

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

54- Graveyard Dead Mark 15:42-47

Mark 15:42-47 *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.*

There are many who claim that Jesus never died and in fact many who say He never lived. Some will believe anything to keep from coming face to face with the fact they are in need of spiritual help. I have entitled with graveyard dead because I want to make a strong statement concerning the fact that Jesus died on the cross and was buried. We will look at some thought in our next session concerning the resurrection and the false view that have been perpetrated on it but for now let me mention only one that has direct bearing to this session.

There is a theory that says that Jesus did not die but was only in a coma when taken down from blood loss and other factors. They claim in this swoon theory that Jesus only revived in the tomb because He was not dead. My friend, not to be trite or sarcastic, let me say that if they went through the torture, sleep deprivation, and the hanging on the cross and did not die then maybe they could make such a ridiculous claim. Many men did not survive what Jesus went through before the cross and then hanging for several hours on it certainly compounded the stress. Still we force this point because after all Jesus did not die from His injuries, from the blood loss but by Him giving up the ghost we saw the last time. So let me again say with all the force of history and the Bible that Jesus was graveyard dead; as dead as any man in history has been.

I- Sabbath Preparation:

Mark 15:42 *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath....,*

With the death of Jesus there had to be some quick action taken. He died at three in the afternoon and the next day would begin in only 3 hours at 6:00 PM by the way of reckoning time of the Jewish people. The next day being the Sabbath or Saturday made the matter ever more urgent. After the six o'clock time came then there was not work that could be done on the Sabbath so the matter was urgent. Concerning the disposal of the crucified bodies Barclay says, "It frequently happened that the bodies of criminals were never buried at all, but were simply taken down and left for the vultures and the scavenging wild dogs to deal with. In fact it has been suggested that Golgotha may have been called the place of a skull because it was littered with skulls from previous crucifixions."

So the lack of time explains why that there was not any more care given to the body of Jesus at His death.

II- Rich Man's Tomb:

There is a prophecy in **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.* We have seen He was crucified between two thieves and now the next part of this verse leaps into action. **Mark 15:43** *Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*

We do not see that Joseph was rich in Mark but Matthew says in **Matthew 27:57** *When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:*

Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin and along with the one who came to Jesus by night was a secret believer in Jesus as Messiah. Look at **John 19:38-39** *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*

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leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

They go to Pilate it says boldly with all pretense of the cloak of secrecy left behind and ask for the body of Jesus. They take Him down and move the body hastily to the tomb of Joseph which he had made ready for His own burial. No man had lain in the tomb before.

III- The Investigation:

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Before the body is turned over to Joseph and Nicodemus there had to be an investigation into whether He was dead, grave yard dead or not. Pilate would not have consented for the body to be taken down if He was still alive.

Mark 15:44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

Mark gives us the emotion of the situation by Pilate marveling or being surprised that He was dead. Pilate calls for the Centurion who was in charge of the men who did the crucifixion; you remember the one who make the bold statement that Jesus was the Son of God, to ask if He was dead. Upon verification of the fact that He was then Pilate released the body to the men. You will also recall that the soldiers wanted the deaths to occur before sundown from the fact that they came to break the legs of the men on the cross but Jesus was already dead, graveyard dead.

IV- The Burial:

Mark 15:46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

The pace must have been furious as they wrapped the body and as we have seen in **John 19:39** put spices hastily on the body. They laid him in the tomb carved out of the rock; this alone tells us it was a rich man's tomb, and rolled the stone into place. They closed the tomb and went forth to observe the Passover.

V- The Observers:

Mark 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid. Again we see the fearless boldness of the women who followed and saw the place where Jesus lay. This will be information that comes into play in a few days when they go to the tomb to do a better job of honoring Jesus in death.

These women however were not the only ones who were observing the burial. The Sanhedrin also was aware of where He had been place. Notice **Matthew 27:62-66** Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

They did not want anyone to steal the body and wanted to make sure it was secure. This is still another indication that Jesus was indeed dead because the guards would have certainly reported if the stone had been moved from the inside and He had come out. The seal set on the tomb was to verify that indeed the integrity of the tomb had not been breached.

May I suggest that if this was all there was to the story then it would be a dark day? But beloved the one who we leave lying in the tomb bound in burial clothes is only borrowing the tomb.