

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## Culmination of the Ministry

### *The Burial Rite*

And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just;

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

This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. -- *Luke 23:50-55.*

Joseph of Arimathea, assisted by Nicodemus (both private disciples of the Master), obtained the body by permission of Pilate and anointed it with a hundred pounds of aloes and myrrh -- the bitter and the sweet, reminiscent of Cross and Crown, Gethsemane and Transfiguration, Crucifixion and Resurrection: the path of tears transformed into the path of love.

Joseph of Arimathea, like Nicodemus, was a prominent and influential resident of Jerusalem. The fact that he was a member of the Sanhedrin did not render him immune to the fury of persecution visited upon all who were known to be associated with the crucified Nazarene.

Joseph narrates in his Gospel: "After I had begged the body of the Master, the Jews in their hatred and fury shut me up in prison. During the fifth hour of the night, Christ Jesus appeared unto me. With Him there was a great light and there was a fragrance as of Paradise about Him. I found myself out of prison and we were going toward Galilee. The body of the Master seemed altogether made of light. He was surrounded and ministered unto by Angels. I remained with them for three days, then I no longer saw them, and was in my own home."

The apocryphal history of Joseph of Arimathea tells us that later, accompanied by other Christian Initiates -- among them Mary Magdalene -- he set sail across the Mediterranean and carried the torch of the great new spiritual light first into Gaul (France) and then into Britain where he founded the Abbey of Glastonbury, the first seat of the Christian Mysteries to be established in the Western World.

The new tomb wherein man never was laid is the Path of Initiation opened by the coming of the Christ. Hewn in stone is the deathless body of the Initiate, the new *petra* or rock upon which the New Age religion is founded.

And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. -- *Matt. 27:60, 61, 66.*

The great stone which seals the sepulchre and which must be rolled away before the Resurrection takes place is the force or weight of desire. Man must divest himself of this weight so as to be free and, in the words of Paul, be "as a strong man to run a race." The watch that is set is the aura that serves as a constant protection. This the neophyte learns to build by love and service and the prayer that continues "without ceasing."

Mary Magdalene, the lower feminine, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, the higher, are beside the tomb, because the possibility of the Resurrection depends on the lifting of the fallen feminine pole of the spirit. *(Continued)*