

“He was Buried.”
1 Corinthians 15:4

Intro: Christ was buried but:

- The grave could not hold Him;
- The seal of the tomb is broken;
- The stone is rolled away; and He is GONE.
- Death is defeated.

The Gospel is not only that Christ died and that He arose. The Gospel is: “How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that HE WAS BURIED, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...” (1 Cor. 15:3b-4)

We hear much about Christ’s death, and a good bit about His resurrection, but very little is said about His burial. The Bible says: “He was buried”.

When we read of Christ’s resurrection, we naturally put His death before it. “That he was buried” is supplemental. When we think of what the Word of God says in Psalm 16:10, “neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,” burial seems unnecessary. It is not!

I. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA AND NICODEMUS

A. Who was it that asked for the body of our precious Lord and Saviour? It was Joseph of Arimathaea who, as the scripture says: “When the even was come , there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also was Jesus disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered...” (Matthew 27:57-58).

B. We see also that Nicodemus was there with Joseph as he asked for the body of Jesus so that they could bury it (John 19:39).

C. Joseph and Nicodemus were men of means; they had money; and they had position. They are, we shall say, in the minority. The scripture says: “...not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.”

1. In every age of the church, it is so that more common folk than rich and wise are called to Christ. But here, we find two men of distinction, rank, and means. This shows not that God has to have them or depend on them, but that salvation is not limited to the poor or to the factory worker or the man who is middle class or below.

a. In the Holy Word, we find that the Lord called Doctor Luke, the Tax Collector Matthew, and fishermen such as Peter James and John. He also called to salvation the woman at the well and the demonic of Gadara.

b. How is that men are called? 2 Thessalonians 2:14 says: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Up unto this bold act of asking for and receiving the body of Jesus, Joseph and Nicodemus were secret disciples. They were afraid to let others know of their love for the Lord. They were ashamed or afraid it seems. When the disciples were loudly saying that they would go to prison and death for Christ, they were silent.

a. Things do change, and we need to take heed we stand lest we fall. In the hour of trial and temptation, the disciples left Him, forsook Him, and fled.

b. Now those who had been silent speak out and are bold in their actions, publically acknowledging the Messiah.

c. Zechariah 4:10 reminds to not despise "the day of small things." Think of where God has brought you from and where you might have been. Some of you are still secret disciples and need to step forward!

II. THE WOMEN WHO CAME TO THE TOMB

A. Luke 23:55 says: "And the women also, which came with from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how the body was laid." It is to be noted that they saw how the body was buried: "how the body was laid." The women saw the body in the grave: He was dead!

1. If Joseph had not begged the body of Jesus, then it would have been buried at the foot of the cross or thrown into a pit. Oh, but his could never be for the prophecy of Isaiah says: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (53:9).

a. "He made his grave with the wicked." The Hebrew word translated "he made" is *nathan* (naw-than) and means "appoint, assign, designate." Henry Morris comments: "They [the Jews] planned His grave (to be) with the wicked." (767)

b. The phrase "the rich" is singular and refers to Joseph of Arimathaea, the rich man who asked for Christ's body.

Think of this, the Jews wanted Christ buried with criminals. And marvel of marvels, Pilate, knowing this, let Joseph and Nicodemus have Christ's body; and the body of Christ was laid in the tomb of a rich man.

B. Of the women, it is said: "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day..." (Luke 23:56). Out of love, they did this. How much do we love him? Enough to sacrifice of our time and means?

III. THE TOMB WAS NOT HIS OWN

A. Christ was born in another man's barn and buried in another man's grave. While He lived and ministered, Jesus said: "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9:58).

B. His was not a grave of earth, but one hewn out of rock.

1. There was only one way into this borrowed tomb, the front. It could not be approached from the back or the sides.

2. It was sealed; it was guarded and watched.

a. It was a new tomb. Matthew 27:59-60: "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed."

b. No other body was in the tomb; none had ever been in the tomb; it was His alone. No collusion here could be attached to His burial.

C. Think with me for a moment. There in that stone lies the one who made it. In it are the sealed lips of the one who said: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." In there, are the closed eyes that beamed with mercy and compassion for the needy and wept over Jerusalem.

IV. WHY WAS HE BURIED AT ALL?

A. His burial was confirmation of His death. Our salvation depends on this: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:4).

1. On the cross, the soldiers examined the two thieves crucified with Jesus; and then, they examined Him. Here are the words of John the Apostle: "Then came the soldiers, and braked the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But

when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs” (John 19:32-33).

2. We need to further note that a soldier, even after His death was confirmed: “with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:33). He was buried because He was dead.

B. His burial fulfilled the prophecy of Matthew 12:40: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

C. His burial was a part of His humiliation. The Son of God, God the Son, was buried.

D. In His burial, He sanctified the grave for the believer. He has prepared the grave for His own.

1. The believer would have been afraid to go in, but Christ has gone on before us.

2. We can, at death, lie in His bed after Him. He has freed the grave of its horror. He had softened it and made it easier for His children. “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:54c-57).

V. HE WAS BURIED BUT THE GRAVE IS NOW EMPTY

A. When we go to the cemetery, we read the words: “Here Lies...” When we come to the grave of Jesus, we hear the angel say: “He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay” (Matt. 28:6).

B. Not only did the angel testify of His resurrection; many others did so as well (1 Cor. 15:4-8).

Conclusion: Gone, The stone’s been rolled back, Gone, the tomb is empty, Gone to sit at the Father’s side, Gone, over death triumphant, gone, sin is defeated, gone, He is forevermore.