

Good News of Jesus' Burial

I have some good news for you- Jesus was buried. Perhaps this created as unease in you. How can the burial of Jesus be good news? Before I attempt an answer let me remind you of Paul's summery of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received:

that Christ died for our sins
according to the Scriptures,
⁴ that He was buried,
that He was raised on the third day
according to the Scriptures,
⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas,
then to the Twelve.

The fact of Jesus' burial is part of the gospel message. It is crucial to our salvation.

Let's note the account of Jesus' burial as recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in detail. All four gospel narratives relate the account and it is mentioned in the sermon summaries recorded in Acts. Such testimony should alert us to its importance. Listen to Matthew's narrative - Jesus Is Buried

⁵⁷ When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse

than the first.”⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, “You have a guard^[a] of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.”⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard (Matt. 27:57-61).

Paul in Acts 13 preached saying, “And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, ““You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’

The burial of Jesus is also connected to Christian baptism. In Romans 6:4 Paul writes, *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

In Colossians 2:12 he says, *Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

So Jesus burial is very important. Why is it a part of the good news?

The burial of Jesus is crucial because **it proves that Jesus really died**. There is no possibility of his surviving crucifixion, being a swoon, and then reviving. He was buried under a heavy load of burial cloths weighted down with spices. John testifies: ³⁸ *After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.* ³⁹ *Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.* ⁴⁰ *So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.*

The actual death of Jesus is necessary for our salvation because the wages sin pays is death. Jesus had to undergo the penalty of our sin in order to redeem us. In Genesis 2 we read: ¹⁵ *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.* ¹⁶ *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

Thus Paul writes: ²³ *For the wages of sin is death. (6:23)*

Romans 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Hebrews 2:9 *But we see him (Jesus) who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

¹⁴ *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Heb. 2:14-15)*

The burial of Jesus testifies to the reality of Jesus' death, which is part of his enduring the judgment of our sins. As our substitute he must undergo all that we are due as sinners in order to redeem us from the curse and judgment.

The burial of Messiah was also part of the prophetic message. Jesus himself pointed to Jonah in his predictions of his approaching death in Matthew 12:40 *For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Here is what David prophesied in Psalm 16:10: *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (the pit).*

And hear the prophet Hosea 6:2 *After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.*

After Jesus expired, he went to the realm of the dead. Now if you consider Jesus' story of the rich man and the poor Lazarus in Luke 16 where two compartments of the dead are mentioned - paradise or Abraham's bosom, and a place of torture across a great gulf and we also read 1 Peter 3:18- 19, "... having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the ^[b]spirit; ¹⁹ in ^[c]which He also went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison." It appears Jesus announced in the spiritual realm his victory over death for God's elect to those who had previously died. Therefore we read in Revelation 1: ¹⁸ *I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*

Here is the good news of Jesus' burial - he underwent the full penalty of your sin so that you who believe on him are delivered from the judgment of God to come, and even though we must still physically die or be translated when he comes again, he has removed from us the sting of death.

“Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”^[a]

⁵⁶ Now death’s stinger is sin, and sin’s power is the Law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus the Messiah!^[b] 1 Corinthians 15:55-56.

Death - now though still our enemy - has had its venom removed and becomes a doorway into the presence of the Lord as we await our full redemption in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting with him on the new earth.

This is the good news of Jesus’ burial and why it is part of the gospel message. Dear Christian, as you mourn when you lose a loved one in death you can recall two things - Jesus wept at the grave site of his friend Lazarus so he feels with you the sting of death’s separation. Second, you can remember that Jesus has gone before us - into the shadow of death and he emerged victorious on the Day of his glorious resurrection from the dead. He is the first born from the dead - his resurrection was physical and in a now incorruptible immortal body and all who believe will follow in the resurrection in the last day.

Jesus was in the grave in the state of death and the dead on the Sabbath, but the First Day of the New Creation dawned when who was dead arose from the dead.

*Up from the grave he arose
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes.
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And he lives for ever with his saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!*

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