

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

The Cross
Lesson 6B The Burial of Jesus

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We will start this lesson in Luke 23:50-56, *Vs. 50 And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: Vs. 51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. Vs. 52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Vs. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. Vs. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. Vs. 55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. Vs. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

Verse 53 again, *And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.* We've been studying the cross-work of Jesus, and this lesson is necessary for every Christian to learn and thereby be admonished to become the ambassadors God has saved us to be (Ephesians 6:20). All of the events mentioned in the gospels are important, but especially those focused around the death, burial, and resurrection. These events are recorded so carefully, that we should meditate on each detail.

Having seen the power of the cross, the precious pierced hands, the brutal crucifixion, let us now focus on the burial. What is so special about the burial that God wants us to see? A typical burial is not something that we would normally sit around and meditate upon, but God has something very special to show us in the burial of Jesus Christ, and we need to see it. The burial of Jesus Christ is just as supernatural as the death and the resurrection. We know this by all the details that the Holy Spirit gives the writers of the gospels to record. Through these details, He gives us evidence of some very critical realities: God's purpose in history, His power and workings, the authenticity of Scripture bringing validity to the claims that Jesus made.

What was buried that day? It was not just the body of Jesus, it was also the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2) past, present, and future. Jesus took our sin to the grave. He took our place in the grave and died so we could take

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our place in Him and live. The burial is a significantly important part of the gospel. (1 Corinthians 15:4)

Let's consider some details about the burial as an introduction. Think back to Calvary, when Jesus was crucified. It was a very dark time for His disciples. Jesus had said to them, ***“Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone...”*** (John 16:32). This was fulfilled at the cross. After His crucifixion, His enemy assumed that was the end of Him. His followers were afraid and ran away into hiding. The enemy thought he had won.

Calvary was now a quiet place. All of Jesus' acquaintances and the women that had followed Him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding a dead body hanging on the cross. Their hopes of Jesus being their King, their Redeemer, their Leader were now shattered as they viewed a lifeless corpse. And this presented a challenge to their traditions – It was necessary for the body to be removed before the end of the Sabbath (Deuteronomy 21). This Sabbath was especially important because it was a Passover Sabbath, a high day for the Jews. It was customary for the Romans to let the bodies of those crucified hang there until they rotted and disintegrated. The Romans were in charge and could have done whatever they wanted with that body. However, God had a determined purpose – Jesus was to be buried, and He was to be buried in a way that was in fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Him.

Look at John 19:31, ***The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.***

Now all this had to be done very quickly because the Sabbath ended at six o'clock. Remember, Jesus died at the ninth hour, which was three o'clock, so they were in a hurry to get those bodies down. Their attempt at being religious is so hypocritical...trying to keep the Sabbath on a high day as they were crucifying the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 23:28). Religion has always been a show, never a relationship.

The Jews needed the bodies to come down. They asked Pilate to break the legs, which would cause them to suffocate and bring death more quickly. What they did not know was that He was already dead. There was no need for the soldiers to break His legs (Psalm 34:20). Notice in John 19:33, ***But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his***

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legs:”. That too was a fulfillment of prophecy as shown in Exodus 12:46, the Passover lamb cannot have a broken bone.

These hypocritical Jews wanted the body dead and down. They had no idea that it was what God wanted also, but for different reasons, of course. The body had to come down and be buried, but in the right way, and in a way that would be in line with the Law. The question for the Jews now was, who was actually going to do it? According to the Law, Jews were not allowed to be near a dead body; they needed someone to do it for them. This man would be Joseph of Arimathaea.

The Holy Spirit shows us several characteristics of Joseph of Arimathaea in the gospels:

- The Book of Matthew records Joseph as a rich man and a disciple.
- The Book of Mark says he was an honourable counselor, who also waited for the kingdom of God. It tells us he went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus.
- The Book of Luke says he was a counselor, a good man, and “a just”. A just what? The scriptures go on to tell of his character, *“(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.”* Luke 23:51-53.
- The Book of John says in chapter 19, verse 38, *“And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.”*

The Book of Matthew tells us that he was a disciple, but the Book of John tells us what kind of disciple he was, a secret disciple for fear of the Jews (timid). Yet now he is boldly approaching Pilate and begging the body of Jesus; and, when he received permission, he went directly to follow through with what he intended to do for the Lord. This is an admonishment to all Christians that we should act with boldness and charity in our commitment to God.

In John 19:39-42, we read of another secret follower of Jesus. It's Nicodemus, and he comes bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 100 pound weight. It is interesting that Peter, James, Matthew, and all the rest of the disciples wanted nothing to do with this; and these two guys (Joseph and

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Nicodemus), who weren't even considered to be disciples or followers, were the ones who came forward and were entrusted with the great and glorious task of burying the body of Jesus. Think about what people might have been saying under their breath, "What a waste of good ointment and spices – on a dead body, and that of a criminal." People think and say similar things today. "Why give money to missions, or tithe to the church, or spend money for tracts and Bibles. What a waste." Not a penny spent on God will ever be a waste, not in this life nor in the life to come.

John 19:40-41, ***"Then took they (Joseph and Nicodemus) the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid."*** No crowds, no hymns sung, no sermon, no great procession. Very simple, very humble, very sublime. Another prophesy fulfilled from Isaiah 53:9, ***"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."*** That is exactly what happened.

The burial of Jesus was a testimony to the world that He actually died. He died to make an atonement for our sin. (Romans 5:11)

He was buried in order to fulfill a prophecy that he declared, comparing Himself to Jonas. Matthew 12:40, ***"For as Jonas was three days and nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*** This simply proves Psalm 33:4, ***"For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth."***

There are some very interesting differences between Jesus Christ's birth and His death and burial:

- At His birth, the angel proclaimed He was a Saviour, ***which is Christ the Lord.*** (Luke 2:11)
At His death, the Jews proclaimed he was a criminal/malefactor. (John 18:30)
- His birth was praised by all the host of heaven. (Luke 2:13)
His burial was attended by only two that loved him.
- His birth was in a dirty animal stable. (Luke 2:7)
At His burial He was wrapped in fine linen, with spices perfumed, and laid in a clean stone cave, where never a man was laid. (Luke 23:53, 56)
- At birth, He entered into a corruptible body. (Romans 1:23)

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After His burial, He was miraculously raised in an incorruptible body. (1 Corinthians 15:44)

At His conception a miracle took place, and after His burial, another miracle took place. Thanks be to God, the story does not end there; it goes on through eternity. 1 Corinthians 15:57, ***“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** He lived in our place, He suffered in our place, He died in our place, He was buried in our place, and we will be raised in His place forever because of all He did. (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 4:1; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:6)

Let's close this study with a few thoughts to meditate upon:

- The first Adam (Adam): He was placed in a garden (Genesis 2:15)
- The last Adam (Jesus): He was buried in a garden (John 19:41)
- The first Adam (Adam): By his sins, many are dead (1 Corinthians 15:22a)
- The last Adam (Jesus): By His obedience, many are made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22b)

Notes

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Lesson 6B The Burial

Name _____

(*) if asterisk is shown in question, scripture is required along with an answer in your own words.

1. What was so special about the burial of Jesus? *

2. Who were the two that came on the scene to help in his burial?
 - a.

 - b.

3. Who was the last Adam? *

4. Why was it so important that the legs of Jesus not be broken? *

5. Why were the Jews so adamant about getting the bodies down from the crosses and buried? *

6. Whose testimony proves that it is never too late to do something for Jesus?

7. Who is Lord of the Sabbath? *

8. What do Jesus and Jonas have in common? *

