

The Burial of Jesus

Sermon Series: *It Is Finished!* / Matthew 27:57–66

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Matthew 27:57–66 NKJV

#1 Fulfilled PROPHECY.

A. Isaiah's Prophecy

Isaiah 53:9 NKJV

- Jesus was truly buried with the rich as he was wrapped in fine linen, placed in the expensive family tomb of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea and perfumed with an expensive amount of spices.
- What was predicted more than 600 years prior to Jesus's birth regarding the Messiah was fulfilled by Jesus! Remarkable!

B. Jesus's Prophecy

Matthew 12:40 NKJV

- Jesus predicted he would be buried and his burial fulfilled that prophecy.

Why does the fact that Jesus's burial fulfilled prophecy matter for us today?

- If you are **not a Christian**, do you know of any other person in human history that has fulfilled so many prophecies? Doesn't this provide quite a mountain of evidence that the Bible is divinely inspired and that Jesus is the Savior that the

whole Bible points to? If you don't believe it does, why not? How do you explain the evidence?

- If you are a **Christian**, these facts should enlarge your faith. They should motivate you to pursue intimacy with Jesus, the true Savior of the world. They should motivate you to be disciplined in your Bible intake. You are not just reading a book with good moral, ethical stories. You are actually reading the very words of the living God!

#2 Provided PROOF that his resurrection happened.

A. Was Jesus's burial made up?

This is implausible for a few reasons.

1. If you were making a story about a rich man burying Jesus, you would never use a **well known person** like Joseph of Arimathea.
2. You would not make two members of the **Sanhedrin**, one a Pharisee, heroes of the burial, and in the process, incriminate yourself and the other disciples.
3. You would never have two **women** as key witnesses.
 - *I have been reading poems, romances, vision-literature, legends, myths all my life," he wrote. "I know what they are like." So if someone "tells me that something in a Gospel is legend or romance," he wrote, "I want to know how many legends and romances he has read, how well his palate is trained in detecting them by the flavor; not how many years he has spent on that Gospel."*
-C.S. Lewis
 - *The **majority** of New Testament critics concur that Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea. According to the late John A.T. Robinson of Cambridge*

University, the burial of Jesus in the tomb is "one of the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus". - William Lane Craig

- Since we can trust that Jesus was dead and buried as the Gospels describe, we have evidence for the resurrection. Why? In order to prove that Jesus rose from the dead, you must first show that he was in fact dead!

B. Jesus's burial accounts refute the many theories that skeptics have proposed regarding the empty tomb and Jesus's resurrection appearances.

- The **swoon theory** states that although Jesus was crucified, it didn't kill him but rather knocked him out and then when he "came to" he presented himself as resurrected from the dead.

a. John, an eye witness, states that he saw Jesus's side speared and out of it came a mixture of blood and water, which a medical professional will tell you, meant that Jesus had died from asphyxiation due to his lungs being collapsed.

[John 19:34–35](#) NKJV

b. Pilate verified with the Roman centurion who was in charge of the crucifixion that Jesus was in fact dead.

[Mark 15:44–45](#) NKJV

c. If Jesus was merely unconscious, those who spent a couple hours handling Jesus's body to prepare him for burial would have noticed if Jesus was showing any signs of life.

d. The scribes and chief priests feared that Jesus's followers would falsely claim that Jesus had been resurrected and so they asked Pilate to have

guards seal and guard the tomb. No doubt they would have checked the tomb to make sure Jesus was in it before they sealed it.

[Matthew 27:62–66](#) NKJV

e. How could a half dead man survive three days in a tomb?

f. If Jesus was half dead but somehow revived in the tomb, how would he have rolled away the stone and overpowered the guards? It would have been hard enough for him to get out of the linen cloth that he was wrapped in.

- The **wrong tomb theory** asserts that the disciples when they went back to the tomb on Sunday morning went to the wrong tomb which was empty, and therefore, they concluded Jesus rose from the dead.

a. Jesus's burial accounts make it clear that Jesus's tomb was known by Joseph for it was his tomb that he bought with his own money, and Nicodemus and the women as they were present while Jesus was buried. Even the chief priests and elders knew where Jesus was located because they sent guards to protect the tomb from intruders.

b. If the disciples went to the wrong tomb, all the guards or the religious leaders would have had to do was go to Jesus's tomb and produce his dead body and that would have immediately stopped the news about Jesus's resurrection.

c. If Jesus had been thrown in a common grave with the corpses of countless other criminals and the disciples claimed that they went to the grave and did not find Jesus there, skeptics could have said Jesus was there but that his disciples mistook Jesus's corpse for another criminal or his body had been eaten by birds and animals.

d. Although Jesus was buried in Joseph's family tomb, it was new, which meant that Jesus wasn't even buried with one other person. In other words, there was no way for his disciples to misidentify Jesus's body.

Why does the fact that Jesus's burial provided PROOF for the resurrection matter for us today?

- *Other major facts which also stand up to scrutiny include the empty tomb, the original disciples' belief that Jesus was risen from the dead - despite their having every predisposition to the contrary - and the multiple occasions and various circumstances in which different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead. These facts are agreed upon by the majority of scholars and any adequate historical hypothesis must account for them. -William Lane Craig*
- If you're **not a Christian**, how do you account for not only the fulfilled prophecies but also the historical facts? If the resurrection of Jesus is not the best explanation of them, what is?
- If you are a **Christian**, your faith is not based on a pipe dream no matter what people or the media wants to tell you. This should bolster your faith and give you confidence to engage with loved ones who are skeptical about Christianity in truth and of course in love.

#3 Completed his journey DOWNWARD.

[Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV](#), [John 3:31 NKJV](#)

- In his burial, Jesus, the one who came from above and was above all, made himself below all.
- The King of Heaven who made earth allowed himself to be swallowed up by it.

Why does the fact that in his burial, Jesus completed his journey downward matter for us today?

- Death is a door that we will all have to walk through.
- If you are **Christian**, you have a Savior that has walked through that door too.
- If you are **not a Christian**, why face death alone and without hope?

#4 BURIED our OLD life in Adam.

- The Christian's old life apart from God, guilty of sin, and trapped by the enslaving power of sin was crucified. [Romans 6:5–7 NKJV](#)
- Paul states that the Christian hasn't just been crucified with Christ but also buried with Christ. [Romans 6:4 NKJV](#)
- What is the point Paul is making?
 - Paul is **intensifying** the truth that the Christian is dead to sin.
 - The believer is not just dead to sin, they are **buried** to sin.

Why does the fact that in his burial, Jesus buried our old life in Adam matter for us today?

- If we are buried with Christ, our old man, our old nature, is buried with Christ. Meaning our old life and nature has officially, decisively, and finally been **put out of this world!** It is long gone! Dead as dead can be!
- Jesus's burial gives Christians **further proof** that they are no longer a slave to sin! Death no longer has dominion over them! They are free to submit their bodies not to sin but to righteousness!
- Dear **Christian**, if you ever wonder if you are really dead to sin's enslaving power, remember that you have not only died to sin; you have been buried to sin! It is final! It is finished! It is long gone! Your old life has been put out of this world.
- If you are **not a Christian**, are you sick of being captive to your self-destructive ways? Turn to Jesus in repentance and faith for he is the only one that can heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, restore sight to the blind, and set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Discussion Questions:

1. Were you aware of the prophecies regarding Jesus's burial?
2. What are the various ways people try to explain away these prophecies as well as the other messianic prophecies that Jesus fulfilled?
3. How should Jesus's fulfillment of these prophecies increase a Christian's faith?
4. How do the events of Jesus's burial support his resurrection? How would you explain this to a friend?
5. Is it easy for you to believe in Jesus or do you require logic and evidence in order to believe?
6. What convinced you that Jesus was real?
7. What doubts have you struggled with in regards to Jesus?
8. Does doubt have a place in the Christian faith? Why or why not?
9. What skeptical theories have you heard regarding Jesus's life, death, burial, and resurrection?
10. How has the fact that Jesus suffered helped you to endure suffering? Can you give a specific example?
11. Do you think you will be able to face death with confidence and hope? Why or why not?
12. If you are a Christian, are there any ways in which you struggle to believe that your old life enslaved to sin is buried?