

June 20

Jesus' Empty Body: Loved by Some, Feared by Others

They made his grave with...a rich man...although he had done no violence...Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him...When you make his soul an offering for sin...the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand...he will see the light and be satisfied – Isaiah 53:9-11

[Mark 15:42-47, a garden tomb, Thursday evening] When evening had now come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath a rich man named Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent council member, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), who also himself was looking for the Kingdom of God—a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews—came. He boldly went in to Pilate, and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate marveled if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead long. When he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred Roman pounds. So, he bought a linen cloth, they took Jesus' body and, taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb, in

which no man had ever yet been laid. Then because of the Jews' Preparation Day (for the tomb was near at hand) they laid him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock. He rolled a great stone against the door of the tomb and departed.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joses, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and sitting opposite the tomb, saw the tomb where he was, and how his body was laid. They returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Now on the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come at night and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He is risen from the dead;' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone. [Matthew 27:57-66, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42]

1. How would it feel to be Joseph, Nicodemus, or the women? Have you felt this way before?
2. What really worried the priests? How do you know? Have you tried to stop God's power?
3. Jesus, your body was empty—your soul was made an offering for sin—yet your friends...