

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for October 9, 1988**

**The Burial of Jesus**  
**Part 2**  
**Matthew 27:57-66**  
**Dale Whitehead**

Introduction: A fool says there is no God. God holds the universe together (**Psalm 139**; **Ephesians 1:11**).

1. The burial by Joseph of Arimathea fulfills prophecy. Every detail of the burial of Jesus is there because God wanted them to be there, because He has a purpose for them.

A. Old Testament Prophecy: **Isaiah 53:9**

B. New Testament Prophecy: **Matthew 12:40**

“For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Jesus came off the cross late Friday and rose on Sunday morning. How is this “three days and three nights?”

The Jews reckoned their days differently than we do. The night and the day were one day and a part of this period was considered a whole day. Therefore, Friday was one day, Saturday was one day and Sunday was one day.

Joseph made certain that he got Jesus into the tomb (the heart of the earth) on Friday so that this prophecy might be fulfilled.

2. Testimony, which verifies the resurrection (**27:61-66**)

The soldiers verified the death of Jesus in **John 19:31-34**. The Romans would usually break the legs of a criminal on a cross in order to speed the execution so that they would not be able to lift themselves to breathe. Jesus was already dead by 3:00 p.m. and was spared having His bones broken, fulfilling **Psalm 34:30**. The soldiers pierced Jesus with a spear to make certain that He was dead (**John 19:34**), fulfilling **Zechariah 12:10**. So the soldiers saw that Jesus was dead, pierced Him to be sure He was dead, and saw blood and water come out, proving that He was dead.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph provided testimony to the resurrection of Christ by being at the tomb (**verse 61**). They could verify as eyewitnesses

that Joseph actually placed Jesus in the tomb as well as verify the temple guard was established.

The Jewish leaders would not bury Jesus on the Sabbath. The next day was not Saturday but Friday night because the Jews viewed the day beginning at 6:00 p.m. The chief priests were Sadducees and archrivals of the Pharisees. Here we see them uniting in their opposition to Christ by coming to Pilate on a Sabbath in order to secure a guard from the Romans (**verses 62-65**). Pilate allowed the Jews to guard the tomb with their own temple guard. This guard would be accountable to the Pharisees and provides us with further evidence of the security of the tomb (**verse 65**).

A seal on the tomb also testifies to the resurrection (**verse 66**).

Note: It is doubtful that the disciples would ever dream of stealing the body of Jesus. They not only abandoned Jesus at the crucifixion but they never even believed in a literal physical resurrection (cf. **Mark 9:9-10; John 20:9**).

God orchestrated the events of the burial to work out His plans to fulfill prophecy and verify the resurrection of Christ. This same God is sovereignly working out the circumstances in our lives for His purposes (**Romans 8:28**).