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Matthew 27:57-66

57. “When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

58. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given *to him*.

59. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60. and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

61. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.

62. Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate,

63. and said, ‘Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, “After three days I *am to* rise again.”’

64. ‘Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, “He has risen from the dead,” and the last deception will be worse than the first.’

65. Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard; go, make it *as* secure as you know how.’

66. And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.”

Now in this text we read that the day after Jesus was crucified and buried, the religious rulers who had plotted and demanded the execution of Jesus, again gather together and go to Pilate. They say, “Sir, we remember that when He was alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I am to rise again.’ Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Isn’t it interesting that the enemies of Jesus remembered His claim that He would rise from the dead after three days. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. While Jesus’ disciples had given up--having forgotten or dismissed Jesus’ claim of His bodily resurrection after three days in the grave--the chief priests and Pharisees not only remembered Jesus’ claims but were acting on them!

And so Pilate told them, “You have a guard; go make it (the tomb containing Jesus) as secure as you know how.” And that they did.

Even to the extent of setting a seal on the large stone rolled into the tomb’s entrance. In doing so they officially decreed, “You will not come out on the third

day!” The powers that be on earth, have been saying that ever since!

Take note of a couple of important lessons here. Number 1: Your enemies and those who fight the gospel of Jesus Christ may be listening to the message more closely than your friends and the brethren. Number 2: Your enemies may be more honest with you, and accurate in pin-pointing your faults and areas in need of repentance than those who are close to you (your loved ones).

Certainly there is a purpose to every event under heaven.