

# Scripture Fulfilled in His Burial

**John 19:38-42**

**Introduction:** Our Sovereign God has orchestrated every event around the life, ministry, trial and execution of Jesus. Prophecies from centuries past were fulfilled in precise detail, because everything was predetermined by God. Peter reminded the Pentecost crowds of this reality just 50 days after this event.

**Acts 2:22-24** <sup>22</sup> "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- <sup>23</sup> this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

Jesus has been murdered by evil men! The Romans had made certain He was dead, but how can men kill God? According to the Scriptures....they were permitted to so that Christ the Son would die a sinners death for you and me. Jesus Himself told Pilate....

**John 19:11** ...."You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above."

And now they will bury Him and this too will be carried out according to the Scriptures.

The truth about Scripture is this....It has been about Christ from the beginning. This is what the angel told John right at the end of time....In awe of all he saw, John writes...

**Revelation 19:10** ..... I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The first prophecy of Christ was given to Satan in the Garden..

**Genesis 3:15** <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

The Messiah has then been progressively revealed like a road map leading right to the manger. He would be descendent of Seth not Cain. He would be a descendent of Abraham. But Islam claims Abraham as a father, but God specified the legitimate son Isaac not Ishmael. Then through Jacob, the younger twin of Isaac and through one of Jacob's twelve sons....Judah. From the clan of Judah a man would marry Rahab the Canaanite prostitute. Their son would marry a hated Moabite and she would have a child who would be the father of eight sons....only one of which would be the ancestor of Messiah.

That Jesus was the Messiah of Scripture was the worst kept secret in history. God went to every length to telegraph His arrival and in the process revealed so many details about His life and death that it was unmistakable. Even then they missed Him. BUT Why?

Why do men still not embrace and trust Jesus Christ with all that is known about Him? Because as a race we are so spiritually damaged that we cannot see our God. We are of the world...the earth. This is what we understand and what we are able to perceive. Spiritual understanding is impossible to mankind. Trust in Jesus Christ as Savior is a ridiculous proposition to the world.

**1 Corinthians 1:18** <sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

BUT...God did send Christ into the world to save men. And because of their spiritually dead condition He had to make them alive to Him through regeneration. Jesus called this new birth when He spoke to Nicodemus. Paul said this about it:

**Ephesians 2:4-5** <sup>4</sup> ..... God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Jesus while still on earth explained it this way:

**John 6:44** <sup>44</sup> "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Now let's see how God is still fulfilling prophecy and confirming the identity of Jesus even after His death. Let's read this passage now:

**John 19:38-42** <sup>38</sup> After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret *one* for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. <sup>39</sup> Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds *weight*. <sup>40</sup> So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup> Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>42</sup> Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The Scripture defines the gospel this way:

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4** Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, <sup>2</sup> by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died** for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that **He was buried**, and that **He was raised** on the third day according to the Scriptures,

As a youth I was taught that believing those three facts about Christ constituted saving faith. I always wondered why there were so many churches that claim to believe them and yet do not affirm who Jesus said He was or what He taught. Churches I attended were filled with people who confessed the gospel, but exhibited no devotion or love for Christ. How do so many end up in the condition of possessing faith that does not transform them? Because it is bogus faith. It is the counterfeit provided to deceive men.

It is the idea of “faith in faith” rather than “faith in Christ.” This is the crucial error of people who were so determined to defend doctrine about Christ that they actually came to trust in the doctrine rather than Christ. They make trust or faith [it is the same word in Greek] in sound doctrine the litmus test of salvation. This is a subtle, but deadly error. It allows people to confess true things about Christ without putting their trust in Christ Jesus Himself. In other words, you can become a Christian based on what you affirm rather than on whom you trust in. In this way of thinking it is possible to have no love, obedience or affection for Christ and still consider yourself saved.

But Paul was more specific about Gospel truth than that. Saving faith was trust in Jesus to have died, to have been buried and to have risen. So you see, Scripture is vital to our faith because it reveals the true Jesus Christ. But our faith is NOT IN SCRIPTURE. It is in Jesus Christ whom the Scripture identifies as God the Son, who became a human man and bore our human sins for us on the Cross. He is creator and owner of all things and this includes you. Faith that does not “trust” Jesus alone to have redeemed you, own you and keep you for all eternity is not saving faith.

Now we all struggle with trusting Christ fully because we are still fallen sinners, but there comes a point in the mind of the born again, where they realize that their eternal soul and earthly life are in the hands of this man and they do trust Him to keep them. Our ability to do so is limited and weak, but our desire to do so is strong.

Let’s define gospel faith: **Christ died** for my sins just like the Scripture said He would, **He was buried**, and **He was raised** on the third day just like the Scriptures said He did.

We talked about His death in some detail last week. This morning the Scripture takes up the second aspect of the saving Gospel of Jesus as the Christ. It is His burial. I used to think that this was just one of those phrases to skip over or to attach to His death, but I was wrong.

Even His burial fulfilled Scripture. Let’s get right into it then starting at verse 38.

**After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews...[38a]:** One of the humiliations of death by crucifixion was not allowing burial. The bodies were left on the crosses for the vultures to eat and desecrate. The Jews on the other hand always buried everyone, but had a particular place of dishonor for their criminals. Everyone in Jerusalem was aware of how this would take place. They had all seen it many times before.

But...it was the afternoon of the Passover. In a few hours the sun would set and the Passover feast would begin. If Pilate left decaying bodies out in plain view this week

there would be a riot. Remember...Pilate is all about keeping the Jews from rioting. This is how they managed to get him to crucify Jesus in the first place.

If the Jews take Jesus down from the cross they are going to bury him in a potter's field. Perhaps the very one where Judas' corpse was thrown. Either way Jesus' body was destined by the circumstances and customs to be disposed of in a very dismissive and demeaning way. And then....mysteriously....after the Romans had assured Jesus was dead this man Joseph appears before Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already be dead...

**Mark 15:43-45** <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup> Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. <sup>45</sup> And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

Joseph was an important member of the group that just planned and carried out the murder of Jesus and at the same time was expecting and looking for the Messiah of God to come. There are several other things known about him from gospel accounts:

**Matthew 27:57** <sup>57</sup> When it was evening, there came a **rich man** from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a **disciple of Jesus**.

**Luke 23:50-51** <sup>50</sup> And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a **good and righteous man** <sup>51</sup> (he had not consented to their plan and action), a *man* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

John tells us here that he was a secret disciple for fear of the Jews. I have read some pretty critical comments about Joseph being a secret disciple over the years. Let me try to put this in perspective for you.

He finds himself believing that the long awaited Messiah that he has always longed for is Jesus the Nazarene. He realizes this because???? Because the Father has drawn Him. The Holy Spirit has given him eyes to see and a heart to believe and Christ Himself has revealed His beauty and Deity to him. We do not know when all of this happened or how long it had been a reality. We only know that up until now he had kept it to himself. Even more so as he watched his colleagues go on a murderous rampage against Jesus. It takes a little time to decide what to do in a circumstance like this. We do know that he did not consent when the vote was taken to the plan to kill Jesus. He was not just a lowly coward trying to save his own neck.

**Joseph asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. [38b]:** His determination to own Christ was strengthened by what he saw rather than diminished. After they killed Jesus Joseph decides to own Christ publically regardless the cost. These are not the actions of a coward but of a man growing in grace and love for Jesus.

Like John and Peter who followed Christ right into His trial, Joseph in his position as a prominent member of the Jews, goes into Pilate and asked for the body to be given to him.

This is highly unusual. The Romans did not give up these bodies because they saw their misuse of them as part of the deterrent to treason and defiance of Rome. So just asking took courage. The fact that Pilate granted it has another reason altogether. It was another awesome evidence of God's control over every detail of the life, death and now burial of Jesus the Son. Isaiah had revealed this detail of the Messiah's burial. Although considered a criminal and assigned a place with the wicked...He would in fact be given honor in His burial in spite of the customs and desires of the Jews and the Romans.

**Isaiah 53:9** <sup>9</sup> His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

God had chosen Joseph before the foundation of the world to carry out this little detail in Christ's burial. God made Joseph rich and then opened his spiritual eyes and heart to love and care for Jesus in His burial. What Kings and even governors do they do under the direction of our God...

**Proverbs 21:1** The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

**Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came [39a]:** There was another man with Joseph that day. We have never heard of Joseph before this time, but we do know Nicodemus. John refreshes our memory so that we know that this is the same guy from Chapter Three. There John tells us that Nicodemus was the chief or main teacher in Israel.

**John 3:10-12** <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you **the teacher** of Israel and do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup> "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

How indeed? The same way that all men come to Christ. They are a gift to His Son and The Father draws them. The Spirit, Jesus explained, causes new birth...

**John 3:6-7** <sup>6</sup> "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

**Bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. [39b]:** These two men, both of whom are very rich came to publicly expose themselves to danger, ridicule, humiliation, excommunication and possible death in order to own Jesus and claim His body. They brought with them one hundred pounds of costly spices to honor Christ's body as if it belonged to a King or one of the richest men in Israel. Not to a homeless and hated criminal.

Myrrh was a sticky and fragrant resin. It was mixed with aloes which were resins drawn out of certain woods through a steam process.

**So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. [40]:** This was a process of mixing the myrrh with the liquid aloe and then applying that to each strip of cloth. The cloth was then wrapped around the body. More of the material was then put on top of the cloth and another layer of wrapping took place until all the spices and cloth had been used up. These materials would then harden into a solid resin like hardened tree pitch.

It is pretty clear from this that they did not understand, just like everyone else, that Jesus was going to rise from the dead in three days. Even Christ's most devoted followers, those who loved Him deeply...did not understand the reality of His resurrection until it actually happened.

**Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. [41]:** Time is running out now. Jesus did not die until 3:00 PM.

**Matthew 27:45-46** <sup>45</sup> Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. <sup>46</sup> 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?"

By 6:00 PM the bodies needed to be down from the cross and buried somewhere. All of these events took place with a sense of urgency. They needed to find a tomb and they needed to prepare the body and get it inside by sunset when the Passover would begin. This is why they chose a tomb very near the place of Golgotha. It had never been used before.

**Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. [42]:** Just as time and daylight were running out these two rich men, who have come out of hiding to own Jesus in His death and who are not accustomed to doing such a menial task as preparing a body....Two of the most unlikely men....finish their task and place Jesus in the tomb that God had intended for His Son since eternity past.

It was a rich man's tomb...brand new....prepared for that man's eventual death. It actually belonged to Joseph so no permissions needed to be sought.

**Matthew 27:59-60** <sup>59</sup> And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, <sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

I hope Joseph did not miss the beautiful irony of it all. The one who died for him was buried in the tomb....intended for him.

**CONCLUSION:** God is busy revealing His Sovereign control over the events of history. He is revealing this truth to us, confirming all these details by telling them to men centuries before they occurred.

What else happened during these three days of Christ's burial? Much more than we have been able to discuss here. More than John's account described. Let me share a couple more.

- Visible decay and decomposition set in at the end of the fourth day. This would not happen to God's Son. How can a person be dead and not decay? By being resurrected before the fourth day.

**Psalm 16:10** <sup>10</sup> For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

- The Jews had asked repeatedly for a sign of Christ's authority...all the while rejecting every sign He provided for them. Jesus finally snapped back at them saying.

**Matthew 12:39-40** ..... "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup> for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

What was Jonah doing in that fish? Prefiguring the burial of the Holy Son of the Living God. He was not in there for FOUR days, but THREE! The Son of God was not allowed to physically decay.

- At least one other remarkable thing was fulfilled during this three days of burial. The Sabbath Day of God was finally perfectly kept by the one who kept the entire law of God perfectly. Let me show you.

The Jews counted any part of a day as one day. In order for Jesus to have been in the tomb for three days He must have had to be buried before Friday ended and then arisen on Sunday. They reckoned their days from Sunset to Sunset. Sabbath [Saturday] therefore started at 6:00 PM [or sunset] on Friday night and ended at 6:00 PM the next day. Its ending also signaled the beginning of the first day of the week....Sunday.

The Sabbath was given to commemorate the Creation. When God was done He rested from His work. Let's read it.

**Exodus 20:11** <sup>11</sup> "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Did God rest because He was tired? Of course not! He rested because He was finished. Jesus was the author of a new creation. His spiritual children who were united to God through Him. Paul described it this way...

**Galatians 6:14-15** <sup>14</sup> But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. <sup>15</sup> For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

And that new creation is our spiritual life in Christ. It was lost at the fall but restored to us at the Cross. When Jesus had created it he said...It is Finished!!! What was finished? The New Creation that would replace the one Satan and Adam decimated. It would replace death with life. Separation with union. Alienation from God with reconciliation.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-21** <sup>17</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup> Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Christ's burial is part of the Gospel good news. It was not just an incidental event. Like everything else it was planned for God's Glory and for your eternal life. Jesus kept the law of God perfectly in life. In death He even fulfilled the entire purpose and meaning of the Sabbath. What was remembered on the Sabbath was a fallen and broken creation. What is remembered on Sunday is the New and Undefined Creation...the restoration of our lives to God and our hope of Eternal life through Jesus.

So...draw near to worship and love Christ. Take no detail for granted. Everyone was planned before the creation of the world. Jesus carried them out on the Cross, in the tomb and as we will see next time...in His own resurrection.

The Scripture and its fulfillment is about Christ. Christ alone reversed the consequences of Satan's temptations and Adam's sin. Religion, ritual and self righteousness are not the solutions to our hopelessly lost condition. It is Christ Jesus alone..It is the gospel....

**2 Corinthians 4:5-7** <sup>5</sup> For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;