



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Our Lord's Death and Burial

Matthew 27:45-66

"Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

⁴⁹ The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

⁵⁴ So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

⁵⁵ And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, ⁵⁶ among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

⁵⁷ Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹ When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹ And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶² On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³ saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."

Background Notes

When we compare the accounts of the crucifixion in the four Gospels, there are some differences that appear, at first, to be contradictions. However, there is no problem in harmonizing these accounts. Mark 15:25 states that it was the third hour when they crucified the Lord. Then Mark 15:33 says (as in Matthew 27) that there was darkness over the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. We also have this stated in Luke's account, in Luke 23:44, but in John's account we read that it was the sixth hour when the Lord was tried before Pilate. John 19:14 - "*Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"*" How is this apparent contradiction to be resolved? No problem! Matthew, Mark and Luke were using Jewish time, so the sixth hour would be noon during the crucifixion. John was using Roman time, so the sixth hour would be 6AM, or early in the morning, when our Lord was before Pilate.

One other area that must be harmonized is the exact reading of the inscription on the cross. In Matthew 27:37 says, "*And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*" Mark 15:26 says, "*And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS.*" Luke 23:38 says, "*And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*" And John 19:19 says, "*Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.*"

So we have four different accounts about what was written on the inscription on the cross. Is this a contradiction in the Bible? No, it is **selection**! The actual inscription probably read, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." So the inscription actually did say everything that each of the Gospel writers decided to record. And remember, the inscription on the cross was in three languages, according to Luke 23:38 – Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. So the difference in languages may have created some slight differences in the accounts as well.

Doctrinal Points

1. Supernatural events were associated with the crucifixion of Christ.

In verse 46 we read that there was a period of three hours of darkness. Was this a total eclipse of the sun, or was it a supernatural event? The evidence would seem to point to a supernatural event. It was during those three hours of darkness that our Lord was suffering for the sins of the world – for your sins and for my sins.

"Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" This was not a call for Elijah the prophet to come to His aid, as some people around the cross thought. This was a quotation from Psalm 22, in Aramaic, meaning: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" It was because of our sins that God the Father had to judge the Son. The Lord Jesus had to experience separation from His Father and endure the wrath of God against the sins of mankind in order to pay for the penalty of our sins.

Verse 51 tells us that the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom – another supernatural event. By this action, God demonstrated that our Lord’s death had opened the way for all believers to enter the Holy of Holies, and come into the holy presence of God! Hebrews 10:19-20: *“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh...”*

“...the earth quaked, and the rocks were split...” More supernatural events – so much so that the hardened Roman soldiers concluded from this evidence that truly Jesus was the Son of God! *“So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”(v54).*

“...the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” What about these saints who were raised? Was this a resurrection, and these saints are now in glory in their resurrected bodies? Or were they temporarily brought back from the dead, like Lazarus, and these people became part of the early Church and later died again? Read the commentaries of this account and you will find a lot of disagreement. I tend to go with the idea that this was a true resurrection, and these saints are now with the Lord in glory in their resurrected bodies as part of the first fruits of the great harvest to come at the Rapture. If this were only a raising from the dead (as with Lazarus), I would think that we’d have some record of these unique saints in early Church writings; however, we have no further record of them or the event. In any case, supernatural events were associated with the crucifixion of Christ.

2. Significant evidence was associated with the burial of Christ.

“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹ When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.”

Joseph of Arimathea was rich and a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews. He and Nicodemus had become secret disciples of the Lord Jesus. Now Joseph of Arimathea boldly asked Pilate for the body of Jesus for burial, and permission was granted. We know from John 19 that Nicodemus also helped Joseph of Arimathea prepare our Lord’s body for burial.

⁶² *On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³ saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was*

still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ *Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.'* *So the last deception will be worse than the first."*

⁶⁵ *Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."* ⁶⁶ *So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."*

The chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate and reminded him that Jesus said He would rise again after three days. (It sounds like they were a little worried, doesn't it?) Pilate granted their request for extra security around the Lord's tomb: "*So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.*" A Roman seal was placed on the tomb so that any tampering with the entrance could easily be detected. There was also a unit of Roman guards, and there may have been a Jewish guard detail as well. I'd say that the tomb was pretty secure, wouldn't you?

All this evidence refutes a number of the theories that skeptics have invented to try to explain away the resurrection of Christ. The "stolen body" is one false theory. The chief priests and Pharisees said that they wanted to make sure that such a scenario didn't take place. Little did they realize that they were providing **irrefutable evidence** that the body was **not stolen!** (I love the way the Lord causes the efforts of unbelievers to backfire!) In addition, the "wrong tomb" theory to explain away the resurrection is refuted by the evidence given here. The idea that the disciples (and everyone else) went to the wrong tomb on Sunday morning is strongly refuted here. This tomb was not some unknown, unmarked grave in an unknown spot in Jerusalem! No, this was a large new tomb owned by the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea. He certainly knew where his own tomb was -- he had directed the carving of this tomb out of solid rock. Also, the tomb was well marked by the Roman seal and presence of guards! How much more evidence do we need to refute the ridiculous theories of skeptics? Significant evidence was associated with the burial of Christ.

Practical Application

Use your money and position for the Lord.

Joseph of Arimathea did exactly that -- He used his money and position for the Lord. Pilate would not have given the body of Jesus to just "anyone." Joseph of Arimathea would have been well-known because of his position in the Sanhedrin and because he was wealthy, so he had some clout with Pilate. God had placed Joseph of Arimathea where he was for this very reason.

Maybe God has blessed you with money and/or position. Most likely, if you look around you, you can see some areas where your influence and money can do what other people can't do for the Lord -- maybe in local government or an area of public opinion. God has placed you where you are for a reason. Do you want to serve the Lord as Joseph of Arimathea did? Use your money and position for the Lord.