

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom **Part XXXVII: Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Burial** **(Matthew 27:57-66)**

I. Introduction

- A. Matthew's Gospel was written to explain to Jewish readers how Jesus was their Messiah even if He did not establish His Messianic Kingdom in His first advent, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1337.
- B. A part of that explanation is Matthew's record of the burial of Christ in Matthew 27:57-66, and we view that very significant event for insight and edification (as follows):

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Burial, Matthew 27:57-66.

- A. Part of the Gospel we preach for people to believe to be saved is that Jesus was buried after He died in line with Scripture, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, which burial shows He **truly died** and then **truly arose** from the dead.
- B. In addition, **only** by His **death** could Christ **atone** for **sin**, Hebrews 9:15-16, 22, 28, so the events surrounding His burial importantly reveal Jesus had truly died in accord with Scripture, Matthew 27:57-66:
 - 1. First, a wealthy man of Arimathaea, Joseph, a secret disciple of Jesus, went to Pontius Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission to take and bury Jesus' body, Matthew 27:57-58. This is an important event as it fulfilled Isaiah 53:9-10 that Christ would be assigned to a rich man's burial once He died as a sin offering, providing evidence that He was the true Messenger of God and Messiah.
 - 2. Second, this burial of Jesus with a rich man's burial was meant by God to signal Christ had not done any violence nor was deceit in His mouth, Isaiah 53:9 KJV; Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. III, p. 352-353. Though He died as a criminal, Jesus was **not** a criminal, seen in His very unusual burial as if He were a wealthy man, not a criminal, a highly unusual twist of fate that signals divine intervention.
 - 3. Third, as seen by some women who had followed Jesus in His earthly life, His body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth and laid in a new tomb hewn out of a rock, with a large stone rolled over its door, typical of the burial of a rich man, Matt. 27:59-60. Josh McDowell (A Ready Defense, 1991, p. 226) reports such a tomb with a 4 1/2 to 5 foot tall opening had a stone door that weighed 1 1/2 to 2 tons. It was put in a track uphill that ran in front of the opening and was held in place by a wedge that, when removed, left the stone to roll down the track until it hit at a pre-set stop. Once set, the stone would be very hard for a group of men to remove, for since the stone was in a track, it would have to be removed by being rolled uphill!
 - 4. Fourth, the next day, the preparation day when Jesus' followers would be absent from the tomb, observing the Sabbath (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Matt. 27:62), the religious leaders remembered how Christ had predicted He would rise the third day, Matt. 27:62-63. To keep that from happening lest it create what they thought was a worse deception, they asked Pilate for permission to secure the tomb for three days lest His disciples steal the body and say He arose, Matt. 27:64. Pilate had them set a guard and make the tomb as secure as possible, Matt. 27:65. They thus sealed the stone by stretching a cord across it and fastening it at either end to the tomb wall with a seal of clay stamped with the official signet of the governor so that if the stone even slightly moved, the seal would break in violation of the law, Matthew 27:66a; Ibid., p. 230, 227-228.
 - 5. Fifth, the Roman guard was set, Matthew 27:66b, a guard composed of the most highly disciplined soldiers in that part of the world at that time who were trained and disciplined to protect six square feet of ground each from constant attack even by an enemy battalion, Ibid.
- C. Thus, it have been humanly impossible for the disciples who forsook Jesus for fear of the authorities or for His supporters either to want to steal or to be able to steal His body from the tomb and claim that He had risen!

Lesson: *Jesus' burial shows He was the Messiah, for (1) it fulfilled Scripture that He would be buried with the rich, (2) His burial with the rich defended His character as sinless (3) and the rock tomb and door with the sealing and setting of a Roman guard as a watch would make it impossible for the disciples who forsook Jesus for fear of the authorities to be motivated to want to try stealing Jesus' body! (4) Even if the disciples had become motivated to steal the body, the consequences of breaking the seal and hence Roman law to do so, let alone trying to attack and overcome highly trained Roman soldiers in the process would have made the endeavor disastrously futile!*

Application: *May we believe that Jesus is the true Messiah and Son of God for eternal life as supported in the reality of His death that preceded His true resurrection, all in accord with Scripture and the material testimony that is recorded in the Gospels.*