

Episode #2-26 – John 19 Part 4 - God in a Tomb

I. The purpose of the gospel of John is to produce believers in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the One anointed by God to be the Savior of the world, and that Jesus is the Son of God, God represented in human form.

II. We are considering the Lord's crucifixion. We saw that the Lord was not killed by the cross: instead, He laid down His life for us. He died under the wrath of God that we deserved, dying for our sins. Now, we will see what happened on the cross after He died there.

III. John 19:31-37. After His Death on the Cross.

- A. V.31. This was the preparation of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This Sabbath was not a weekly Sabbath, but first day of Unleavened Bread was always a Sabbath, no matter what day of the week it fell on, Leviticus 23:5-7. Romans, in spite of their cruelty, had a way to end the suffering of those hung on the cross if they wished to do so: a mallet to break their legs. Since they had to push themselves up by their legs to breathe, this would result in a quick death by suffocation. The Jews do not want men "working" on the cross on a High Sabbath, so they demand they be killed.
- B. V.32. It would be most unnatural for them to pass by the Lord in the middle and then come back to Him if there were three crosses in a line...but not if there were five! The Lord was third in line. There were five crosses there, not three!
- C. V.33. They figure there is no reason to go to the trouble of breaking His legs if He is already dead.
- D. V.34. They want to make sure He is really dead, so they stab His side with a spear. Blood and water came out! Could this be a sign of a tear in the heart? Luke 22:44. Regardless, this symbolizes the New Covenant, which is ratified by the sprinkling of water and blood. Hebrews 9:19.
- E. V.35. John was an eyewitness of these things. Again, he does not refer to himself directly, to keep all our focus on Jesus Christ. Why he is telling us these things: so we may believe. Remember the purpose of John! (John 20:31) Do you believe John's eyewitness account of the Lord's work on the cross?
- F. V.36. This fulfills Psalm 34:19-20. It also fulfills the requirements of the Passover lamb, Exodus 12:46.
- G. V.37. This refers to Zechariah 12:10. Notice that verse 36 was fulfilled, but this is only setting up the fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10.

IV. John 19:38-42. The Burial.

- A. V.38. Joseph of Arimathea was a secret supporter of the Lord for fear of the Jews. He was a member of the rich class, Matthew 27:57. Arimathea is probably Greek for Ramah (Hill), Samuel's hometown. Joseph asks for the Lord's body. This was a bold move for him, since his fellow the Jews would surely hear of it! Now he is bold, after the Lord is dead. Pilate agrees, probably to spite the Jews. Victims of crucifixion were usually thrown on the refuse heaps in the Valley of Hinnom, where they were either burned or eaten by worms. This will not happen to the Lord, however.
- B. V.39. Nicodemus (John 3) joins him. Expensive spices were typically used to honor the bodies of the rich. The wise men's spices probably had been sold by Joseph and Mary to support their poor family long ago. This ends Nicodemus' story that we started in chapter 3: he decides to throw in his lot with the Lord here. Remember the question of John: will you do the same?

- C. V.40. The Jews, Israel's rich class, would bury this way. Criminals were wrapped in old rags. Spices formed a paste that would harden into a shell. Once they dried, it would be almost impossible for a fully healthy man to get out of them. Lazarus had to be cut loose (John 11). The Lord could not have "revived" and gotten out.
 - D. V.41. This was no doubt a family tomb recently purchased by Joseph or Nicodemus. A garden is a beautiful place for a tomb. The Lord was treated like a King in His burial, though like a common criminal in His death. Isaiah 53:9. Imagine trying to figure that out in advance! God's plan is strange, but true, as He planned it.
 - E. V.42. This was apparently a temporary arrangement. Maybe they would have purchased a tomb of His Own for Him to lie in later. The Lord's work seems to die with Him. His ministry seems a failure to the world. His disciples saw nothing but defeat. The Son of God, the Word, was dead, and all seemed lost. Praise God, the story does not end here!
- V. Conclusion: The Lord was truly dead. The actions of the soldiers prove it, and John was an eyewitness. The Lord was truly buried, proving that His death was real. He, God in human form, died for us, to take away our sins! The question of John is: do we believe it?