



Good day Worthy Knights,

In this part 64, Joseph of Arimathea

(Wikipedia)

Joseph of Arimathea was, according to all four canonical gospels, the man who assumed responsibility for the burial of Jesus after his crucifixion. Because there is no historical location of Arimathia, scholars propose "Arimathia is probably an invented word, meaning 'Best Doctrine Town'."

Gospel narratives

Matthew 27:57 described him simply as a rich man and disciple of Jesus, but according to Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea was "a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God"; and Luke 23:50–56 adds that he "had not consented to their decision and action".

According to John 19:38, upon hearing of Jesus' death, this secret disciple of Jesus "asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus and Pilate gave him permission." Joseph immediately purchased a linen shroud (Mark 15:46) and proceeded to Golgotha to take the body of Jesus down from the cross. There, according to John 19:39–40, Joseph and Nicodemus took the body and bound it in linen cloths with the spices that Nicodemus had bought.

The disciples then conveyed the prepared corpse to a man-made cave hewn from rock in a garden of his house nearby. The Gospel of Matthew alone suggests that this was Joseph's own tomb (Matthew 27:60). The burial was undertaken speedily, "for the Sabbath was drawing on".

Since the 2nd century, a mass of legendary detail has accumulated around the figure of Joseph of Arimathea in addition to the New Testament references. Joseph is referenced in apocryphal and non-canonical accounts such as the Acts of Pilate, a text often appended to the medieval Gospel of Nicodemus and The Narrative of Joseph and mentioned in the works of early church historians such as Irenaeus (125–189), Hippolytus (170–236), Tertullian (155–222) and Eusebius (260–340), who added details not found in the canonical accounts.

Gospel of Nicodemus

The Gospel of Nicodemus, a text appended to the Acts of Pilate, provides additional details about Joseph. For instance, the Jewish elders express anger at Joseph for burying the body of Christ.

And likewise Joseph also stepped out and said to them: Why are you angry against me because I begged the body of Jesus? Behold, I have put him in my new tomb, wrapping in clean linen; and I have rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. And you have acted not well against the just man, because you have not repented of crucifying him, but also have pierced him with a spear.

— Gospel of Nicodemus, translated by Alexander Walker.

The Jewish elders then captured Joseph, and imprisoned him, and placed a seal on the door to his cell after first posting a guard. Joseph warned the elders, "The Son of God whom you hanged upon the cross, is able to deliver me out of your hands. All your wickedness will return upon you."

Once the elders returned to the cell, the seal was still in place, but Joseph was gone. The elders later discover that Joseph had returned to Arimathea. Having a change in heart, the elders desired to have a more civil conversation with Joseph about his actions and sent a letter of apology to him by means of seven of his friends. Joseph travelled back from Arimathea to Jerusalem to meet with the elders, where they questioned him about his escape.

According to the Gospel of Nicodemus, Joseph testified to the Jewish elders, and specifically to chief priests Caiaphas and Annas that Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven and he indicated that others were raised from the dead at the resurrection of Christ (repeating Matt 27:52–53).

Arimathea

Arimathea itself is not otherwise documented, though it was "a town of Judea" according to Luke 23:51. Arimathea is usually identified with either Ramleh or Ramathaim-Zophim, where David came to Samuel (1 Samuel chapter 19).

