

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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PART 85: THE BURIAL OF JESUS

WAKEUP CALL

Earthquakes are violent consequences of tectonic plates under the earth's surface sliding by or colliding with one another. Was it a coincidence that the Messiah had suffered and died and such an occurrence took place? Not at all. Along with the temple veil being torn, this was simply a further manifestation of God's power to mankind.

The hearts of the Jewish religious leadership were harder than the rocks. The shaking was so violent that large rocks were split apart, but the ungodly refused to repent.

Matthew 27:51

The dead had been buried in graves, some of them interned in hollowed-out rock or in caves. The powerful earthquake damaged many of the graves, and when Jesus was resurrected, it had the opposite effect as they were brought to life. **verse 52**

It would be three more days until the God-man was resurrected and this amazing event took place. God the Father was proving that Jesus had power over death and the grave.

The graves were located outside of Jerusalem, and the newly resurrected walked into the city to converse with their shocked family, friends, and associates. All this testified to the power of God and the death of the Messiah on the cross. **verse 53**

ROMAN WITNESS

The three hours of darkness starting at noon and the ensuing earthquake caused the Roman centurion supervising the crucifixion to believe that Jesus was innocent of the charges and a deity of some sort. He was ignorant of the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, but was nevertheless awed by the display of power and in the way that Jesus died. **Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47**

THE WITNESSES

The crowd that had gathered for the crucifixion was convinced of the God-man's innocence; they were not blind to the guilt of the Sanhedrin and the priests. The suffering of Jesus, combined with the three hours of darkness and the powerful earthquake, deeply affected them. The smiting of their chests indicated guilt, having witnessed the Messiah scourged, crucified and killed by ungodly religious leadership.

Luke 23:48

During the time of ministering before coming to Jerusalem for the last time, Jesus had an entourage (120 persons) which included the 12 apostles, 70 others, and 38 women who performed the cooking and washing of clothing for the men. A number of these women bravely followed Jesus to Golgotha to watch the crucifixion and stayed throughout the supernatural darkness. **Luke 23:49; Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41**



THE HIGH SABBATH

Jesus was crucified on Wednesday – not Friday – of the Passover Week because the following day was a special, additional Sabbath to the regular one. Passover was the first of seven high Sabbaths:

1. Passover
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread
3. Feast of Firstfruits
4. Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
5. Feast of Trumpets
6. Day of Atonement
7. Feast of Tabernacles

In preparation, the roads and bridges leading to Jerusalem were cleaned of garbage and the corpses of dead animals were removed. Graves were whitewashed so that the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem would not be defiled. This was the reason the Jewish leadership did not want any bodies – especially a murdered one – hanging on crosses the next day.

As a result, they requested Roman soldiers to break the legs of the condemned and hasten their deaths. **John 19:31**

Pilate agreed to the requests and Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two malefactors. The shaft of the spear was used to shatter the shin bones and the result was suffocation within minutes. **verse 32**

The body of Jesus showed no signs of life. His head was drooped, there was no heaving of the lungs, and no other body movement. It was evident that the God-man was already dead and therefore not necessary to break His legs. **verse 33**

Nevertheless, one of the soldiers stabbed his spear into the side of Jesus' rib cage. This fact would become important later when Gnostics later began denying Jesus' physical death. The soldier piercing Jesus with a spear was more than likely doing so because the God-man's legs were not broken and they wanted to ensure He was dead.

1. The heart is surrounded by a membrane called the pericardium which contains a fluid resembling water and protects the heart against infection, blunt trauma, and lubricates its movements. It was this which the spear pierced and from which the water flowed.
2. The spear also stabbed into the heart; the warm blood oozed out to follow the water of the pericardium, so to appear to be blood and water flowing together.

John called attention to the water and the blood. **verse 34; 1 John 5:6**

John stated he was an eyewitness, appealing the readers concerning his testimony as a truth teller. **John 19:35**

The Messiah's bones were not going to be broken; per the instructions Jesus instituted some 2,000 years earlier prior to the exodus from Egypt.

1. Jesus instituted the Passover meal and specified it had to be an unblemished lamb. **Exodus 12:1-8, 14**
2. One of the provisions of the meal was that the bones of the lamb should not be broken. **Exodus 12:46**
3. This is what John was referring to about “a bone of him shall not be broken.” He was referring to Jesus as the Passover lamb. **John 19:36**
4. King David had also prophesied some 1,000 years earlier.

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. (Psalm 34:20)

John mentions another Messianic prophecy (Zechariah, 520 B.C.) fulfilled by the death of the God-man. The onlookers and everyone that played a part in the death of Jesus gazed upon His pierced hands, feet, and chest. **John 19:37**

It is important to note the pronouns used in the following verse. This is Jesus speaking prophetically about Himself centuries earlier and relates to the Second Coming when the Jews realize that the God-man they rejected and crucified was the real Messiah.

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **they shall look upon me whom they have pierced**, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

(Zechariah 12:10)

BURIAL OF JESUS

My personal belief is that Pontius Pilate was present on Golgotha since there are recorded interactions. Joseph of Arimathea and the Jewish leadership both sought Pilate’s permission on separate occasions and it does not seem feasible that they traveled to the Praetorium and back to Golgotha, a total trip of one mile.

The day was coming to an end and preparations were made for the coming Sabbath. **Mark 15:42**

Joseph Arimathea was wealthy, a member of the Sanhedrin, and more importantly, a secret disciple of Jesus. He was a godly man that not participated in the kangaroo court and now sought permission to bury the body of Jesus. He needed the permission of a magistrate before the soldiers at the crucifixion site would allowed him to take custody of Jesus’ body. **Matthew 27:57-58; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50-52; John 19:38**

Mark records that Pilate marveled at the news that Jesus was already dead. The governor clearly expected Jesus to last longer, and being mistrustful, he questioned a centurion to verify the claim that the God-man was deceased, and ordered the body taken down from the cross. **Mark 15:44-45**

Joseph of Arimathea had already purchased linen which was used to wrap the body of Jesus from head to toe. The corpse was placed in a tomb of hewn rock which no one had occupied and was intended for himself.

The God-man never had anything to call His own:

1. Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger. **Luke 2:7**
2. He had no home to call His own. **Matthew 8:20**
3. Even in death, the Son of Man continued to depend upon others.

Joseph was a rich man and more than likely that he did not work alone. Matthew described the stone covering the entrance to the tomb as “great” and Joseph would have needed help rolling the huge stone in place. **Matthew 27:59-60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53**

Nicodemus – the Pharisee who spoke with Jesus secretly at night – arrived with an enormous amount of myrrh and aloe. These spices were expensive and showed the value that he placed upon honoring the body of Jesus. The sheer weight meant he would have needed a pack animal, and just like Joseph, more than likely employed a number of servants in the task making sure Jesus got a proper burial. **John 19:39-42**

These events were witnessed by Mary Magdalene and the mother of James and John. **Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55**

They didn’t return home since they were from Galilee, but returned to where they were staying to prepare spices and ointments for embalming; something Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus had not done due to time constraints. **Luke 23:56**

In case you missed it, the actions of the women – wanting to embalm Jesus – proved they had no hope of a resurrection on the third day.

More than likely Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken to the home of John since his account doesn’t provide any further information about the burial.

NOT DONE WITH JESUS

The next day, Thursday, the day of the high Sabbath, found the chief priests and the Pharisees petitioning Pilate about the body of Jesus. They were concerned that the disciples would take the body in order to claim Jesus had been resurrected.

They saw the God-man as a deceiver who was finally dead and did not want a fake resurrection to further embellish the Man they hated. Their paranoia sought to avoid a story that would make Him into a legend. They wanted armed guards for the tomb to dissuade any attempt to steal the body of Jesus.

Pilate assigned the chief priest a watch (group) of Roman soldiers to stand in front of the tomb, instructing them to make the grave secure. To that end, a clay seal attached with thin rope was placed on the great stone and the door frame of the grave. Any attempt to roll the stone aside – open or secret – would break the imprinted seal and reveal tampering.

Ironically, the preventive effort of the ungodly Jewish leadership proved futile as God’s power was revealed with the resurrection. **Matthew 27:62-66**

The prophetic words of Jesus continued to be fulfilled.

“...the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.” (Matthew 20:18-19)

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?