

### **Isaiah's Passion History**

**Sermon Text: Isaiah 53:9** 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.

**Sermon Theme:** Isaiah Prophecies Jesus' Burial and its Significance.

In the name of our Savior Jesus Christ who conquered death for us, dear fellow redeemed;

It sounds unthinkable. Considering all Jesus went through and suffered for us in order to redeem us, we are filled with utter amazement. Who would ever have thought the eternal, blessed Son of God would be so cruelly mistreated by the very people He came to bless? Even more amazing is the holy Son of God being nailed to the accursed tree to suffer the torments of hell and death. Unthinkable as all this is, everything happened as Isaiah had foretold some 700 years prior to Jesus' passion. Not only does this verify the absolute truthfulness of God's inspired Word and His faithfulness to His promises, but it also reveals God's great love for us.

In this morning's text we find yet another aspect of Jesus' passion which seems incomprehensible. With Jesus having been cut off from the land of the living, His lifeless body was laid to rest in a grave. For mortal man death and the grave is a common occurrence. On the other hand, for Jesus who was not only true Man, but also true God death and the grave was completely foreign to Him. And yet, as Jesus had foretold, it was not only necessary for Him to suffer death, but also to have His body laid to rest in the heart of the earth for three days.

As people travel to different parts of the world, wherever they go there are special places reserved for the burial of the dead. Down through the centuries out of respect for departed loved ones the survivors have taken great care in laying to rest their mortal remains whether it be in a humble grave out in the meadow or an elaborate tomb.

The Bible makes special mention of various burials and burial places. For example, the patriarch Abraham, who sojourned as a stranger in Canaan, purchased the cave of Machpelah for his wife Sarah and for himself. The patriarch Jacob, who died in Egypt, was carried back to Canaan and buried near the lifeless bodies of Abraham and Sarah. Centuries later Joseph's embalmed body was taken along with the Israelites as they made their way to the promised land.

It is very likely these Old Testament patriarchs wanted to be buried in Palestine, because they believed in God's promise of giving this land to their descendants. But even more importantly, they put their faith in the prophecy of the Savior being sent to this land. There He would live and die so that we can enter the promised land of heaven.

Just as countless numbers died and were buried prior to the time of Christ, so also the Lord of glory would die and have His body placed in a grave. But unlike many others, Jesus had made no prior arrangements for His burial even though He knew when and

where He would die. Just as Jesus gave little thought to Himself in life, but only and always was concerned about serving others, so also in His death and burial.

All this does not mean Jesus' burial had not been divinely planned. Our text reveals that God had foreordained how His Son was to be buried. In verse 9 we find Isaiah foretelling two aspects concerning this matter. The one is how the enemies of Jesus wanted His body to be taken care of and the other is what God intended for His Son's burial.

Concerning the desire of Christ's enemies we read, "And they make (or they assign) His grave with the wicked." With this Isaiah reveals Jesus' enemies wanted Him to be buried in a grave of dishonor and shame—a grave befitting a criminal. In Old Testament history those of ill repute were given a dishonorable burial or no burial at all.

Those who cried out for Jesus to be crucified regarded Him to be the worst of all criminals. When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy. When given the choice of releasing a murderer and insurrectionist named Barabbas or Jesus, they demanded Barabbas be set free and Jesus to be crucified. In all of this, the Jews looked upon Jesus as a worse criminal than Barabbas. Therefore the Jews not only wanted Jesus to die a shameful death by crucifixion, they also wanted His body cast into a grave of dishonor.

Since a special Sabbath observance was to begin that evening, the Jews wanted the bodies of the crucified quickly and unceremoniously disposed of. Therefore they prevailed upon Pilate to order his men to break the legs of the condemned to hasten their death. However, Jesus' legs were not broken, because He was already dead. This too was according to Old Testament prophecy. In the book of Numbers where we find God giving instruction concerning the observance of the Passover Festival, the Passover lamb, which symbolically pointed to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, not a single bone of the lamb was to be broken (Num. 9:12). This was God's way of foretelling that His Son wouldn't have any of His bones broken at Calvary.

Instead of Jesus' enemies taking charge of His burial, lest they be ceremonially defiled, two of Jesus' disciples had the privilege of laying His body to rest. Their names were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Up until this time they had remained silent about their allegiance to Christ. Being members of the Jewish high court the Sanhedrin they were afraid of what their colleagues would say or do to them if it was known they were followers of Christ. And yet, when they witnessed the Savior's dying love for them, they were no longer fearful of men and what they could do to them. Rather their hearts were overcome with love and devotion to Jesus.

Nicodemus may well have remembered that beautiful gospel message Jesus had made known to him earlier, saying, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is

condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (Jn. 3:14-18)

With Joseph of Arimathea compelled by love for His Savior, he went openly and boldly to Pilate in order to ask for Jesus’ body. He gave no thought or concern about how his colleagues might react to him going against their wishes concerning Jesus’ burial.

We do well to take note of Joseph’s exemplary love and devotion to Christ; and pray the Lord enable us to fearlessly stand up for and speak out for Christ before the world, giving no thought to what others might think, say or do to us for it. If we are tempted to be secret disciples of Christ who do not let on about our Christian beliefs, let us look on Christ’s great love for us. He endured terrible shame and ridicule for us, and bore our sins in His body as He suffered and died on the cross for our eternal salvation. There we will find the impetus to be bold in identifying with Christ and to live a life of unashamed devotion to our Savior Jesus.

Both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had been blessed with material riches and therefore could well provide an honorable burial place for Jesus just as the heavenly Father had desired and planned. Nicodemus bought about 75 lbs. of a mixture of myrrh and aloes to be used with strips of cloth for the embalming of Jesus’ body. This was done according to Jewish custom for the dead and not because Jesus’ body was to remain lifeless in the grave until judgment day, for Jesus’ body would not begin to suffer decay, but be raised back to life on the third day. This again is an amazing thing about Jesus, because ordinarily a lifeless body of a human begins to decay right after death. It was foretold in Psalm 16 concerning Jesus’ dead body, “Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” (V.10)

After taking Jesus’ body down from the cross, the two disciples carried it to Joseph’s personal tomb which was near Golgotha. This was a new tomb hewn out of rock where no one else had been buried. In this way Isaiah’s prophecy of Jesus’ body being buried with the rich was fulfilled.

Many are the examples in the Bible which demonstrate the truthfulness of God’s Word. Throughout the passion history of Christ every prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. God’s Word is indeed absolute truth and is completely trustworthy. Keep this in mind whenever the unbelieving world tries to call into question the truthfulness of the Bible. It is also a source of great comfort to know that God’s promises to us are sure and certain, and especially so when we are faced with death and our eternal destiny that lies beyond the grave.

Finally in our text, Isaiah reveals the reason why Jesus was buried in a grave of honor when he writes, “Because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.” While His enemies reckoned Jesus deserving of a grave of shame, yet He received a grave of honor, because “He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.” The guilt Jesus bore on the cross was not His own. It was rather the guilt of our sins He carried and suffered for. The accursed death Jesus underwent was not to pay the penalty for any wrongdoing on His part. Rather He died an accursed death to atone for the sins we committed. On account of such great love and such a great sacrifice, Jesus was

truly worthy of being buried in a grave of honor.

In the three Christian creeds, namely the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, we make confession of Jesus' death and burial, because of its of eternal significance to us and all the world of sinners. We have come to know and to believe, and therefore openly confess that Jesus perfectly and fully completed on the cross His work of redemption for everyone. We rejoice in this blessed truth, because it means every last sin of every single person has been paid for and the gates of heaven stand wide open for us through faith in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Because of our Savior we know that there is no need for any of us to look upon the grave as something to be feared or dreaded. Since Jesus died for us and was buried, we have been set free from the bonds of eternal death. Also, even as Jesus' body did not remain lifeless in the grave, but rose victoriously back to life on the third day, so also all those who die in the Lord will be raised from the grave on the last day to live with Him in glory.

May God grant us all a blessed end, believing in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer. Amen.