

BURIED WITH THE RICH

“He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death . . . “ (Isa 53:9)

Everybody knows that Jesus was born in poverty, lived in poverty, and died in poverty. Why was he buried with the rich?

His parents were poor. We know this was true, not only because Jesus was born in a manger, but because of a provision in the Mosaic Law. The Law specified offering a lamb for purification, if you could afford it. When a woman gave birth to a boy she was unclean seven days and on the eighth day her child was to be circumcised. She was then to continue in the “blood of her purifying” 33 more days. At this point the Scriptures indicate: **““When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. He shall offer them before the LORD to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood.”“These are the regulations for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl. If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.”” (Lev 12:6-8 NIV)**

When Jesus was born, as you know, Mary offered two turtle doves or pigeons (Lk. 2:24). Obviously she was poor and could not afford a lamb.

During His ministry Jesus was so poor that He did not have a place to lay His head (Lk. 9:58). He was so poor that a group of women supported Him with their means. This group included Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and many others (Lk. 8:2, 3).

Jesus died at a place called Golgotha, which means “the place of a skull” (Matt. 27:33). It was obviously a place where property values were low. How would you like to buy property near a place of public executions? Jesus not only lived in poverty, He died in poverty. Someone else had to buy the linen and spices for His burial. Someone else had to furnish Him with a tomb.

Yet, in spite of all His poverty, Isaiah predicted centuries before it came to pass that Jesus would be buried with the rich. Why? I am convinced, that at least a part of the answer involves the RESURRECTION!

Poor people, even to this very day, often have no burial at all. In India many who die in the streets are picked up by government vehicles and their bodies are heaped together and burned. The poor beggar named Lazarus, whom Jesus spoke of, may have suffered a similar fate. Note that the Scriptures merely mention that the beggar died. By contrast, Jesus said that the rich man died “and was buried” (Lk. 16:20 - 22).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the primary evidence God provided as proof that He was the Messiah. While this truth is stated many places in the Bible, perhaps this single reference will suffice at this time: **“A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt 12:39-40 NIV)**

Because Jesus was buried “with the rich” his tomb was secure from marauding animals and vandals. It had a large stone that could be used to seal the mouth of the sepulcher. Additional security was provided by the Roman Government. Soldiers were placed at the tomb and the official government seal was used as an additional safeguard. No human forces would have been able to tamper with the evidence or steal His body away.

In retrospect we see how wise and practical it was for Jesus to be buried with the rich. It is even more incredible, however, that Isaiah predicted this eight centuries before it came to pass. There are many paradoxes in the life of Christ that teach us important truth. Nothing that happened to Him was “accidental” or “random”. Everything happened to Jesus for a purpose, even something as insignificant as the fact that He lived in poverty, but was buried with the rich.