

Mark 15:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

Analysis

Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor—Joseph came from Arimathea, likely Ramathaim-zophim northwest of Jerusalem. Honourable means prominent, respected, of high social standing. Counsellor identifies him as a Sanhedrin member, part of the 71-member ruling council. Luke 23:50-51 clarifies he was a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action—he dissented from the council's condemnation of Jesus. **Which also waited for the kingdom of God**—Joseph was a pious Jew anticipating Messiah's coming. His messianic hope led him to recognize Jesus's identity, making him a secret disciple (John 19:38). **Went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus**—The Greek verb means to dare, take a risk. Joseph's action was bold because publicly identifying with Jesus risked reputation, position, and potentially life.

Historical Context

Sanhedrin members wielding religious and political authority typically avoided association with executed criminals. Joseph's request was shockingly countercultural—a respected leader publicly honoring one condemned as a blasphemer and insurrectionist. This could have cost him his council position and social standing. Pilate's agreement suggests respect for Joseph's status or desire to avoid Jewish unrest during Passover. That Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb fulfilled Isaiah 53:9: And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man

in his death. Joseph's unused tomb meant Jesus's burial place was known, verifiable, and unquestionably empty three days later.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Joseph's transformation from secret to public discipleship teach about how crisis can clarify priorities and embolden faith?
2. How does a respected religious leader honoring Jesus's body when apostles fled challenge assumptions about whose faith is strongest?
3. Where might you be a secret disciple for fear of consequences, and what would bold identification with Christ cost?

Interlinear Text

ἦλθεν	Ἰωσήφ	ὁ	ἀπὸ	Ἀριμαθαίας	εὐσχήμων	βουλευτής
came	Joseph	G3588	of	Arimathaea	an honourable	counsellor
G2064	G2501		G575	G707	G2158	G1010
ὃς	καὶ	αὐτός	ἦν	προσδεχόμενος	τὴν	βασιλείαν τοῦ
which	also	G846	for	waited	G3588	the kingdom
G3739	G2532		G2258	G4327		G3588
θεοῦ	τολμήσας	εἰσῆλθεν	πρὸς	Πιλάτον	καὶ	ἠτήσατο τὸ
of God	boldly	and went in	unto	Pilate	also	craved
G2316	G5111	G1525	G4314	G4091	G2532	G154
σῶμα	τοῦ	Ἰησοῦ				
the body	G3588	of Jesus				
G4983		G2424				

Additional Cross-References

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.

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 23:51 (Kingdom): (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.

Matthew 27:57 (References Jesus): When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:

John 19:38 (References Jesus): And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.