

EASTER

John 19:14-19; Luke 23:50-56; 24:1-9



WHEN Jesus was living here on the earth He did many kind things for the people. He made sick people well. He made blind people see. He made bad people good. He held little children on His lap and blessed them. All the people who loved Him knew He was God's Son and had been sent from Heaven to be their King.

A king is a man who tells all the people what to do. Jesus was not the kind of a king who sat in a beautiful chair and wore a purple robe like most kings do. Jesus was the kind of a king who wanted all the people to love God, and to pray to Him.

There were some bad people who did not want Jesus to be their King. They did not want to pray to God. They wanted a king, but they did not want Jesus to be their King.

They told lies about Jesus to all the people who would listen. They took Jesus to a man named Pilate. Pilate listened to the mean men tell lots of lies about Jesus. Jesus talked to Pilate, too. Pilate loved Jesus. He said he could not see anything wrong in what Jesus had done. He did not want anyone to hurt Jesus but the mean men said: "Put Jesus on the cross." In that place, they put people on a cross if they were bad. Jesus was not bad, but the people who lied about Him were bad.

Soldiers came and got Jesus. They took Him to a hill and put Him on a cross. They put two robbers on crosses, too, one on each side of Jesus. Poor Jesus! They hit Him and made fun of Him, but Jesus did not get mad at them. He prayed for them and asked God to forgive them, even if they were not sorry for what they did. It is hard to be nice to someone who is mean to us or hits us, but Jesus wants us to pray for the ones who are bad to us.

Jesus' friends and His mother stayed by the cross. They felt so sad! Jesus had not done anything wrong. He loved everybody.

Jesus loved them so much that He came down from Heaven and was nailed to the cross to save naughty people. He did not have to let the mean men hurt Him, but He was glad to do it to take away our sins. All of us are born with sin in our heart.

After Jesus died on the cross, His friends did not want to leave Him there, so a man called Joseph asked Pilate if he could take Jesus with him. Pilate said: "Yes." Oh, so lovingly they took Him down off the cross and wrapped Him in a clean, soft, white cloth. They put sweet smelling spices in the cloth, too.

Into a beautiful garden they carried Him. It was such a lovely place! In this garden there were some big, big rocks. A little room was cut out of the rocks and Jesus' friends took Him there.

Jesus was laid in that room in a rock tomb. As they left, His friends rolled a big stone in front of the doorway so no one would bother Jesus.

Oh, how sad Jesus' friends felt when they went home that night. They thought they would never see Jesus again. It was on Friday night that Jesus was put in the rock tomb.

Saturday came. No one was supposed to do any work on Saturday or to go anywhere, so no one went into the garden where Jesus was.

Early on Sunday morning while it was still a little bit dark, some women who loved Jesus very much, started to walk to the garden. They had some sweet smelling spices they wanted to put on Jesus' body. They wondered about the big stone that was in the doorway of the tomb. How could they move it? Who would roll it away for them?

Closer to the rock tomb they walked. They stopped in surprise. That heavy rock was not in the doorway. The door of the tomb was wide open. There stood a beautiful angel. The ladies were afraid. The angel knew that the ladies were afraid. "Do not be afraid," said the angel. "I know you came to find Jesus. He is not here. He is alive. Come and see the place where He lay."

In they went. They looked and looked but they did not see Jesus. Yes, there lay the clean, white cloth that Joseph had wrapped around Jesus, but Jesus was not there.

Had someone come in and taken Jesus away so they could not find Him? Where had they laid Him?

"Jesus is alive," said the angel. "Remember, He told you that He must die on the cross and on the third day He would live again. Go and tell His friends that He is alive and they shall see Him this day."

How glad they were to know they were going to see Jesus again!

When the ladies turned around and started to run to tell everyone the happy news, Jesus stood in front of them — alive! He talked to them. Then they went and told others: "Jesus is alive. He has risen from the dead as He said He would. He is living."

They had come to the garden so sad — they went away, oh, so glad!

This was the first Easter Day

MARY AT THE TOMB

John 20:1-21



IT was early, early in the morning. Mary Magdalene was going to the place where Jesus had been put when He was taken down from the cross. Mary had something nice that smelled sweet to put on Jesus. Mary was a special friend of Jesus.

Stop! Look! Where is Jesus? The place where Jesus was laid was empty. Jesus was gone! Jesus was not there! Where was He? Who took Him away?

Mary looked again into the tomb to be sure, but no — Jesus was really gone. Mary did see two angels there. Mary started to cry because she felt so bad. One angel said, “Woman, why weepest thou?” Mary said, “Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him.”

Mary turned around. She felt so sad! She was crying hard. You know what? Jesus was standing right there — right there by Mary. Jesus was alive. Mary was crying so hard she did not know it was Jesus. She thought it was the man who kept the garden nice.

Then Jesus said her name, “Mary.” Mary turned around and looked again. She knew Jesus’ kind voice. It was Jesus! Jesus was right there by her. He was living again just as He said He would. Mary was not crying anymore. She kneeled down by Jesus’ feet and worshipped Him.

Jesus surprised some of His other friends that day, too. He walked along the road with two of them. He ate dinner with some of them, too.

Ten of Jesus’ helpers — one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten helpers were sitting together Easter Sunday night. All of a sudden in came Jesus, without opening a door. He knew where they were just as He knows exactly where you are all the time. His helpers were so surprised they could hardly believe it was really Jesus. They even walked over and touched Him. Yes, it was their dear Jesus, alive and well.

Jesus talked to His helper friends a long time that Easter Sunday night. They were so happy to talk to Him again.

We cannot see Jesus, but we can talk to Him any time we want to and He always hears us. We pray — that is how we talk to Jesus. He wants us to talk to Him every day.