

Joseph of Arimathaea

"After the Resurrection"

"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." John 19:38 KJV

"I am Joseph of Arimathaea. Much has been written about me. Many have speculated on my relationship with Christ my relationship with Mary and even my connection with a special flowering tree, the shroud of Torren and this list goes on.

"I was very wealthy in earthly things, but that alone cannot bring satisfaction. I was a voting member of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus to death. If I had spoken up while Christ was alive, I was afraid I would be killed. I had heard Jesus speak about its being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into Heaven. Some people tried to explain this away by referring to a small gate into Jerusalem where I camel had to get down on its knees to enter the city. But, I do not think this was what Jesus

was saying. After all, if you were riding on a camel, why not just go to a larger gate into the city? People thought about this statement of Jesus and responded with a question as to how anyone could be saved since it was impossible for a camel or even any person to go through the eye of a needle used in sewing.

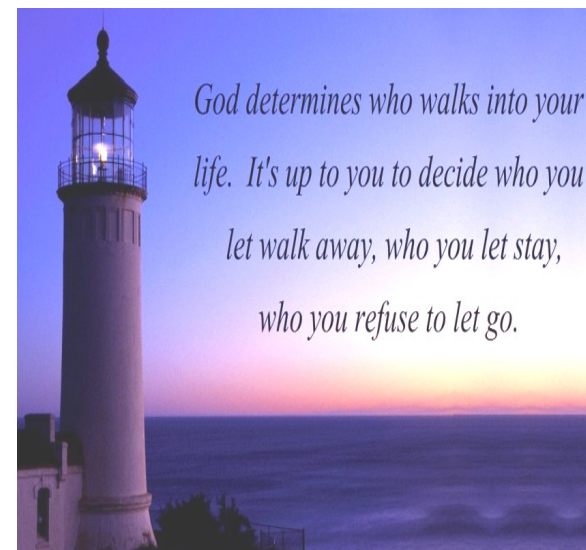
"Nicodemus had told me about Jesus telling him that he had to be born again. These two examples of Jesus' ministry sounded impossible at first until I stopped to think about what Christ was really saying.

"As a Jew we had been taught that earthly riches were a gift from God. The idea that wealth was a sign of God's blessing was deeply entrenched in Jewish theology. The young man who had asked about his salvation didn't want to be told he had to give up his earthly treasures, and he didn't understand why earthly treasurers were wrong. Just like so many other things that Jesus said, this had a far deeper meaning than seen on the surface. Man can work and accumulate earthly treasures, but he cannot work his way into eternal life with Christ. I was there and realized that Christ was paying the ultimate sacrifice by his death so that I could get into Heaven. If you remember the rich young man's first question was *'Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?'* Matthew 19:16 He thought he had money enough to pay for it. Later on Luke explained what Christ meant in his gospel 18:25. Man can do nothing to save himself. Man can be saved only through the grace of God. However, I truly believe that if Jesus wanted to make a camel go through the

eye of a needle he could do it!

"Before Christ was crucified, I had become a believer in what He was saying. I did not often openly acknowledge this when I should have because I, like many others, was afraid for my life. But after I saw what they were doing to him and how they treated him, I wanted to help in some way. I no longer cared what the other Sanhedrin thought. By that time, the only way I could help was to offer a new tomb that had been hewn out of the rock for me.

"Some say I was a member of the Sanhedrin and had voted for the death of Christ. Some say I had been imprisoned on Friday because of my beliefs in Christ and then miraculously escaped from prison to ask for the body of Christ. Some authorities believe that I took the Holy Grail, the cup which Christ used at the last supper he had with his disciples. Some say I took it to England and started the church there. Whatever, they say; I know that for too long I was silent.



"Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat. I am."

Jesus, Mark 8:34

"I realized that this man was truly Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Lord. Knowing I was old and did not have much longer to live, I had also purchased a linen robe in which to be buried. Nicodemus, another man who believed Jesus was the Christ, came with a mixture of myrrh and aloes to prepare the body for burial. We wrapped the body of Jesus in the spices and the linen cloth and took it to my own tomb. Several of the women who also loved Jesus, including Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, watched as I sealed the tomb with a large rock that had been cut from the side of the hill. I knew that they had been followers of Christ; I did not feel they were intruding. They like Nicodemus and myself, mourned his death. That was all that I did. I saw my Lord being mistreated, and was not able to help in any other way. I was given strength and conviction that I had never felt before."

"You never know how strong you are. . . Until being strong is the only choice you have."

The Stranger of Galilee

by Leila N. Morris

*"In fancy I stood by the shore, one day,
Of the beautiful murm'ring sea. I saw
the great crowds as they thronged the way
Of the Stranger of Galilee. I saw
how the man who was blind from birth,
in a moment was made to see. The lame
was made whole by the matchless skill
of the Stranger of Galilee. And I felt I
could love Him forever, so gracious and
tender was He! I claimed Him that day
as my Savior, This Stranger of Galilee.*

*"His look of compassion, His words of
love, they shall never forgotten be. When
sin-sick and helpless He saw me there,
This Stranger of Galilee; He showed me
His hand and His riven side, and He
whispered, 'It was for thee!' My burden
fell off at the pierced feet Of the Stranger
from Galilee.*

*"I heard Him speak peace to the angry
waves, of that turbulent, raging sea.
And lo! at His word are the waters
stilled, This Stranger of Galilee. A peace-
ful, a quiet, and holy calm, now and ever
abides with me. He holdeth my life in
His mighty hands, This Stranger of Galilee.*

*"Come, ye who are driven and tempest-
tossed, and His gracious salvation see.
He'll quiet life's storms with His 'Peace,
be still!' This Stranger of Galilee; He
bids me to go and the story tell, what He
ever to you will be if only you let Him
with you abide, This Stranger of Galilee.*

*"Oh, my friend, won't you love Him for-
ever? So gracious and tender is He!
Accept Him today as your Savior, This
Stranger of Galilee."*

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to realize that You loved us so much you came to this earth and suffered and died for us. Please help us to have the conviction of Joseph of Arimathaea and to dare to face danger and ridicule for our belief. Give us the calmness that comes with knowing we are in your hands forever. Amen

1. Why was Joseph afraid to be seen with Christ? Are we ever in that situation?
2. What part did Nicodemus play in the burial?
3. Why did Joseph have to go to Pilate to ask for the body? Was this another dangerous move for him?
4. Joseph was a Jew and hated by many people. Do you think people believed he wanted to do the burial for selfish gain or were people able to see his change in life?
5. How can we show our love for Christ to other people?

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