

John 19:38-42

Teaching Points

“The Body of Jesus”

Three times John mentions “the body of Jesus” while concluding the account of His burial by saying, “so there they laid Jesus.”

Discussion Question: Why do you think the Bible emphasizes the fact that Jesus had a body and that His body was actually buried?

Thoughts: *When we study the Personhood of the Lord Jesus, we emphasize His true humanity. Jesus was God in the flesh. He had a real body. And that real body experienced real death. He was buried. That’s a crucial part of the Gospel according to 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 which says, “**For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen...**” The only way Jesus could be our Substitute is if He took the punishment our sins deserve. He did that very thing, while being perfectly innocent of all sin Himself.*

Some (Unexpected) Friends of Jesus

It is surprising that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus show up and especially that they show up to honor Jesus in His burial. Joseph is mentioned in all four Gospels at this point after the crucifixion of Jesus. We are told by Mark and Luke that he was a member of the council (the Sanhedrin). He was considered a “respected” member and a “good and righteous” man. While so many around him plotted Jesus’ death and looked favorably upon His crucifixion, Joseph did not consent to their decision and action (Luke 23:51). Nicodemus was the “ruler” who came to Jesus by night back in John 3. Jesus needed to instruct this teacher about the necessity of the new birth. These men are now “owning up” to Jesus. Not only are they acknowledging Him, but they’ve come in broad daylight to the man responsible for His execution asking if they can honor His body by preparing Him for proper burial.

Discussion Questions: Why do you suppose these men show up now to offer such kindness and honor to Jesus? It’s over, isn’t it? Jesus is dead. Why do this now? Go back and read John 12:42-43 which could be speaking specifically about these men. If it’s not speaking about them, it is certainly men in their position. John does not speak favorably of them. What happened to make men like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus change?

Thoughts: *It looks like we’re seeing the fruit of what Jesus said in John 12:24, “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.**” Jesus has died and already we see fruit. While many mocked Him and plotted His destruction, the Holy Spirit was working in the hearts of others including these two men.*

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More Fulfilled Prophecy

Though John does not make the point, we can add without any sense of inappropriateness that this was to fulfill the Scripture, **“And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.”** (Isaiah 53:9). Joseph of Arimathea was a “rich man” (Matthew 27:57) who offered his new tomb to Jesus. Nicodemus gave Jesus a burial fit for royalty with a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. We’re reminded that Jesus was presented gifts fit for a king at His birth. Once again, the King of kings is being identified for Who He truly is—whether as the Baby in the manger or after His crucifixion on the cross—Jesus is King. He fulfills the prophecies which speak of the Suffering Servant, the Messiah, in Isaiah 53. How excellent is the Lord Jesus! Even from the account of His burial we find Him to be worthy of worship and honor and praise.