

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, ἔλθεν δὲ καὶ Νικodēmos, ho elthōn pros auton nyktos to prōton, pherōn migma smyrnēs kai aloēs hōs litras hekaton)—Nicodemus, introduced in John 3 as the nighttime visitor, now comes publicly with extravagant burial spices: 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		
άλόης	ὥσει	λίτρας	ἐκατόν					
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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