

## Matthew 27:57-66 “When Jesus Was Buried”

9.9.18

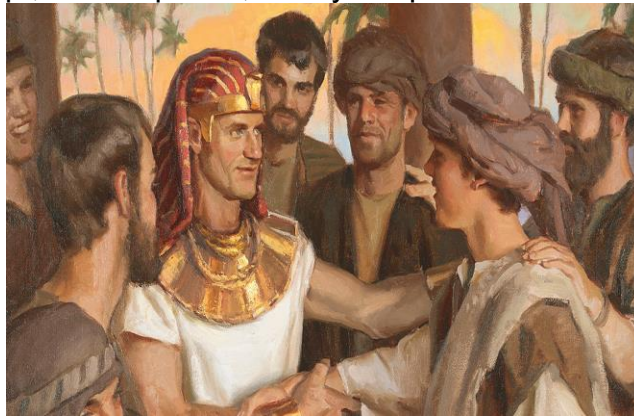
One of the most well known and most often quoted Bible verses in all of the Bible is Romans 8:28. Do you know it? Let’s read it in context...See the screens...

### **Romans 8:26-28**

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

What do we see here? We see that in context...there will be times that we are so weak that we don’t even know what to pray or how to pray...and yet...God works even those difficult times and difficult things together for our good...yes...our weaknesses are worked by God for our good. Why?

Because He has a plan! He is Sovereign! He’s in 100% total control! Do you believe this? Do you believe God has a plan in all things? Remember Joseph in the OT. Sold out by his brothers...ended up in Egypt, then in prison, but by the providence of God...



Joseph would come to power as second in command to the Pharaoh and he would save his brothers and their families and say, “What you meant for harm, God meant for good.” What did Joseph understand? Romans 8:28 before it was even written... ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD...most certainly the hard things...FOR GOD’S PEOPLE! God has a sovereign plan and He uses all of our circumstances to accomplish a greater purpose. See this picture...



That’s a tapestry, and on the left, you’ll see the backside of that tapestry and it looks like a mess, but when you flip it over...you see the beauty of what was created by what looks to be a mess.

That's what God can do to a life. He can take the mess and turn into beauty if we'll let HIM FLIP OUR LIVES!

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Yes, God has a plan in all things and we're going to see that today. We're going to see the events of Jesus' burial today, as we near the end of our study of the book of Matthew. Believe it or not this is our 139<sup>th</sup> message (3 ½ years) in the book of Matthew and Lord willing, we'll finish with Matthew's Gospel in 2 weeks and then we'll be moving to the book of Hebrews. But for today, we're going to see the plan of God unfold in ways perhaps you've never seen. **Follow along with me beginning in verse 57**... Jesus is now dead and a man comes to take His body to bury Him...

### **Matthew 27:57-66**

<sup>57</sup> When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud <sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. <sup>62</sup> The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup> and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' <sup>64</sup> Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." <sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." <sup>66</sup> So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

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It's now after 3 pm, what a crucifixion! It's been unlike anyone has ever seen. Pitch-black darkness in the middle of the day, from high noon until 3 pm...this man in the middle of three crosses has been offering forgiveness to those at His feet...and salvation to those who hung beside of Him! Oh those people at the cross...they saw an earthquake that was so violent it split the 60' tall curtain in the Temple from top to bottom and opened up graves in the cemeteries around Jerusalem...and then Jesus breathes His last... Suddenly, light returns to the earth and it's time to get Him off the cross. See the scene...



There's now a race to get Jesus off of the cross by 6 pm. 6 pm? What's that? Well, **turn with me to John 19 and I'll show you why?**

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You see, for the Religious Leaders...they've got to get Him off the cross by 6 pm before the Passover begins. Remember in the reckoning of time by the Jews, the Sabbath always starts at 6 pm on Friday night and this Friday night is different, it's not only the start of the Sabbath, but this year...it's a high and holy year...because it's also the Passover. The year Jesus died...the Passover also happened on the Sabbath. Yet, however, once again...I'm amazed at the hypocrisy of the religious leaders...they wanted to get Jesus down to respect the Sabbath and Passover, but

they condemned and innocent man and now He's dead!! Oh the hypocrisy reeks! But even in this hypocrisy...it all plays right into the Hands of God's sovereignty! Watch!

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### **John 19:31-37**

<sup>31</sup> Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. <sup>32</sup> So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. <sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. <sup>35</sup> He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup> For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." <sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."

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What we just read from John 19 are the facts that the religious leaders played right into the hands of the prophecies they should have known. The Romans didn't know the prophecy...but, the members of the Sanhedrin sure should have. Psalm 34 was written 1,000 years before Jesus was born and verse 20 says:

### **Psalm 34:20**

<sup>20</sup> He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.

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Written 500 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Zechariah prophesied this about Jesus:

### **Zechariah 12:10**

<sup>10</sup> "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn."

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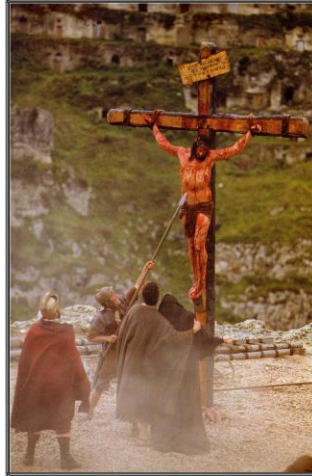
No, the Romans didn't break Jesus' legs because they weren't supposed to break his legs. You understand, that no lamb could be brought for sacrifice to the Temple that had spot, blemish or broken bones...



The sacrifice brought to the priests had to be perfect! And this Lamb of God was...



And His legs would not be broken... But, the Romans were to pierce Jesus...



and they did...guaranteeing that Jesus was dead. And this spear wound was so deep and so large that Jesus would say to Thomas...put your hand in my side and believe... Do you understand...**even in His death, the prophecies of Jesus as Messiah were fulfilled**...all part of God's plan! As horrible as the death of Christ was...it was used for good...to secure salvation.

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Well, now Jesus is dead and it's time to get Him off the cross and Joseph of Arimathea arrives on the scene...

**Matthew 27:57-58**

<sup>57</sup>When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup>He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

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This, too, CHURCH FAMILY is another fulfillment of God's sovereign plan...fulfilled in prophecy... You may not know this...but, it was prophesied 750 years earlier that Jesus would not be buried with criminals...but in a rich man's tomb.

**Isaiah 53:9**

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

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Joseph of Arimathea is indeed a rich man and he was also part of this group... Who is this group?





They meet in the Chamber of Hewn Stones. The group led by Caiaphas the High Priest: the Sanhedrin! But, Joseph didn't consent to Jesus' death...

### Luke 23:50-51

<sup>50</sup> Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, <sup>51</sup> who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God.

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Mark's gospel describes Joseph this way...

### Mark 15:43-45

<sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup> Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. <sup>45</sup> And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

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John's gospel says this about Joseph... (we're seeing all 4 Gospel writers speaking of Joseph.)

### John 19:38-39

<sup>38</sup> After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. <sup>39</sup> Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.

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Let's see if we can understand what we've seen from the 4 Gospel writers about Joseph...this is so intriguing. First, Joseph knew what the soldiers would do with Jesus' body. They would toss into the city dump...Ghenna, the burning landfill. He would get no burial at all. Joseph came out of love and honor and sacrifice...to give Jesus a dignified burial. **Secondly**, this is so interesting...Joseph had no right to the body of Jesus at all. He's not family, BUT he is well known because he is a member of the Sanhedrin. So, Pilate agrees. **Third**, Joseph defiled himself by going to Pilate. Remember, Pilate is a Roman...a Gentile...and by going into the Praetorium, Joseph became defiled. He would also be defiled because he's going to touch a dead body...Jesus is dead and these things are prohibited by the Law if you were going to eat the Passover Lamb. But, Joseph didn't care...because he believed Jesus was the Lamb of God! He believed, and unlike the Apostles...who were all scattered in fear! He came! He came to Calvary and then to Pilate!

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Yes, Joseph, and even Nicodemus had been secret followers (Nicodemus coming by night)...but, now they come in the open! In broad daylight! You see I'm convinced Joseph was at the cross and saw the darkness and he saw Jesus speak words of forgiveness and salvation from the cross and he saw and felt that massive earthquake and I believe he must of said, "This is it! It's Him...He is

the Messiah...all of this proves it! I'm all in...no matter what! I'm burning the bridge to my past...I'm never going back!"

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Listen carefully, this is so marvelous! Joseph did all of this for a Messiah who hadn't risen from the dead! No! He's doing all of this for a dead man! The apostles are in hiding! Not Joseph! He believes! He believes and courageously steps out in faith for a dead man! You see, Joseph is so convinced that Jesus is the Messiah that he's willing to lose it all for Jesus. I believe he remembered the words of Jesus...

### **Matthew 16:25**

<sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

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Do you understand what happened to Joseph after this? He would no longer have a position in the Sanhedrin! He's finished! He's done! It's over! He will never wear the robes of position or authority again! Church, there is no way to fathom much money this man forfeited... He's walking away from one of the most lucrative and prominent positions (as a member of the Sanhedrin) in all of Israel!

You know, I've thought a lot about this and I've come to this conclusion...you know it's relatively easy and inconsequential to follow Jesus in the darkness...when no one sees. It's a whole 'nother ballgame when you follow Jesus to Calvary. When go to the cross at Golgotha and you are on hill where everyone can see what you are doing! JUST LIKE THE WOMEN DID LAST WEE. Because there's no hiding on Calvary! Joseph was no longer a secret disciple...it was all in the open now.

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**What about you?** Are you following Jesus in the darkness, under cover...hoping no one will see? Or are you willing to lose your life to Him...to find it! Step out of the darkness...take up your cross! Walk in the light...Just like Joseph of Arimathea.

**Look at verse 62**, it's now Saturday and Pilate has more visitors...

### **Matthew 27:62-64**

<sup>62</sup> The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup> and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' <sup>64</sup> Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

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Guess what church...what we just read is once again part of God's sovereign plan! Here's how. Jesus in Matthew 12 was once again being pressed by the Pharisees to perform a miracle and Jesus prophesied these words...a prophecy about Himself:

### **Matthew 12:40**

<sup>40</sup> For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection. And this is the fourth fulfilled prophecy we've seen today...once again...the sovereignty and providence of God at work...God's plan being fulfilled. You know it's funny. The Apostles couldn't ever seem to grasp the fact that Jesus was going to rise again... He had said it over and over in the last couple of months of His life. But it didn't resonate!

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Well, it did with the religious leaders! And that's why they went to Pilate and once again, they use the threat of riots to try to blackmail Pilate! They are relentless before Pilate... I can just see Caiaphas before Pilate...



He keeps threatening Pilate and here Caiaphas and his flunkies are seeking to use Jesus' own words to convince Pilate to give them a guard to secure the tomb by saying, "The disciples of Jesus might try to come and steal the body." That's hilarious! Such irony! That's the furthest thing from the disciples' minds... After all, where were the disciples...HIDING...in fear and shame! They're nowhere near Jesus!

Church family, this is so amazing! Without realizing it, the Jewish leaders and Pilate actually joined forces to help prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The enemies of Jesus literally sealed their own fate! The enemies of Jesus went to such lengths to make sure the grave was secure, that this proves the fact that it would have been impossible for the disciples to have taken the body of Jesus! And so Pilate agreed...he wilts under the political pressure again...

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**Matthew 27:65-66**

<sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." <sup>66</sup> So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

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Now how did they make the grave secure? They sealed the stone! Did they glue with FlexSeal or Gorilla glue? No! They used ropes, clay and the signet of the Roman Centurion. See it-depiction:



Believe me, the religious leaders were there inspecting what the Roman Soldiers did to secure that tomb. And the seal...



EXEMPLAR ROMAN SEAL (MORE)

oh...the seal of the Roman centurion in charge from his own signet ring would have literally sealed the deal!

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Listen carefully, do you know what would've happened if there had not been a Roman guard and there had not been a seal on Jesus' tomb? The lie that the disciples took stole the body of Jesus could have easily been accepted. But because the tomb was sealed by Romans...who could lose their lives if they didn't guard what they had been assigned to protect...oh...we can be confident there was a resurrection...because nobody was getting into that tomb...the only one coming out of that tomb would be Jesus Christ Himself, three days later! All part of God's plan!

Not a bone was broken, as prophesied...Jesus was pierced, as prophesied...He was buried by a rich man, as prophesied...Jesus would rise from the belly of the ground...as Jonah came out of the belly of a fish...as prophesied! And so what have we seen today? Exactly how God worked everything for good! He even used the Sanhedrin and the Romans to SEAL THE DEAL!

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Now listen carefully and we'll be done. How does all of this relate to you and to me? It goes back to



Joseph of the OT... "What you meant for harm, God meant for good!"

It goes back to the tapestry





God taking what looks like a mess and making something beautiful out of it. Just like the burial of Jesus! Oh...all things are controlled by God to work together to fulfill His eternal purposes for His children...for our good...even what may be meant originally by the evil of this world...to have been for our harm.

Listen, this is where the rubber meets the road of our faith! To have joy in this life we must walk in the daylight up to Calvary...mount that hill...no matter what...we risk it all! We give up our lives to gain them! And this is trusting God when we can't explain the trouble we're going through. This is Joseph burying a dead, but three days later hearing that man walked of His tomb!

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Oh...the Sovereignty of God...our Lord...who at this moment has control of every proton and neutron of the entire universe and He works everything according to His purpose...all for our ultimate good...even though at times...for the moment it seems all is lost. It's not! Why? Because

**Romans 8:28**

<sup>28</sup> we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

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Whatever is happening in your life today, whatever it is that you can't understand, whatever it is you are struggling with, whatever it is that doesn't make sense...it all fits in His plan. He's in control and He hasn't abandoned His throne and He won't abandon you!