

The Gospel of Mark Tried and Crucified

Lesson #12 for September 21, 2024

Scriptures: Mark 14:53-72; 15; Luke 13:1; Psalm 22:18; John 1:1-3; 20:24-29; Daniel 9:24-27.

1. In this lesson we will discuss Jesus's interaction with the Sanhedrin from the end of Mark 14. Then, we will discuss Mark 15 with His trial in front of Pilate, His crucifixion, and His burial. **In the big picture, why did Jesus have to die?** Was it to “pay the price for our sins”? Or, was there something much bigger? Something **for the entire universe to see and learn?**

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Mark 15 is the heart of the Passion Narrative. It presents the trial of Jesus, His condemnation, the mockery by the soldiers, His crucifixion, and then His death and burial. The events in this chapter are presented in stark, crisp detail, likely because the author let the facts speak for themselves.

Throughout this chapter, irony plays an important role. Because of this, it is helpful to have a clear definition of what irony is.

Irony often contains three components: (1) **two levels of meaning**, (2) the two levels are **in conflict or contrast** to each other, and (3) **someone does not see** the irony and does not recognize what is happening and does not know that he or she is the one who will suffer the consequences.

This week, from the question of Pilate, “ ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ” to the mocking soldiers, the sign above the cross, and the mocking of the religious leaders, “ ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save,’ ” to the unexpected appearance of Joseph of Arimathea, the chapter is filled with painful ironies that nevertheless reveal powerful truths about the death of Jesus and what it means.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath Afternoon, September 14.^{†‡}

2. We know who Jesus was, and we know where He came from.

John 1:1-3: ¹ In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²From the very beginning the Word was with God. ³Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., John 1:1-3). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].[‡]

3. As we have noted in previous lessons many times, Jesus told people whom He had healed not to mention what He had done for them. That is sometimes called His **revelation/secretcy motif**. But, at the point in time near His death that we are studying, it was important for Jesus to be seen and heard by as many people as possible, raising as many questions as possible about who He really was and why He was dying. Is that understood even today?
4. The Sanhedrin played an important role in the final days leading up to Jesus's death.

[BSG:] The Sanhedrin, located in Jerusalem, was the “supreme judicial council of Judaism with 71 members. It figures prominently in the Passion narratives

of the Gospels as the body that tried Jesus, and it appears again in Acts as the judicial court that investigated and persecuted the growing Christian church.”— Philip Wesley Comfort and Walter A. Elwell, eds., *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), p. 1165.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 159.†§

5. A careful reading and understanding of the New Testament, including Acts 23:1,6, helps us to understand the animosity that existed toward Jesus and even among the various members of the Sanhedrin.
6. The one probably overwhelming message of this section of Scripture is how envious and hateful the Jewish leaders were toward Jesus. When Judas offered to betray Jesus, they were delighted. After His arrest, when the high priest questioned Jesus directly as to whether or not He was “the Son of the Blessed God,” Jesus answered, “I am.” (Mark 14:61-62, *GNB**) They felt that was sufficient reason for condemning Him for blasphemy. However, they needed the claim of sedition against Caesar to bring a charge against Jesus and make it stick in front of the Roman government which had the only authority to put Jesus to death.
7. After Herod the Great died, the area of Judea came under the jurisdiction of his son Archelaus. Archelaus was so evil and hated that the Jews demanded he be removed; and at that point, the Roman government chose to place a Roman leader over Judea. That is why Pontius Pilate, not a Jew but a Roman, was the leader of the Jews at the time of Jesus’s ministry. He was the governor of Judea under the Roman government from A.D. 26–A.D. 36. He was known for doing many very cruel things.

Luke 13:1: At that time some people were there who told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices to God.—*Good News Bible.**

8. In their rage against Jesus, the Jewish religious leaders needed to find a rationale that would stand up before Pilate to whom they took Jesus for trial.

[Green in BSG:] “Procurators, such as Pontius Pilate or Felix, depended on Jewish courts or councils to handle many administrative matters.”—Green and McDonald, eds., *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, p. 270.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 159.]†§

9. If we could see these events in 3D, living color, we would realize that as the religious leaders took Jesus to Pilate, they were followed by a large crowd of Jewish rabble. Pilate recognized very quickly that the Jewish leaders believed that Jesus was a threat to them. They were envious of Him. Pilate hoped to get the crowd to stand up for Jesus and oppose the religious leaders. So, Pilate turned to the crowd and asked how they felt. They shouted back, “Crucify Him.” **He did not realize that the crowd was already controlled by the Jewish leaders.**
10. Pilate almost had been persuaded to release Jesus from the condemnation of crucifixion. However, the people shouted: “ ‘If you release this Man, you are not a friend of Caesar.’ ” (John 19:12, *NASB** [2020])

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **Pilate longed to deliver Jesus.** But he saw that he could not do this, and yet retain his own position and honor.

Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. How many, to escape loss or suffering, in like manner sacrifice principle. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another. The current sets strongly in the wrong direction, and he who compromises with evil is swept away into the thick darkness of guilt.

Pilate yielded to the demands of the mob. Rather than risk losing his position, he delivered Jesus up to be crucified. But in spite of his precautions, the very thing he dreaded afterward came upon him. His honors were stripped from him, he was cast down from his high office, and, stung by remorse and wounded pride, not long after the crucifixion he ended his own life. So all who compromise with sin will gain only sorrow and ruin. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 14:12.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 738.2-3.††

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[BSG:] **Ironically, it is Pilate, not the Jewish leaders, who alludes several times to God’s kingdom in his identification of Jesus as the King of the Jews.** Jesus brought the possibility of the kingdom of God to His nation, but the invitation was rejected by the leaders of the nation. The secular governor recognized Jesus as King, and Jesus permitted Himself to be called such. From Pilate’s perspective, Jesus died as “the King of the Jews.” According to the Gospel of John, “Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written: ‘JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS’ ” (*John 19:19, NASB*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161.††§

[BSG:] The irony is that Jesus is both the Messiah and the King of the Jews. His convictions for blasphemy and sedition were mistaken; He should have received homage and worship instead. Yet, Jesus still acts in a kingly manner. His response to Pilate, “‘You have said so’ ” (*Mark 15:2, ESV*), is noncommittal. He does not deny the title or affirm it. This response may suggest that He is a king but of a different sort (*compare with John 18:33–38*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, September 15.‡§

[BSG:] In other words, Jesus says to Pilate, *I am not only the King of the Jews, but I am also above all powers and kingdoms on the earth, including yours.* The import of these electrifying words seared Pilate’s mind so that he “made efforts to release Him” (*John 19:12, NASB*). However, Pilate’s understanding of the kingdom of God was limited by his view that there was no king higher than Caesar (*see John 19:12, 15*), which, of course, was a title for the Roman emperor.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 161.‡§

11. How often are we controlled by the crowd? Or, by peer pressure? Pilate’s first attempt to release Jesus was to suggest that He should be set free; but, the people demanded Barabbas instead.
12. ***What principles or factors mold and motivate our thoughts and decisions in life today?***
13. So, Pilate suggested that he would have Jesus whipped and then released to them. But, the people demanded that He be crucified! Pilate was trying to be fair!
14. The whipping that Pilate suggested in place of crucifixion was a severe one.

[BSG:] The Romans utilized a severe form of beating to prepare prisoners for execution. The victim was stripped of his clothes, tied to a pole, and then lashed with leather whips to which pieces of bone, glass, stones, and nails were tied.

After Jesus was whipped, the soldiers tasked with His execution continued His humiliation by clothing Him in a purple robe, placing a crown of thorns on His head, and mocking Him as king of the Jews. The group of soldiers is called a battalion, in this case anywhere from 200 to 600 men.

The irony in the scene is evident to the reader because Jesus really is the King, and the mocking words of the soldiers proclaim this truth. The action of the soldiers was a parody of how soldiers hailed the Roman emperor with the words “Hail, Caesar, Emperor!” Thus, there is an implicit comparison to the emperor.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, September 15.‡

15. Once Pilate agreed with the mob to have Jesus killed instead of just whipped, Jesus was sentenced to be taken to Golgotha to be crucified on the cross. While the Romans loved to humiliate anyone who was to be crucified, the Jews abhorred public nakedness. So, after beating Him, mocking Him, and placing the crown of thorns on His head, the Roman soldiers returned His own garments to Him before the trek to the cross.

Mark 15:21: On the way [to Golgotha] they met a man named Simon, who was coming into the city from the country, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. (Simon was from Cyrene and was the father of Alexander and Rufus.)—*Good News Bible.*‡*

[BSG:] At this point in the Passion Narrative, Jesus is a silent victim, controlled by people who are bent on His death. Throughout the Gospel, up to His arrest, He was the master of activities. Now He is acted upon. Though He was a robust itinerant preacher, the beating He had received and the lack of food and sleep wore Him down to where a stranger had to bear His cross.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, September 17.‡

16. When they arrived at Golgotha, Jesus was nailed to the cross; and the soldiers gambled for His clothes.

Mark 15:22-24: ²²They took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means “The Place of the Skull”. [*sic*] ²³There they tried to give him wine mixed with a drug called myrrh, but Jesus would not drink it. ²⁴Then they crucified him and divided his clothes among themselves, throwing dice to see who would get which piece of clothing.—*Good News Bible.*‡*

[BSG:] At the cross His garments were removed and became the property of the soldiers, who cast lots to see whose they would be (*compare with Ps. 22:18*). Crucifixion was a fairly bloodless method of execution. The nails used to fasten a person to the cross (*compare with John 20:24–29*) were likely driven through the wrist below the palm [in the forearm] where no major blood vessels run. (In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for “hand” can refer to both the hand and the forearm.) The palm of the hand itself does not have the structures necessary to carry the weight of the body in crucifixion. The median nerve runs through the center of the forearm and would be crushed by the nails, causing

excruciating pain up the arm. Breathing was difficult. To get a good breath, victims of crucifixion had to push against their nailed feet and flex their arms, again causing agonizing pain. Exhaustion asphyxia was one of the possible causes of death.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, September 17.^{‡§}

17. Notice that even the Roman soldiers who were mocking Jesus called Him a king. He was, in fact, not only King of the Jews, but also the King of the Romans as well.

Mark 15:25-32: ²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶**The notice of the accusation against him said: "The King of the Jews".** [*sic*] ²⁷They also crucified two bandits with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

²⁹ People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus: "Aha! You were going to tear down the Temple and build it up again in three days! ³⁰Now come down from the cross and save yourself!"

³¹ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law jeered at Jesus, saying to each other, "He saved [healed, rescued] others, but he cannot save himself! ³²**Let us see the Messiah, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him!**"

And the two who were crucified with Jesus insulted him also.—*Good News Bible.*^{*†‡}

[BSG:] **One of their mocking statements stands out.** In Mark 15:31, they say, "He saved others; he cannot save himself" (*ESV*). To make their point about His helplessness on the cross, they indicate that He did help others (the Greek verb can mean "save," "heal," or "rescue"). Thus, ironically, they admit He is the Savior. The irony goes further—the reason He could not, or would not, save Himself was because at the cross He was saving others.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, September 17.^{†‡§} [Is that how He saved us?][‡]

18. While Jesus was on the cross, the Father was distancing Himself from Jesus, demonstrating for the universe what the separation of the sinner from God at the end will be like.

[EGW:] ... All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. **The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour [*sic-Br*] in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.**

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. **The Saviour [*sic-Br*] could not see through the portals of the tomb.** Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. **Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute,**

that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.1-2.†‡

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19. In His dying moments, Jesus cried out the prophetic message from **Psalm 22:1**: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (*GNB**) Sin separates us from God when we do it!

Mark 15:33-36: ³³ At noon the whole country was **covered with darkness**, which lasted for three hours. ³⁴At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which means, “**My God, my God, why did you abandon me?**”

³⁵ Some of the people there heard him and said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah!”

³⁶ One of them ran up with a sponge, soaked it in cheap wine, and put it on the end of a stick. Then he held it up to Jesus’ lips and said, “Wait! Let us see if Elijah is coming to bring him down from the cross!”—*Good News Bible*.*†

[BSG:] Jesus’ words from the cross are reported in Aramaic along with translation. The words “my God, my God” are *Eloi, Eloi* in the verse (a transliteration of the Aramaic *‘elahi*). It would be easy to hear Jesus as calling for Elijah (Aramaic *‘elijyah*, which means “My God is YHWH” [*sic*]). This is the mistake that some bystanders make.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, September 18.†§

20. Why was there darkness at the cross? Was it to shield Jesus from gawking humans who did not understand what was happening in the controversy between God and Satan over the character and government of God? This was another major battle in the great controversy!

[BSG:] The Gospel of Mark presents the cross as a very dark place, both physically and spiritually. A supernatural darkness descended on Calvary from about noon on that Friday until about 3 p.m. “And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour” (*Mark 15:33, ESV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, September 18.†§

21. And then, Jesus died, separated from the Father. See *Desire of Ages* 756.2.

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Mark 15:37: With a loud cry **Jesus died**.—*Good News Bible*.*†

22. What was the real cause of the death of Jesus? God had stated that sin leads to death. (Genesis 2:17) It is our sins that separate us from God, the only Source of life. (Isaiah 59:2) Jesus came to demonstrate how that actually happens: “**The withdrawal of the divine countenance**” “**broke the heart of the Son of God.**” Jesus was treated as we deserve so that we could be treated as He deserved. Jesus died as a demonstration that the death which is the direct result of sin, separated Him from His Father. That is what the Bible calls *the second death* which will kill the wicked in the end. Jesus is the only Person in the history of the universe, so far, who has died as a direct result of sin. We are given a choice: (1) We can choose to live lives following the pattern of Jesus’s life and live forever; or, (2) We can choose to ignore the messages He came to bring. Then, we will die the death that He died, separated from His/our Father, the only Source of life.

23. As we have noted already, Jesus died because He was **separated from His Father**, the only Source of life. This was to demonstrate the truth about what sin does to us. This separation from God is referred to in Scripture as the *wrath of God*. See Romans 1:18-32; 4:25; and Matthew 27:46.

24. Was God's *wrath* displayed at the cross? See the handout about *God's wrath* on Theox.org. https://www.theox.org/images/uploads/bbk/KHart_BTGG_PDF_Gnrl_Gods_Wrath_or_Anger_16.pdf

25. Does the death of Jesus teach "substitution"? Is the Bible study guide incorrect in this?

[BSG:] Look at how central the theology of substitution was to Ellen G. White and also to the Bible (*see, for instance, Isaiah 53*). Why is any theology that downplays the central role of substitution and Christ's dying in our stead, paying in Himself the penalty for our sins, a false theology?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, September 20.[§] [Is that true?][‡]

26. **It is true that because Jesus died to teach us the truth about sin and its results, if we take advantage of that experience and learn the truth, then we do not have to die. But, there is no such thing as "transferring our sins to Jesus." Sins cannot be transferred. It is true that the suffering that we should all experience was experienced by Jesus so that, if we learn the truth, we do not have to experience it. The idea that because of our sin, Jesus had to "pay" to the Father the penalty that we owe or deserve because the Father has demanded that a penalty be paid is not taught anywhere in the Bible! That idea has entered Christian thinking from pagan sources!**

Isaiah 53:4-5: ⁴ "But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne.

All the while **we thought that his suffering**

was punishment sent by God. [Notice that *we thought*, but it was not true.]

⁵But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did.

We are healed by the punishment he suffered,

made whole by the blows he received."—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

27. What was the Roman officer talking about when he said that Jesus was the Son of God? Did he have some understanding of the Jewish religion and the truth about Jesus? Or, was he just thinking in terms of Roman polytheism?

Mark 15:39: The army officer who was standing there in front of the cross saw how Jesus died. "This man was really the Son of God!" he said.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

28. It is of note that virtually none of the disciples are mentioned in any of this sequence at the cross. Where were they? The disciples were in hiding! Why do you think it was that women felt so free to be around at the time of the crucifixion and also at the time of the resurrection? Notice that three women are specifically mentioned: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. After being at the cross till the end, we will note also that these women were back on Sunday morning, taking spices to anoint the body of Jesus. (Mark 16:1-5)

Mark 15:40-41: ⁴⁰ Some women were there [at the cross], looking on from a distance. Among them were **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James**

and of Joseph, and Salome. ⁴¹They had followed Jesus while he was in Galilee and had helped him. **Many other women who had come to Jerusalem with him were there also.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*††} [See Luke 8:1-3.][‡]

John 19:25-27: ²⁵ Standing close to Jesus' cross were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ Jesus saw his mother and **the disciple he loved** [John] standing there; so he said to his mother, "He is your son." [Where were the other sons of Joseph? They were Mary's stepsons.]

²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "She is your mother." From that time the disciple took her to live in his home.—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

29. These women became important witnesses to the fact that Jesus was dead and buried, and then, rose back to life.

30. At Jesus's death, it is interesting to note that the sacrificial system, which was so important to the Jewish leaders, was brought to an end as the curtain hanging in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (Mark 15:37-38)

Mark 15:38: [At the time of Jesus's death,] The curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

[BSG:] How ironic that when Jesus was dying on the cross, the priests, in their uncontrolled excitement, declared that the One on the cross was Christ, the King of Israel! Even though Jesus is referred to as king many times in this chapter, it is Pilate who enunciates it most clearly. But now, even the leaders of the Israelite nation declare Jesus as Messiah and King of Israel, albeit in mockery. They do not know that, with Jesus' death, the necessity for their administration of sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary was about to cease. Mark 15:37 says, "Jesus let out a loud cry, and died," (NASB) and in the following verse, the Gospel notes that "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mark 15:38, NASB).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} 160.^{‡§} [Which curtain was it that tore? See *Desire of Ages* 756.5. If it was the curtain between the holy and most holy places, how could people see inside unless the curtain from the courtyard to the holy place was also torn?][‡]

31. One historical detail of extreme importance is the verification of the death of Jesus since there are some who have claimed that Jesus did not die; some say that He "swooned" or merely fainted on the cross. However, a soldier pierced His body with a spear. (John 19:32) That would have killed Him if He had not already been dead.

32. Who dealt with the body of Jesus after He died? Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, previously undeclared followers of Jesus and members of the Sanhedrin, claimed His body.

Mark 15:42-45: ⁴²⁻⁴³ It was towards evening when Joseph of Arimathea arrived. He was a respected member of the Council, who was waiting for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was Preparation day (that is, the day before the Sabbath), so Joseph went boldly into the presence of Pilate and asked him for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. He called the army officer and asked him if Jesus had been dead a long time. ⁴⁵After hearing the officer's report, Pilate told Joseph he could have the body.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

[BSG:] In this passage, Joseph of Arimathea appears for the first and last time in the Gospel of Mark. He was a respected member of the Sanhedrin and one of the “urban elites.” As a wealthy and respected man, he had standing with the governor, which explains how he could dare approach Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus. It is a touching detail that a member of the council took such interest in Jesus’ burial. Meanwhile, where were Jesus’ trusted disciples in all this?

.... **Mark 15:43** tells of Joseph’s request for the body of Jesus. But Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus already was dead (*Mark 15:44*). He, therefore, summoned the centurion in charge of the crucifixion and asked if Jesus was dead already. The centurion confirmed that it was so.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, September 19.^{†§}

33. Three men helped to bury the body of Jesus: Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and John.

John 19:38-42: ³⁸ After this, **Joseph**, who was from the town of Arimathea, asked Pilate if he could take Jesus’ body. (Joseph was a follower of Jesus, but in secret, because he was afraid of the Jewish authorities.) Pilate told him he could have the body, so Joseph went and took it away. ³⁹**Nicodemus**, who at first had gone to see Jesus at night, went with Joseph, taking with him about thirty kilogrammes [*sic-Br*] of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. ⁴⁰The two men took Jesus’ body and wrapped it in linen with the spices according to the Jewish custom of preparing a body for burial. ⁴¹There was a garden in the place where Jesus had been put to death, and in it there was a new tomb where no one had ever been buried. ⁴²Since it was the day before the Sabbath and because the tomb was close by, they placed Jesus’ body there.—*Good News Bible.*††*

[EGW:] In this emergency, **Joseph of Arimathea** and **Nicodemus** came to the help of the disciples. Both these men were members of the Sanhedrin, and were acquainted with Pilate. Both were men of wealth and influence. They were determined that the body of Jesus should have an honorable burial.

Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and begged from him the body of Jesus. **For the first time, Pilate learned that Jesus was really dead.** Conflicting reports had reached him in regard to the events attending the crucifixion, but **the knowledge of Christ’s death had been purposely kept from him.** Pilate had been warned by the priests and rulers against deception by Christ’s disciples in regard to His body. Upon hearing Joseph’s request, he therefore sent for the centurion who had charge at the cross, and learned for a certainty of the death of Jesus. He also drew from him an account of the scenes of Calvary, confirming the testimony of Joseph.

The request of Joseph was granted. While **John** was troubled about the burial of his Master, **Joseph** returned with Pilate’s order for the body of Christ; and **Nicodemus** came bringing a costly mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a hundred pounds’ weight, for His embalming. **The most honored in all Jerusalem could not have been shown more respect in death. The disciples were astonished to see these wealthy rulers as much interested as they themselves in the burial of their Lord.**

Neither Joseph nor Nicodemus had openly accepted the Saviour [sic-Br] while He was living. They knew that such a step would exclude them from the Sanhedrin, and they hoped to protect Him by their influence in its councils. For a time they had seemed to succeed; but the wily priests, seeing their favor to Christ, had thwarted their plans. **In their absence Jesus had been condemned and delivered to be crucified.** Now that He was dead, they no longer concealed their attachment to Him. While the disciples feared to show themselves openly as His followers, Joseph and Nicodemus came boldly to their aid. The help of these rich and honored men was greatly needed at this time. They could do for their dead Master what it was impossible for the poor disciples to do; and their wealth and influence protected them, in a great measure, from the malice of the priests and rulers.

Gently and reverently they removed with their own hands the body of Jesus from the cross. Their tears of sympathy fell fast as they looked upon His bruised and lacerated form. Joseph owned a new tomb, hewn in a rock. This he was reserving for himself; but it was near Calvary, and he now prepared it for Jesus. The body, together with the spices brought by Nicodemus, was carefully wrapped in a linen sheet, and the Redeemer was borne to the tomb. **There the three disciples straightened the mangled limbs, and folded the bruised hands upon the pulseless breast.** The Galilean women came to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the tomb, and the Saviour [sic-Br] was left at rest. **The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ.** While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Marys lingered about the resting place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved. "And they returned, ... and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23:56.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 773.1-774.1.†‡

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[BSG:] [Mark 15] concludes with the actions of this Jewish leader, a man who found in Jesus the King of his life and of all his possessions. Joseph of Arimathea assumed all responsibility and expenses for Jesus' burial. When most of the disciples were far away and the nation had rejected the kingdom [of God], there was one man, Joseph of Arimathea, who recognized that "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (*Mark 1:15, NASB*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 162.‡§

34. It is interesting to note that most of Jesus's followers were "missing in action" at the trials, the cross, and the burial while two members of the Sanhedrin stepped up to take care of the body of Jesus. Position and wealth gave them protection. And women were there to observe and tell His disciples what had happened.

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