



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Jesus was Buried by Legislators!

APRIL 25-27, 2012

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Matthew 27:57-61

“And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58) This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. 59) And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60) and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away. 61) And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.” (NASB)

“NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE IS GOD’S INCREDIBLE AND AMAZING PROVIDENCE MORE EVIDENT THAN IN JESUS’ BURIAL.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

How does Jesus burial fulfill prophecy? Were the expectations of Christ’s enemies overthrown? What was the common practice of burial for one who had been crucified? Why did God use secret disciples rather than those well known? Who attended the funeral of Jesus Christ? Why a legislator’s tomb?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MAY 2-4: MATTHEW 27:62-66 *THE SINISTER LEADERS SECURE THE TOMB*
- MAY 9-11: MATTHEW 28:1-10 *THE RESURRECTION OF KING JESUS!*

Though many tend to rush from the Bible’s explanation of Jesus’ death to the glories of His resurrection, the truths surrounding His burial are so clearly prophesied and orchestrated by God that it merits our careful examination. While many criminals would last for days upon the cross, Jesus died after six hours of agony. The

first three He primarily suffered the wrath of men and the second three hours primarily suffering the wrath of God for the sins of all who would ever believe. The Triumphal Entry fulfilled the choice of the sacrificial lamb on the 10th of Nissan (Ex. 12:3). And the day of His death on the 14th of Nissan before Passover, at the precise time given in Exodus 12:6, where they were to kill the lamb “*at twilight*” which was between the decline of the sun at three and the setting of the sun around six! Thus, all the priests were in the temple slaughtering lambs when they suddenly heard the roar of the great veil tearing from top to bottom when Jesus died! The next verse (Ex. 12:7), “*they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses,*” graphically pictured the cross! Just before Joseph of Arimathea arrived to see Pilate, the wicked Jewish leaders, probably not only seeking to fulfill the outward law as they say, but also to dishonor Jesus’ body, “*asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away*” (Jn. 19:31, cf. Deut. 21:23). Pilate consented but, “*the soldiers . . . coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water*” (Jn. 19:32-34). Thus, both prophecies were fulfilled regarding the Messiah, “*He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken*” (Ps. 34:20), and “*They shall look on Him whom they have pierced*” (Zech. 12:10). Medical experts claim it is possible for the heart to burst from emotional strain, causing the blood to mix with the lymphatic fluid surrounding the heart.¹ Thereby the Messianic prophecy, “*Reproach has broken my heart*” (Ps 69:20), may also have been fulfilled as revealed by the “*blood and water.*”

“BY ROMAN LAW THE CORPSE OF A CRUCIFIED PERSON WAS NOT BURIED EXCEPT BY THE EXPRESS PERMISSION OF THE EMPEROR.”

A. CARR

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – DENNYS ON RT. 3, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – RESUMING AGAIN ON MAY 2, 2012

THURSDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – RT. 10, IRONBRIDGE SPORTS PK, NOON – WYTESTONE PLAZA – 8TH & MAIN – 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – IN THE TIDEWATER AREA (CALL 804-683-2285 FOR SPECIFICS)

Virginia

Jesus was Buried by Legislators!

I. THE FEARLESS DISCIPLES MT. 27:57-58

The Romans had given the Jews permission to remove criminals from their crosses due to Deut. 21:23. But no doubt these wicked leaders wanted to pay Jesus the final disgrace of a criminal's end in either throwing Him in a common grave with the other criminals or disposing of His body in the burning Valley of Gehenna—Jerusalem's garbage dump! And now they thought they had Pilate's permission! But suddenly, Joseph of Arimathea, a very wealthy, "*prominent member of the Council*" (Mk. 15:43) or Sanhedrin, "*gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.*" Pilate was surprised and "*summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph*" (Mk. 15:44-45). With explicit permission and possibly the godly centurion to verify it, "*he came therefore, and took away His body.*" As naturally a leader would do, he had planned this with another prominent member of the Sanhedrin (the executive, legislative and judicial ruling body). "*And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight*" (Jn. 19:38-39). It was necessary to "*gather up courage*" because these leaders were risking their leadership, fortunes, and even their lives to honor Jesus Christ. Joseph led and proved that he was "*a good and righteous man . . . waiting for the kingdom of God*" (Lk. 23:50-51), though he had formerly been a secret disciple "*for fear of the Jews*" (Jn. 19:38).

"IN A REAL SENSE JOSEPH BURIED HIMSELF ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND RELIGIOUSLY WHEN HE BURIED THE BODY OF JESUS. THIS ACT SEPARATED HIM FOREVER FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT THAT KILLED THE LORD JESUS." WILLIAM MCDONALD

II. THE FUNERAL DOUBLED MT. 27:59-60

There are not only two leaders who are willing to risk everything to honor Jesus, but there are also two women who are there at the funeral. The two acts that they perform both honor Jesus with something new. They "*took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.*" The word for "*clean*" literally means "*without blemish, spotless,*"² and therefore would have been new, "*and laid it in his own new tomb.*" This tomb had two significant security features, important in clearly proving the coming resurrection: it was impregnable because this was a tomb "*which he had hewn out in the rock*" and it only had one entrance which he sealed when "*he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb.*" But most important was the double prophecy that was fulfilled when Joseph boldly requested Jesus' body and put it in his own tomb. "*His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth*" (Isaiah 53:9). The wicked leaders had already assigned Jesus' grave to be with the wicked, but instead His burial was by a prominent legislator in a new tomb prepared for the King of Kings!

"WE KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BURIAL OF THE LORD JESUS THAN WE KNOW OF THE BURIAL OF ANY SINGLE CHARACTER IN ALL OF ANCIENT HISTORY"
WILBER SMITH

III. THE FEMININE DEVOTION MT. 27:61

While all the cocky disciples who promised that they would die with Jesus rather than desert Him are gone, these two Mary's are so devoted to Him they are among the four at the funeral and are last to leave His grave!

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 24-28*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 293-294.

² W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 103.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) How do you prove with your leadership your loyalty and discipleship to Christ?
- 2) Have you considered the impossibility of fulfilling so many prophecies without the sovereign providence of God?
- 3) Is Jesus Christ your Lord and the one you are willing to risk everything for, like these devoted leaders and ladies?