

John 19:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

Analysis

And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight (ἦλθεν δὲ καὶ Νικόδημος, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον, φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν, ἐλθέντης δὲ καὶ Νικόδημος, ὁ ελθόντης πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτός τοῦ πρῶτον, φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης (smyrnēs kai aloēs, 'myrrh and aloes') weighing ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν (hōs litras hekaton, 'about 100 pounds/75 lbs modern weight'). This enormous quantity—appropriate for kings (2 Chronicles 16:14)—demonstrates both wealth and devotion.

Nicodemus's progression tracks spiritual growth: first, fearful nighttime inquiry (John 3:1-21); second, tepid defense of Jesus (John 7:50-51); finally, public identification with the crucified Christ. The 'hundred pounds' of spices is lavish—far exceeding normal burial practices. This act of worship echoes Mary's anointing (John 12:3): when you love Jesus, no gift is excessive. Both Joseph and Nicodemus gave treasures to honor the One religious leaders dishonored.

Historical Context

Roman custom was cremation; Jewish custom required quick burial with spices to offset decomposition in warm climate. Nicodemus's quantity suggested expectation

of extended burial. Myrrh and aloes were aromatic resins mixed and applied between linen wrappings. The expense indicated royal burial—ironically for the 'King of the Jews' mocked hours earlier.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Nicodemus's spiritual journey from secret seeker to public confessor encourage gradual growth in faith?
2. What does the extravagant quantity of burial spices teach about appropriate worship—is anything 'too much' for Jesus?
3. How do Joseph and Nicodemus's actions demonstrate that true faith eventually requires public identification with Christ regardless of cost?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| ἐλθὼν | δὲ | καὶ | Νικόδημος | τὸ | ἐλθὼν | πρὸς | τὸ | Ἰησοῦν |
| came | And | also | Nicodemus | which | came | to | which | Jesus |
| G2064 | G1161 | G2532 | G3530 | G3588 | G2064 | G4314 | G3588 | G2424 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| νυκτὸς | τὸ | πρῶτον | φέρων | μίγμα | σμύρνης | καὶ |
| by night | which | G4413 | and brought | a mixture | of myrrh | also |
| G3571 | G3588 | | G5342 | G3395 | G4666 | G2532 |

| | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|------------|
| ἀλόης | ώσει | λίτρας | έκατόν |
| aloes | about | pound | an hundred |
| G250 | G5616 | G3046 | G1540 |

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 4:14: Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

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