



[Mark 15:42-46](#)

(42) Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, (43) Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (44) Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. (45) So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. (46) Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

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Several points stand out in this passage:

» Evening was beginning—at best Joseph had only about three hours before sunset, when the [Sabbath](#) would begin. The task of preparing and applying the spices for burial required work, which is expressly forbidden on the Sabbath ([Exodus 20:8-10](#)). Additionally, [Deuteronomy 21:22-23](#) demands that an executed criminal be buried before nightfall, and the Jewish law of the time required all dead bodies to be buried before a Sabbath or a feast day ([John 19:31](#)).

» Before he could take the body down, Joseph had to go before Pilate and receive permission. At first Pilate did not believe [Jesus](#) had died so quickly, so he called the centurion of [the crucifixion](#) detail to verify it ([Mark 15:44-45](#)). This delay must have taken at least a half hour.

» After being granted the body, Joseph went to a local shop and bought several yards of fine linen in which to wrap Jesus. With the help of Nicodemus, he then took the body down, wrapped it in the linen—along with about a hundred pounds of spices—and placed it in the tomb ([John 19:39-41](#)).

With all this activity and work between the various locations, Joseph and Nicodemus must have had very little daylight left when they finally rolled the stone over the entrance to the tomb. On this point all the accounts again concur; sunset was very near ([Matthew 27:57](#); [Luke 23:54](#); [John 19:31](#)).

No one disputes that Jesus was laid "[in the heart of the earth](#)" at sunset. If, as we have shown, He was buried for exactly 72 hours, He was also resurrected at sunset—not at dawn!

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
['After Three Days'](#)

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