

## Easter Teaching No. 15

### The Burial of Jesus

Mark 15:42 -47 Luke 23:50-54 Matthew 27:57-61 John 19:28-32

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus approached Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. They were two men on the Council, which meant two men of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin were made up of 71 members and for any meeting to take place, or for a decision to be made, at least 23 had to be present. Obviously Nicodemus and Joseph were not present at Jesus' trials as we are told that all were in agreement with his conviction and execution.

John 19:38 Joseph believed in Jesus but up to that point secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. Luke tells us that he was a good and upright man and had not consented to their decision and action regarding Jesus. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, who had previously visited Jesus by night.

Pilate consented to Joseph's request and he and Nicodemus took Jesus' body away, wrapped it with spices and strips of linen cloth. There was a garden near to where Jesus had been crucified. Joseph and Nicodemus buried Jesus and rolled the stone into position in front of the burial cave.

Matthew 27:60 Tells us that Joseph had bought the tomb in the garden for his own use and that it was new and had never been used before.

This was in fulfilment of Isaiah 53:9

'He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death....'

Ordinarily criminals would be assigned a burial plot but Joseph offered his own new tomb in the private garden.

It is significant that Jesus was buried in a garden. It was in the Garden of Eden that sin had first entered into the human experience through the first Adam, and it was through the death of Jesus, the second Adam that now the garden was a place of redemption and restoration.

All synoptic gospels tell us that the women were onlookers to the burial and knew where Jesus was buried.

It is only Matthew who tells us in his account chapter 27:62 that the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and reminded him that the 'Deceiver' said he would rise again in three days and suggested that the tomb was secured to ensure that the disciples did not steal the body and say it had been raised from the dead as if that happened that this deception would be worse than the first.

Pilate agreed and set a Roman guard to firstly seal it and then to guard it. The seal would have been a set of ropes criss-crossing over the stone covering the tomb. A clay seal would then have been put into place, bearing the Roman insignia where all four criss-crosses met.

Note how the religious authorities addressed Jesus in their address to Pilate, calling him 'The Deceiver', this was a common Pharisaic way of addressing a malefactor. They would use either a derogatory term or substituted a name.

Even today Jewish writings refer to Jesus (Yeshua), as Yeshu, which in Hebrew is a three-lettered acronym meaning 'May his name and memory be blotted out'.

So Jesus was finally buried, the women watching whilst Joseph and Nicodemus went about their business, looking on in sadness and grief, whilst the Roman soldiers sealed the tomb and kept guard.

It was now the Sabbath.