

Chapter 7. "BE NOT AFRAID"

Matthew 27:57-66

The Scripture: As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

God always has a plan. A "rich man" would certainly have had admittance to see Pilate. God's messengers are not always poor, and they have a special courage. Jesus' body was to be well taken care of. That is all that concerned this "Joseph". He knew not of what was to take place. He just did what he thought was best.

The Scripture: Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock.

A thought: Joseph must have been a skilled craftsman to do this and a strong one.

The Scripture: He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there across from the tomb. The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. Pilate was taking no chances. He did not know our God. His only security was to trust other people, either rich or having some authority, or those whom he could order about.

Many who read the Bible and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ say that the mention of "three days" would mean three complete daylight 24 hour dates. The Hebrew calendar counts "days" from morning to evening. If there is daylight, then that counts as one day. The Scripture states that when Jesus says, "the third day", He would mean exactly the third day, and Friday would be the first day, when He suffered (see Luke 24:46), Saturday the second day, and Sunday, the third day. He did not say, "After the third day". It is precise in the Bible that it was sunrise "on the third day". It was the third day! Interesting, also, that it was a Sunday when the Lord was risen – the **first day** of the week, according to the Jewish calendar. God created light on the the first day of Creation. Jesus had said, "I am the light of the world."

Luke 24:45-47 (KJV) "Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to **suffer**, and to rise from the dead the **third** day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Matthew 28:1-20: After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "**Do not be afraid**, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I told you" So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then **Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid.** Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." We seem to have to be constantly told to "not be afraid". Well, of course, when one sees an angel, it is a natural reaction, therefore, the command, "Do not be afraid"!

Jesus said, "In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33