future seems gloomy, but praise be to God, who raised Jesus Christ from death and defeated the power of sin, giving us the living hope of the kingdom and eternal life.

Finally, the Easter Bible conference was a beautiful and inspiring blessing. I could say it was the most amazing Easter I have ever had. God bless each team to demonstrate God's work effectively—choir, messengers, group Bible leaders, media, organization team members, etc. Praise be to his name for the tremendous work of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer topics:

1. May the power of the risen Jesus work in us mightily that we may be his good witness in forgiveness
2. May the risen Jesus give us hope of overcoming our spiritual laziness and living the life that brings glory to him through commitment
3. Juba UBF to keep praying and raising Jesus' disciples in the ministry
4. To reach 100 1:1 weekly bible study and Sunday worship by 2032
5. Establishing twenty house churches among our members by 2032