

Luke 23:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

Analysis

(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. Luke provides crucial clarification in parentheses: Joseph **had not consented to the counsel and deed of them** (οὗτος οὐκ ἦν συγκατατεθειμένος τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῇ πράξει αὐτῶν, houtos ouk ēn synkatatetheimenos tē boulē kai tē praxeī autōn). The perfect participle synkatatetheimenos (συγκατατεθειμένος) means "to vote with, to agree with, to consent to." The negative (ouk, οὐκ) makes this emphatic: Joseph absolutely did not agree with the Sanhedrin's decision to condemn Jesus.

Two nouns describe what Joseph opposed: boulē (βουλῇ, "counsel, plan, resolution") refers to the Sanhedrin's deliberation and decision-making; praxis (πράξει, "deed, action, execution") refers to carrying out that decision—delivering Jesus to Pilate and demanding crucifixion. Joseph dissented from both the verdict and its implementation. Whether he was absent during the night trial, abstained from voting, or voted against the majority, Luke makes clear Joseph bore no guilt for Jesus's death. This detail is theologically significant—God ensured a righteous man would provide Jesus honorable burial.

Joseph's identity continues: **he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews**, locating his origin. Most importantly, **who also himself waited for the kingdom of God** (ὃς προσεδέχετο τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, hos prosedecheto tēn basileian tou

theou). The verb *prosdechomai* (προσδέχομαι) means to wait for, expect, welcome, receive—describing eager, active anticipation. Joseph was among those righteous Jews who longed for Messiah's coming and God's kingdom. Like Simeon (Luke 2:25, 38), he represents the faithful remnant expecting redemption. Ironically, while waiting for the kingdom, Joseph failed to recognize the King until after His death—a pattern repeated throughout Israel's history.

Historical Context

The Sanhedrin's trial of Jesus violated multiple provisions of Jewish law: it occurred at night, on Passover eve, without proper witnesses, and concluded in one session rather than requiring a second session the next day for capital cases. That Joseph 'had not consented' suggests either

1. he was absent from the illegal night trial
2. he was present but abstained or voted against, or
3. he protested but was overruled.

Talmudic law required unanimous consent for capital verdicts, but this provision may not have been enforced under Roman occupation.

Joseph's waiting for God's kingdom places him among devout Jews who studied prophecy, prayed for Messiah's coming, and looked for Israel's consolation. This hope sustained the faithful through Roman occupation, Herodian corruption, and Sadducean compromise. The 'kingdom of God' (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) was central to Jewish expectation—God's sovereign rule breaking into history, overthrowing evil, vindicating the righteous, and establishing justice. Jesus's proclamation that 'the kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1:15) directly addressed this longing.

Yet Joseph apparently didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah until His death. The crucifixion paradoxically revealed what Jesus's ministry had obscured for many: the Messiah must suffer before reigning (Luke 24:26). Joseph's public action—requesting Jesus's body—constituted coming out of hiding. He risked everything: reputation, position, wealth, religious standing. His courage illustrates John 12:42-43: many believed but feared to confess; Joseph finally overcame that fear.

Nicodemus joined him (John 19:39), showing that secret discipleship can emerge into bold confession when crisis demands decision.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does Joseph's dissent from the Sanhedrin's decision teach about maintaining integrity within corrupt systems?
2. How does Joseph's 'waiting for the kingdom of God' yet initially missing the King warn against preconceived expectations blinding us to God's actual work?
3. What finally moved Joseph from secret discipleship to public confession, and what does this teach about the role of crisis in spiritual growth?

Interlinear Text

οὗτος	οὐκ	ἦν	συγκατατεθειμένος	τῇ	βουλῇ	καὶ
(The same	not		consented		to the counsel	also
G3778	G3756	G2258	G4784	G3588	G1012	G2532

τῇ	πράξει	αὐτὸς	ἀπὸ	Ἀριμαθαίας	πόλεως	τῶν
	deed	himself	he was of	Arimathaea	a city	
G3588	G4234	G846	G575	G707	G4172	G3588

Ἰουδαίων	ὃς	καὶ	προσεδέχετο	καὶ	αὐτὸς	τὴν	βασιλείαν
of the Jews	who	also	waited for	also	himself		the kingdom
G2453	G3739	G2532	G4327	G2532	G846	G3588	G932

τοῦ	θεοῦ
	of God
G3588	G2316

Additional Cross-References

Luke 2:25 (Parallel theme): And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Luke 2:38 (Parallel theme): And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 8:12 (Parallel theme): Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Mark 15:43 (Kingdom): Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

Genesis 49:18 (Parallel theme): I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

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