

“God, Murdered and Buried!”

Luke 23:50-56 [Part 11]

The “Passion Week” began on **Sunday**, with the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem which occurred six days before the Passover. Hostility toward Jesus was growing. His enemies had issued a proclamation, that if anyone knew where He was they should report it to the chief priest, so they could take Him and put Him to death.

Even though these events were taking place the Lord did not enter the city in disguise but rather in fanfare. Yet He was not taken by His enemies because His hour had not yet fully come. This is why it is called the “Triumphal Entry”.

He entered the city of His throne, not on a white steed, the emblem of a conquering victor; but on a borrowed donkey, the emblem of humility and peace.

He brought salvation, but it wasn’t the kind of salvation they were looking for, and they rejected it.

- **Monday** we see Him cleansing the Temple.
- **Tuesday** He returned to Jerusalem to be confronted by the Pharisees.
- **Wednesday** is a day of silence.
- **Thursday** there was the preparation for the Passover; the upper room; Gethsemane;
- **Friday** was the day of illegal and unjust trials.
 1. The trial before **Annas**,
 2. The trial before **Caiaphas**
 3. The third trial before the **chief priests and elders**
 4. The fourth trial was held before **Pilate**
 5. The trial before **Herod**
 6. The **final trial before Pilate** resulted in a second announcement of innocence and the offer to scourge and release Jesus.

We’ve been back and forth over these years as we’ve studied the Passion of Jesus from Matthew to Luke, with other quotations from Mark and John.

IV. The Signs That Followed—Matthew 27:51-56

The signs that followed the wicked treatment of Jesus as He was crucified on the cross were;

- The victims were nailed to their crosses, which were raised and fixed in position.
- Either prior to this or shortly after drugged wine was given to deaden the pain. (which Jesus refused)
- The clothing of Jesus was divided among the four soldiers, by lot.
- Railing accusations and mocking occurred throughout the ordeal—the crowd somehow seems to file or pass by the cross.
- Jesus cried out, “Father, forgive them . . . ”.
- The criminals joined in reviling Christ.
- The thief on the cross came to faith in Jesus as his Messiah.
- Darkness falls over the scene, from 6th hour (noon) till 9th hour (3:00).
- Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why has thou forsaken Me?”. (Matthew, Mark)
- Jesus said, “I thirst” (John), drank a sip of vinegar
- Jesus said, “It is finished”. (John)
- Jesus bowed His head and said, “Father, into your hands I commit My spirit, . . . ” and died.
- Immediately, the curtain of temple torn in two, top to bottom (Luke)
- Earthquake, tearing of the curtain and the raising of dead saints. (Matthew)
- Legs of other two were broken, but Jesus’ legs not broken, seeing He was already dead. (John)
- Soldier pierced Jesus’ side with a spear—blood and water gushed out. (John)
- Centurion (and the other soldiers) who witnessed it said, “Surely this was son of God”.

F. Trustworthiness of the Women—v.55-56

These women followed Jesus all the way to Calvary. Their **motivation** was love for the Saviour. Their **manner** was that of dedication to Him. Their **ministry** was to serve Christ;

G. Turnaround of the Crowd—Luke 23:48

There was in the crowd that day, after the supernatural events that had taken place, a sense of astonishment, even what appears to be inward guilt and change of heart. While one cannot know the inner workings of the hearts that occurred there on that day something did happen in the people.

These people who were there because of the spectacle of crucifying Jesus saw the miracles that occurred, the darkness, the earthquake, coupled with the words of Jesus triumph, it changed their outlook on the scene.

They began beating upon their breast, showing contrition and humility in the face of what they had seen and heard.

How do you approach the cross today? Do you have feelings of scorn and reproach, or are you like some of these people, humbled? Or do you like so many feel a sense of heavy guilt and turn away as lost as before, while your conscience is brought to a place of remorse but not repentance.

Jesus is now dead and the final trimmings on this day were already planned by the Jews.

It was common for victims of capital punishment who died on crosses to be left there for days while their bodies rotted. This was just another sign of the humiliation of being hung on a cross.

But the Jews asked Pilate to break the legs of the victims so that the bodies could be taken down and buried before the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Breaking of the legs would bring about death within just a few minutes. They sanctimoniously gave the appearance of keeping the Jewish law. Deuteronomy 21:22–23

They really cared little about the truth of the law but wanted to give the impression of being righteous.

Everyone was surprised that Jesus had died so quickly. The Jews wanted Jesus **dead** and **buried** to satisfy their own legal consciences, so as not to defile their Sabbath. What they didn't know was that God too wanted Him **dead** and **buried**. His death was a planned and calculated event. It was (like everything else in the universe) ordered by the sovereignty of God. John 10:17–18

They were simply carrying out God’s sovereign and predetermined plan.

Jesus was sovereign over everything, even the timing of His own death (though it had been executed by others.)

Even the soldiers failing to break Jesus’ legs was a sovereign act prophesied centuries before. Psalm 34:20

The same fear that had prevailed over the disciples and others of Jesus’ followers continued to dominate. We see that some of them were at the cross on that day but at a distance. Luke 23:49

H. The Trip to the Tomb—Luke 23:50-56 “**50** Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, **51** who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. **52** This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. **53** Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. **54** It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. **55** The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. **56** Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.”

1. The People Involved—v.50-51

There were some among the rulers of the Jews that were loyal to Jesus that sought to claim His body for a proper burial. One of these people was a man named Joseph of Arimathea. This title distinguished him from other Josephs. He was a counselor, a senator, a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel. Apparently, he was highly educated, highly esteemed, well liked, very responsible, capable of leadership.

All the gospel writers describe Joseph in different ways, but always as the ideal man,

- **Luke**—A leader who was good and righteous—the **Greek ideal**. This doesn’t mean that he was sinless, for no one is. It means he had a good reputation as a man of integrity.
- **Mark**—An honorable leader—the **Roman ideal**.
- **Matthew**—A wealthy Jew—is this not the **Jewish ideal**? Joseph’s money would have given him an edge with the Roman officials.

- **John**—A disciple of Jesus (a man of faith, looking for the kingdom of God)—**God’s Ideal**.

He is always spoken of in connection with Jesus’ burial.

John 19 gives some extra details concerning Joseph, as well as Nicodemus. John 19:38–39

The Bible is not necessarily in favor of secrecy when it comes to faith. Believers are **not** always believers simply because **they say** they believe. John 2:23–24; 6:60, 64; John 12:36–50

Joseph is a real disciple. He was just not able to overcome being intimidated by the other members of the Sanhedrin. When the agreement was reached among the council to put Jesus to death he was either absent or remained silent, probably the later, most likely along with Nicodemus (John 19:38-39). Maybe he slipped out of the proceedings so as not to be put on the spot. Whatever the case he didn’t agree with their decision. Can you imagine the horror of seeing the One you love most in life being treated the way they treated Jesus? If he did flee from the pressure on that day, he would be in good company with all the other disciples who forsook Jesus in abandonment.

How many times do we as true believers just keep quiet. We love the Lord and yet we don’t say a word when He is trashed in the actions and words of others.

2. **The Promptness of the People**—v.52-54 “*52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. 54 It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.*

However we must give him some credit as a disciple. He did ask Pilate for the body of Jesus, and he donated the tomb where Jesus’ body would be buried. This would have identified him as a sympathizer. So, he did put himself on the line for Christ but only after His death. Why then? Why did he step up and claim the body?

- Maybe he was tired of hiding and ready to come out into the open with his faith, even if it meant losing his position, or being persecuted. Mark 15:43

It takes courage to stand for Jesus Christ and be His witness. Joseph finally began to show his faith and love for Jesus.

- Maybe he believed the promise of Jesus, that He would rise from the dead. Like the believing thief who said to the Lord, *“Remember me when you come into Your kingdom.”* Maybe Joseph thought this burial is only temporary.

Whatever the reason he stepped up and took a public stand for Christ. He gave him his own private tomb.

Of course, we know that this tomb was in Jerusalem, and Matthew 27:60 says that Joseph had the tomb carved out for himself and his family. It was a new tomb, and no one had ever been buried it before. But there is more here than we see on the surface. Isaiah 53:4–9

Is that not the most remarkable thing? That even the smallest of details about the death of Jesus even down to where He would be buried was foretold. Joseph did all this motivated by his love for Jesus, but behind the scene is God’s sovereign plan being carried out concerning His Son. Listen, nothing is left to chance with God. He orders all things and controls all things.

Gathering the body of Jesus was a prompt act because it would have had to have taken place in the first evening of the day. The Jews observed two evenings in each day.

Marvin Vincent explains:

"The Hebrews reckoned two evenings, an earlier and a later. The former began midway between noon and sunset, or at three o'clock in the afternoon. The later began at sunset, six o'clock. The reference here is to the earlier evening."

So, he had only a short time to obtain the body and prepare it for burial before the Sabbath began.

So along with the women they prepared Jesus body for the tomb. They wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid Him in the tomb.

Because the Sabbath was upon them the women made a mental location of the body in the tomb and would come back after the Sabbath was over to anoint the body with the spices. They obviously didn't believe He would rise from the dead.

Yes, He was dead. But death could not conquer The Creator of the Universe. On the first day of the week He burst forth from that grave

and there were hundreds of eyewitnesses to prove it was true.

1 Corinthians 15:5–8

The resurrection is the very **heart** of the gospel message. It is the point on which the gospel **pivots**. Without it, none of the other truths in the gospel would matter, and it would take its place alongside all the other manmade isms, religions, and philosophical speculations that exist in the world. Acts 2:22–32

The resurrection of Christ was the divine stamp of approval that God the Father was satisfied with Jesus substitutionary death for sinners.

2 Corinthians 5:21

The true gospel is the fact that Jesus died, was buried and rose again to give eternal life to those who believe. The true gospel requires repentance of sin. (A confession of sin and change of heart and mind concerning God and self and sin.) The true gospel demands a new path and walk in life. One that makes the follower a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Have you believed that gospel?