

MATTHEW 27:62-66 THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AT THE BURIAL

In our study of the death and burial of Christ, we have witnessed some amazing miracles that happened that day. We recall the darkness that covered the earth, the veil being torn in the Temple, the earth quaking, the rocks splitting, the graves opening up, and the conversion of the Roman soldiers. God intervened in our world and caused some supernatural events to happen. These came from an outside source beyond the natural realm. He interrupted the natural order as He controlled what would happen as His Son finished the work of redemption on the cross. His plan was coming together precisely as it was foreordained. That included even the burial, which sometimes seems to be forgotten. But we are looking at that burial and we see some very significant elements that need to be brought to attention. Last time we observed Joseph of Arithemea becoming involved as his timing was perfect in getting the body of Christ and taking Him to his tomb as according to prophecy, Jesus had to be buried before the day ended and to be buried in a rich man's tomb. Those prophecies were fulfilled. God is in total control as this most important time in history is being played out. Although this story is all too familiar but we must never lose the wonder of this. This was the plan of the ages and we want to be in awe of this great sovereign God. Let us contemplate a bit on this wonderful characteristic of God, His supremacy, His sovereignty.

God is above all things. He is the supreme ruler over all for He designed everything in this universe. He has an objective which goes far beyond our comprehension because His mind is infinite and perfect and He makes all things work for His will. He is in charge.

1. SOMEBODY IS IN CHARGE--THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

What a majestic attribute this sovereignty this is.

1 Chron 29:11-13, 2 Chron 20:6, Job 23:13, Ps 115:3, 135:6, Prov 21:30, Isa 46:10
Daniel 4:35, Eph 1:11

God rules in this world through two ways.

2. GOD EXECUTES HIS WILL IN SUPERNATURAL WAYS

A. MIRACLES

God overrules natural law. He supernaturally interrupts the natural realm He ordered. He sets aside the natural flow and does supernatural things on occasion. It is not the norm. A miracle is something that is something that can't naturally happen. God, in history has reached down and intervened in our world. Some of those events are the following.

Creation, This would have been the first great interruption. He created out of nothing. Flood, Plagues in Egypt, Parting of the Red Sea, Manna, Elijah miracles,

B. PROVIDENCE

This is the usual way that God acts in our world. He orchestrates all things to bring His purpose to the end. He pulls all things together to make it come out according to plan.

God's superintendency of the universe through normal and natural processes

God orchestrates events to accomplish His predetermined purpose. He accomplishes what He wants done while at the same time humans are free in many areas to do what they desire, whether they are honoring to God or even dishonoring to Him. He superintends all those events in the flawless fulfillment of His own foreordained plans. Seemingly random plans, choices, actions, and events continually work together to perform God's predestined plan.

God rarely uses miracles but there have been certain times He unleashed miracles. The time of Moses was the first notable time. Moses represented the law. The next time God lumped miracles together was during the time of Elijah. He represented the prophets. The third period of miracles was when Jesus came to earth and did His ministry. The Apostles followed suit for miracles backed up the Word. They validated the Gospel.

Prov 16:9, 19:21, Jere 10:23

The story of Joseph Miracles are not really seen in this story but the providence of God is so blatant here. All random choices by people worked out God's perfect plan.

The story of Ruth

The story of Esther There are no miracles in the book of Esther but God uses His providence to preserve Israel. Haman wanted to destroy Israel but God used certain people and circumstances to keep that from happening. God controlled history this way.

The death of Christ. The greatest illustration God used all human and demonic forces to kill His Son for His redemptive plan. God used all the hatred of Jews and the hostility of the Romans toward Jesus. God used the cowardice of the disciples and the betrayal of Judas. Providence is so evident when you think of Jesus riding into the city on the very day the Passover lambs were selected and He died on the cross as Passover lambs were being sacrificed.

Acts 4:27-28 All were against what God was laid out to do. They made their own choices, and plottings and God uses all this to bring about His perfect plan.

Psalms 76:10

God's providence is obviously seen in the burial of Jesus. The burial may seem mundane and ordinary. But all the details of the burial, including the schemes of His enemies, is a testimony to His being the Messiah. The story of Joseph of Arimathea has already illustrated that. That was a positive story. Now we turn to the enemies of Jesus and again the providence of God is seen even through people who want to thwart His purpose. God will use their evil plans to make His plan come out perfect.

3.GOD USED PHARISEES TO BE A WITNESS OF THE BURIAL VV 62-66

A.JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Isa 53:9 Matthew 12:40

B.PHARISEES AND CHIEF PRIESTS

These guys wind up being a testimony to the deity of Christ even though they had no intentions whatsoever.

1.The Preparation Day and the next day

The preparation day was always on Friday, all the more reason to believe that Jesus was crucified on Friday. This proves without a doubt that he could not have been crucified on Thursday, much less on Wednesday. The next day after the preparation day was the Sabbath. John 19:31 calls this a high holy day because the Sabbath was during Passover time.

2.Saducees and Pharisees This is very interesting that this would come about. They would be considered strange bedfellows. The only time these two political groups could agree was when they were against Jesus. Mt 21:45

3.The request to Pilate

They went into the Praetorium where Pilate was staying. This would make them defiled as far as their religious rules were concerned. The day before they did not enter, for one thing it was the Passover and they did not want to defile themselves on that holy day. Why would they do that now since it was the Sabbath? They hated Jesus more than their own law as they violated it.

They had contempt for Christ even after He died. Maybe it could be that there was not a crowd around that would see them go in at this time.

Deceiver They hated Jesus so much they could not even say His name. They were thinking He was going to pull off something in some way. They thought maybe the disciples would try to pull off a hoax to think He really did rise from the dead.

Third day At this point they realize that He had made a statement about being buried and arise after the same period of time that Jonah was in the fish. As referred to in Mt 12:40

Mt 16:21, 17:23, 20:19 Mark 8:31, 9:9-10, 31 John 20:9 blockheads

They could not conceive of the idea of the Messiah dying, so why would there be a resurrection? After 3 days and the third day indicates that those two phrases were used interchangeably. The crucifixion is specifically said to have been on Friday, the day before the Sabbath(Mk 15:42) To argue for a full 3 day and 3 night burial is to presume serious scriptural error.

Their fear

The guard Pilate said, here's your guard, get outta here. Pilate did not want to take any risks of offending the Jewish leaders or risking another insurrection.

C.PILATE'S ANSWER

Secure it

The seal There would be wax on the wall and wax on the stone and string to make sure the body was not stolen out of the tomb. Breaking the Roman seal would be a capital offense. The tomb was under Roman protection.

What if there had been no guard and no seal? Try preaching the resurrection if there would have been confusion over the resurrection. If we didn't know for sure whether the body had been stolen or not, there would be room for doubt. The way God designed this to happen, He removed all doubt about the legitimacy of the resurrection. If the Romans are guarding the tomb, how could anybody take Him out of there without the guard seeing it? This is lock tight evidence, as God made sure there would be no excuse for not believing in this resurrection..

D.PROOF

If the people would somehow believe there was a resurrection even though it didn't happen, this would be a threat to Rome worse than before. If the crowds were as big as they were on the entry into Jerusalem, think how much more they would acclaim as their King as He conquered death. If He were really alive after dying or the people just believed that they would have no fear of Rome and its power over them.. That would cause an uprising.

The purpose of the Jewish leaders and of Pilate was to prevent a hoax.

The Lord's purpose was to take even their unbelieving antagonism and use it to prove the reality of the resurrection and deity of Christ. Jesus' enemies played a big role in this even though that was not what they had in mind. They assured that this resurrection was true

They spread the rumor that the disciples did steal the body from the tomb, even when they knew they had made that impossible to do. This in it self shows the ignorance and stupidity of these leaders. To say that His body was stolen would be telling on themselves how inadequate they were by not protecting from this happening. Matthew 28:11-14

God's sovereignty and providence is seen in this burial as He uses His own people and even the enemies to work out His plan.

When we go through conflicts that seem hopeless, what we have to do is look in the scripture to see how God uses every circumstance for the good. It ultimately works out for the glory of God and our good Rom 8:28