

# **Easter Day Colour White**

## **Jeremiah 31.1-6**

### **The Joyful Return of the Exiles**

**At that time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.**

**Thus says the LORD:**

**The people who survived the sword**

**found grace in the wilderness;**

**when Israel sought for rest,**

**the LORD appeared to him from far away.**

**I have loved you with an everlasting love;**

**therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.**

**Again I will build you, and you shall be built,**

**O virgin Israel!**

**Again you shall take your tambourines,**

**and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.**

**Again you shall plant vineyards**

**on the mountains of Samaria;**

**the planters shall plant,**

**and shall enjoy the fruit.**

**For there shall be a day when sentinels will call**

**in the hill country of Ephraim:**

**'Come, let us go up to Zion,**

**to the LORD our God.'**

## **What's going on?**

**The theme of all the readings today, the greatest day in the Christian year, is of joy and celebration. In this passage from Jeremiah, we hear of the joy of the exiled people of Israel at their return. The passage shows God's faithfulness and allows the people to look forward to a time of blessedness.**

## **Psalm 118**

### **A Song of Victory**

**O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his steadfast love endures for ever!**

**Let Israel say,  
'His steadfast love endures for ever.'  
The LORD is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.**

**There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:**

**'The right hand of the LORD does valiantly;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted;  
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.'**

**I shall not die, but I shall live,  
and recount the deeds of the LORD.  
The LORD has punished me severely,  
but he did not give me over to death.**

**Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter through them  
and give thanks to the LORD.**

**This is the gate of the LORD;  
the righteous shall enter through it.**

**I thank you that you have answered me  
and have become my salvation.**

**The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.**

**This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvellous in our eyes.**

**This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

# What's going on?

The psalmist sings a victory song which has language fitting for the subject of the day. The gates of heaven are open, as the gates of the Temple are opened to the righteous in this psalm. Jesus has overcome death and made it possible for human beings to be united with God in joy and gladness.

## **Colossians 3.1-4**

### **The New Life in Christ**

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

## **Acts 10.34-43**

### **Gentiles Hear the Good News**

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

# What's going on?

Either or both of these New Testament passages may be used. In Acts, Peter tells everyone that he is a witness to the resurrection of Jesus and that it is now his task to tell everyone who does not know what this means for people. No one needs to be separated from God by sin any more. For those who have accepted Christ, says Colossians, there is the further task of thinking about the heavenly life that Christ has won, to look forward to what God wants us to do and to be.

## **John 20.1-18**

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?

For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

## **Matthew 28.1-10**

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

## **What's going on?**

Both these passages tell the story of Jesus' resurrection and of the witnesses to the event. Jesus' followers, who come to mourn his death, find his tomb empty, a heavenly messenger is there to help them understand what has really happened and finally Jesus himself meets them even though they don't recognise him at first. Further, we see those who meet the risen

**Lord immediately hurrying to tell others the Good News. The joy is so great that it *has* to be shared.**

**To think about this amazing event further, have a look at Silvia Dimitrova's painting Rabbouni (see John 20 above). It is in *Sense Making Faith*, or you can see it on Silvia's website [www.silviadimitrova.co.uk](http://www.silviadimitrova.co.uk).**