

Jesus' Burial **John 19:38-42**

38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

The gospels tell us that there was darkness over the whole land from noon until 3:00 p.m. At that time Jesus cries out in a loud voice and yields up the spirit. It is only 3 hours until the beginning of the Sabbath. I am sure that everyone connected with Jesus wondered what was to happen to the body of Jesus.

But God has made provision.

Isa 53:9 And they made His grave with the wicked — But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

So Isaiah gives us the unlikely scenario. That a man would die with wicked men but his burial would be as a rich man.

Two men step into the scene and take charge. Two improbable men. Both were members of the Sanhedrin, the body that has brought Jesus to His death. Why would these men, a part of the group who condemned Him now step in to see that He had a proper burial. And far beyond that, to have the burial of a rich man, a very rich man.

Let us see.

- I. Who will bury the body?
 - A. Two men, both from the institution that had condemned Him to death in the first place.
 - B. Two men, disciples it says.
 1. They were secret disciples.
 - a. Not the best thing to be.
 - b. But it was fear that they would lose their positions they had kept silent until this moment.
 - c. Nicodemus had spoken up once that we know of on Jesus' behalf but was put down quickly.

- (1) John 7: 50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, 51 "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" 52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."
2. But think of what great faith it now takes for them to step into the light.
- a. Even though Jesus was condemned by the other religious leaders.
 - b. Even though Jesus had died on the cross.
 - c. Even though their Messiah was now dead.
 - d. Yet now they wager what before they could not.
 - e. They could not stick out their necks for a living Messiah but they will for a dead one.
 - f. What they had held so dear as to not let it be known while Jesus was alive, now they put in jeopardy for Him who is obviously dead.
 - g. The parents of the man born blind had understood this. John 9:22 His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.
 - h. There was no toleration for defectors. John 12:42 ¶ Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;
 - i. There is a warning in Proverbs 29:25 ¶ The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.
3. Jesus does not speak highly of "secret discipleship"
- a. Mt 10:33 "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.
 - b. Lu 12:8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 "But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.
4. How is it with us, that we deny Jesus in our lives?
- a. Not a dead Messiah but a living one.
 - b. Not a condemned Messiah but an exalted one.
 - c. Not a conquered Messiah but a victorious one.

- d. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did far better than many a modern day Christian.

C. Joseph of Arimathea

1. Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, **coming and taking courage**, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.
2. Matthew 27:57 Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.
3. Luke 23:50–51 Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. 51 He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.

D. Nicodemus

1. This is the same Nicodemus we have seen twice before in John's gospel.
2. John 3
3. John 7:50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹ "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" ⁵² They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."
4. John 19:39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.
 - a. As this large amount of burial fragrances would be very expensive we can conclude that he was very rich.
 - b. This pound would equal about 12 of our ounces.
 - c. Since both these men were very wealthy we must assume that they had a number of servants that helped with the burial.

II. Where will they bury the body.

A. In a new tomb.

1. A tomb was used to allow the body to decay and later they would take the bones and put them in an asuary where several family members were stored together.
2. This tomb had been prepared by Joseph of Arimathea for himself and his family, but he gives it up for Jesus.
3. Jesus truly made His burial with the rich.

B. The tomb was nearby.

1. This is important because the disciples will run to the tomb from Jerusalem in just three days to find it empty.

What do we learn from this passage?

God does not leave the detail to chance, He has a plan.

God works in many peoples hearts to accomplish His will.

That when the closest of the disciples were absent, God had others that would accomplish His will.

Being a secret disciple is not a good idea but brings us a snare.

Don't fear man, but fear God.

If these two would confess a seemingly dead Master, we ought surely to confess a living one.