

Story 1. Jesus Friends Bury Him

John 19:38-42

Backgrounds/Overlays (For scene one/in order used)



SKM



R1



R4

Figures (in order used)



R8

R2

R10

R13

R12

R5

R19

One of first things that Jesus did after riding into Jerusalem and presenting Himself as the Messiah, was to cleanse the temple. He drove out the money changers and those who bought and sold sacrificial animals within the temple square. In doing so, He cleverly united two opposing factions of Jewish leadership, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees were mainly high-ranking priests and Jewish aristocracy. Their power was centered in Jerusalem. The Sadducees controlled the temple, were theologically liberal and politically dependent upon Rome. They were opposed by the Pharisees who stood for Jewish independence and were theologically and religiously conservative.

The Sadducees power was one of position, but the Pharisees had the power of influence. The Pharisees controlled the synagogues, local centers of Jewish worship and instruction developed during the exile after the first temple was destroyed. These 'teachers of the Torah' (the Mosaic Law) exercised incredible control over Jewish thought and daily life. That is until Jesus came on the scene.

When Jesus cleansed the temple, he angered the Sadducees, then defied their authority by boldly teaching in the temple for the next two days. Both groups attempted to trap Jesus with crafty questions, but Jesus outwitted them each time. On the last day, Jesus not only publicly condemned the Pharisees but predicted the destruction of the temple. This united these bitter enemies in their determination to see Jesus put to death.

Two men, are mentioned in this story, Joseph and Nicodemus. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night. He said he knew, Jesus had come from God because of the miracles Jesus did. In another gospel, we learn that both are members of the 'council' or Jewish Sanhedrin (a group of seventy judges established during the time of Moses). Mark says Joseph was a '*prominent*' member of the council. The Sanhedrin appears to speak with one voice in their condemnation of Jesus, but apparently not everyone agreed or participated in the plot.

What are we to think about these two men? What motivated their decision? Was there any real risk now that Jesus was dead? Do their actions demonstrate true belief or might they simply be trying to silence the voice of their own conscience because of their previous cowardice and silence?

Although possibly unaware, their actions fulfilled a prophecy in Isaiah, “*they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death.*” Here is what happened.

After Jesus breathed His last,  Joseph, from the town of Arimathea, went and asked Pilate if he could take the body of Jesus away. And Pilate gave him permission. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he was afraid of the other Jewish leaders.

 So, Joseph went and took the body of Jesus down from the cross.  Then Nicodemus, who had earlier come to see Jesus at night, joined with Joseph  bringing with him about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment—a mixture of aloes and myrrh. 

Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus, and bound Him with strips of linen cloth, anointed with the perfumed ointment—according to the normal Jewish custom of burial. 

Now there was a garden near the place where Jesus was crucified. And in the garden, there was a newly built tomb in which no one had ever been buried. **(Remove)**   

So Joseph and Nicodemus laid Jesus there,  because the Jewish day of preparation for the Sabbath was about to begin and the tomb was nearby.