

Introduction

Easter is at the heart of the Christian faith and its most important festival, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus on the third day after his death – three days that changed the world. The basic story is familiar not only to those who call themselves Christians and many who do not but picked up the basics through education or as a child taken to church. However, the days leading up to and beyond the Cross are, in the gospel stories, busy ones for Jesus and his followers. There is a potentially dangerous journey to make to Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations and a waiting Cross and later, following the Resurrection, another from Jerusalem to Emmaus. In-between are several incidents and opportunities for Jesus to teach that are maybe not so well known but important in the bigger picture. On our own journey through Lent it is a good time to see how these stories, big and small, shared by the writers of the gospels, feed into our understanding of who Jesus is and what Easter means for us.

The Gospels:

As we journey through the eyes of four writers, it is worth recalling briefly who they were originally writing for.

Mark, a friend of Peter, wrote the shortest and earliest gospel (c. AD64) and was writing with a Roman audience in mind.

Matthew wrote for a Jewish audience, and referenced the Old Testament over 100 times, emphasising Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.

Luke, a doctor, historian, and non-Jew, was writing mainly to a Gentile audience, and there is an emphasis on the marginalised.

John took a different approach, beginning with echoes of Genesis, and introducing Jesus as one who will bring a new creation. Jesus uses the same 'I am' that Moses heard from the burning bush in his conversation with God.