

The Easter Story

1

Jesus' journey to Jerusalem

Jesus had spent the last three years telling and showing people about God. He had performed miracles, healing people, feeding big crowds, and even bringing people back to life. Lots of people had heard about Jesus because he had done and said so many amazing things.

Jesus was travelling to Jerusalem to celebrate a special festival meal, called Passover. For the last part of his journey, he travelled on a donkey. His friends, the disciples, had put their coats on the donkey's back to make it more comfortable.

A large crowd had gathered to see Jesus and when they saw him coming some of them took off their coats and put them down on the ground whilst others lay leafy branches from the palm trees down for the donkey to walk on. This was their way of showing that they knew Jesus was special. The crowd started to shout, hurray for Jesus! Hurray for Jesus the king.

What animal would you choose to travel on?

Lots of Christians remember this story each year on Palm Sunday, which is 28th March in 2021.

You can find this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 19 verses 28 to 38.

The story continues...



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One last meal together

Jesus was with his friends as they celebrated the festival of Passover by having a special meal together.

During the meal Jesus told his disciples that he was going to die soon. He picked up some of the bread and said thank you to God for it. He then tore the bread into smaller pieces and gave it to his friends. He told them to eat it. Jesus said, 'This is like my body which I'm giving for you. Eat this as a way of remembering me'.

After the meal Jesus took a glass of wine and held it up. He said, 'This is like my blood, which will be poured out for you'.

What do you think Jesus' friends thought of what he said?

Lots of Christians remember this story regularly when they share Communion together. They eat some bread and drink wine or juice and remember what Jesus said and did.

You can read this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 22 verses 14 to 23.

The story continues...



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In the garden

Jesus went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is part of the Mount of Olives, where there were lots of Olive trees growing. His friends were with him. He asked them to pray too but Jesus went off on his own.

Jesus asked God to help him.

When he went back to his friends, he found that they had all fallen asleep!

As he was waking them up, a crowd of people came towards him and Judas, who had been one of his twelve closest friends, was leading them.

Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek. This was the sign to the soldiers to arrest Jesus and that is what they did.

Do you have something you want to ask God to help you with?

You can read this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 22 verses 39 to 48.

The story continues...



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Lots of questions

The next day the city officials and chief priests took Jesus to Pilate and then to Herod, who were both rulers of the area.

They asked Jesus lots of questions but neither of them could find that Jesus had done anything wrong and did not want to decide what to do with Jesus.

Pilate wanted to let Jesus go free, because he did not think he should be killed, but the crowd shouted for Pilate to have Jesus killed.

Pilate decided to do what they wanted and let the soldiers take Jesus away to be killed.

How do you think Jesus felt knowing that he hadn't done anything wrong?

This is part of the story that we remember on Good Friday, which is 2nd April this year.

You can read this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 23 verses 1 to 25.

The story continues...

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Jesus dies

Jesus was beaten up and taken, with two criminals, to a hill where he was nailed to a wooden cross.

His friends cried for him. Other people gambled to win his clothes. The soldiers and the city officials teased Jesus saying to him 'if you are God's chosen one and have so much power then why don't you save yourself?'

But Jesus just said 'Father, forgive these people, they don't know what they are doing.'

Even though it was the middle of the day the sun stopped shining and it became dark for three hours. Jesus shouted, 'Father, I put myself in your hands!' Then he died.

When one of the Roman soldiers saw what had happened, he said 'Jesus must have been a good man!'

How do you think you would have felt if you had been there?

You can read this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 23 verses 27 to 49.

This is part of the story that we remember on Good Friday, which is 2nd April this year.

Find details of our Good Friday Zoom Messy Church and YouTube Reflection Service at www.stjohnscolchester.org.uk

The story continues...



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Three days later...

Jesus' body was buried in a tomb that had been cut into a rock and they rolled a large stone in front of the opening.

Early on Sunday morning some women went to visit his tomb, but they found the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. They went in but Jesus' body was not there.

They didn't understand what had happened.

Suddenly two men appeared, they were wearing shining white clothes. They were angels. They said, 'Jesus isn't here! He is alive! It has happened just like he said it would.'

The women then remembered Jesus telling them that is what would happen when he died.

The women were amazed and very excited by this news so they went to tell Jesus' friends what had happened, but they didn't believe them.

What could have happened to Jesus?

You can read this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 24 verses 1 to 12.

We celebrate this part of the story on Easter Sunday, which is 4th April this year.

Find details of our Easter Sunday Zoom Holy Communion and live streamed 11am service at www.stjohnscolchester.org.uk

The story continues...



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On the road

On the same day, two of Jesus' friends were walking from Jerusalem to a place called Emmaus.

As they chatted about all that had happened someone else started walking with them. He asked them what they were talking about.

Amazed that this stranger did not know everything that had just gone on in Jerusalem the two men told him all that had happened to Jesus. That he had been killed. That he had been buried but that today some of their friends had told them that his tomb was empty and that they had been told by angels that he was alive.

The stranger asked them, 'What is so hard to understand? Didn't Jesus tell you that this is what was going to happen?'

The three of them stopped to have something to eat. When the stranger took some bread, said thank you to God for it and tore it up and gave it to them the men finally realised who it was. It was Jesus!

How do you think the men felt at the beginning of the story? And at the end?

You can read this story in the Bible, Luke chapter 24 verses 13 to 35.

The story continues...



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The story continues...

Afterwards, Jesus returned to heaven but that isn't the end of the story. Actually, it is an invitation, from God to you.

Christians celebrate the story of Jesus dying on the cross because we believe that Jesus did it because he loves us.

None of us are perfect. We all do things wrong. But God still loves us. No mistake is so big that God will stop loving you.

Jesus was perfect. He let himself be killed so that instead of us having to face the outcome of what we do wrong we can be friends with God for ever.

The fact that Jesus came back to life three days later shows that he was not just a man but someone really special.

God's invitation to be friends is for everyone. It is your choice whether to accept it.

If you would like to be a friend of God you can say this prayer:

Dear God, thank you for loving me. Thank you for sending Jesus to show how much you love me. I'm sorry for the things that I do wrong. I want to be your friend. Thank you that you promise to be with me forever.

If you want to chat more about following Jesus and God's love for you then let us know as we'd love to help. office@stjohnscolchester.org.uk

To collect your Easter Trail prize meet Clare in the St John's Church car park between 10am-12pm on either Saturday 3rd or 10th April!