

Josephus and Philo suggest that Roman administration did not interfere with Jewish customs; for example John the Baptist's disciples are allowed to bury his body (Mark 6: 14-29; Ant 18: 5.2). Roman law also provided that "those who are condemned to death should not be refused their relatives" (Digesta 48: 24.2). That said, non-burial was often part of the punishment of crucifixion, but would this still apply in peace time?

Conclusions: In all probability Jesus and the two others crucified would have been buried, especially with concern of defilement of the land. Furthermore, politically, Pilate would not have wished to provoke the Jewish population, nor would the Jewish authorities.

GOSPEL NARRATIVES

"The Gospels' portrait of the execution of Jesus is consistent with what we know of crucifixion." The judicial procedure is very similar to the execution of Jesus ben Ananias 30 years later (Josephus, *War* 6.5.3 §§300-309). The ossuary of a crucified man c. 20CE (Ossuary no. 4. in Tomb I, at Giv'at ha- Mivtar) - evidences nailed feet (although not nailed hands/wrists which is evidenced in literary sources); broken legs, possibly to hasten death.

Some of the historical elements of the narrative are as follows: the story of Joseph of Arimathea at its core is probably historical and he may have volunteered or been assigned to the burial. The story of the women who witnessed Jesus' burial and then returned early on Sunday to anoint His body is historicity (recorded history of the life of Jesus). The women's prominent position in the narrative is unlikely to be fictitious because "carefully observing where Jesus is buried and then returning on Sunday morning to confirm and even mark, for identification, His corpse, is in keeping with Jewish burial customs. Pre-Pauline 1 Cor. 15:4 evidences the burial and elsewhere Paul presupposes the burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).



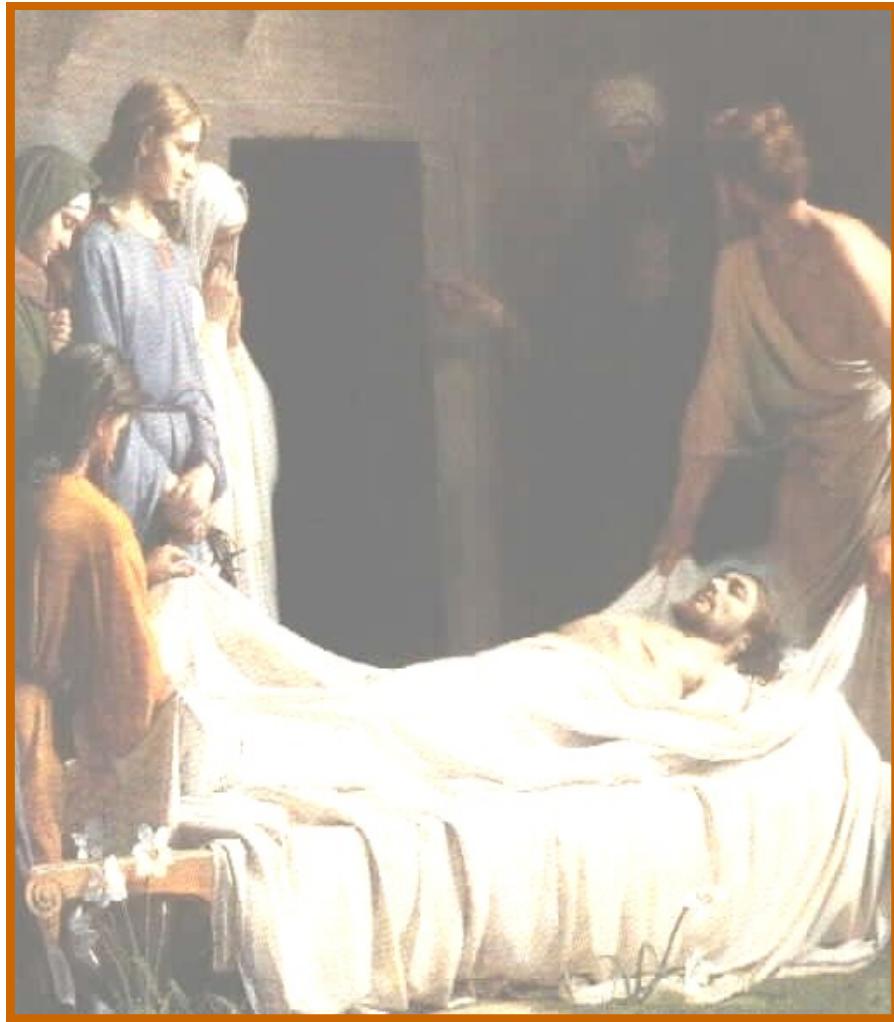
Church of the
Holy Sepulcher
Burial Place of Jesus

In conclusion: it is very probable that Jesus was buried, in keeping with Jewish customs and not left hanging on His Cross nor was cast into a ditch, exposed to the elements. Also it is very probable that some of Jesus' followers (such as the women mentioned in the Gospel accounts) knew where Jesus' body had been placed and intended to mark the location, perfume the body, and mourn in keeping with Jewish customs. The intention was to take possession of Jesus' remains, at some point in the future, and transfer them to His family burial place.

*(excerpted from://sxhari.blogspot.com)

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The Burial of Jesus



...Jesus Christ lives and reigns now and forever.

His death is regeneration;
it is life, eternal life.

Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross And Is Buried

*The burial of Jesus, in light of Jewish tradition, is almost certain for at least two reasons: (1) strong Jewish concern that the dead-righteous or unrighteous—be properly buried; and (2) desire to avoid defilement of the land. Jewish writers from late antiquity, such as Philo and Josephus, indicate that Roman officials permitted executed Jews to be buried before nightfall. Only in times of rebellion—when Roman authorities did not honor Jewish sensitivities—were bodies not taken down from crosses or gibbets and given proper burial. It is highly improbable, therefore, that the bodies of Jesus and the other two men crucified with Him would have been left unburied overnight, on the eve of a major Jewish holiday, just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

In the Mediterranean world at that time, burial of the dead was a "sacred duty". For Jewish culture, this is well attested to in scripture (Gen 23:4-19, 50: 4-14, 50:22-25; Joshua 24:32; 1Sam 31:12-13, 2 Sam 2: 4-5, 21:12-14) which even extends to the "wicked" and enemies of Israel (Numbers 11:33-3; Deut 21: 22-23; 1Kings 11:15; Ezekiel 39: 11-16). In Tobit, Tobit's greatest virtue is burying the dead (1: 18-20, 2: 3-4, 6: 15; 14: 10-13). These buried also include those that were executed (Tobit 2: 3). Similarly, Josephus states "We must furnish fire, water, food to all who ask for them, point out the road, not leave a corpse unburied, show consideration even to declared enemies" (Apion 2:29 §211; cf 2:26 §205). The importance is also evident in the rabbinic writings where even a Nazarie or High Priest is obligated to bury an abandoned body (B. Meg. 3b. Sipre Num on Numbers 6: 6-8). The importance of this is set against the background of those who will not be buried, often in relation to eschatological (belief concerning death) warnings. For example, Moses' warning to Israel that birds will consume their unburied bodies (Deut. 28:25-26); or Jeremiah's warning (Jer. 7:33).

Burial is also important "to avoid defilement of the land of Israel". See Deut. 21: 22-23; Ezekiel 39:14, which is expanded in the *Temple Scroll* 11QT 64, 7-13a. "In Deuteronomy it simply says, 'you shall bury him the same day'; but the Temple Scroll adds 'you must not let their bodies remain on the tree overnight'. The reason given for taking the bodies down and burying them the day (or evening) of death is to avoid defiling the land, for the executed person is 'cursed of God'." While in various fragmentary Dead Sea Scrolls it is believed that while God will give the Jews victory over their enemies, the High Priest will still need to oversee the burial of the bodies to save the land from defilement. In the Mishnah one hanged must not be left overnight, but not buried in the "place of their fathers" but a place allocated for criminals. After decomposition, the bones may then be taken to the family burial place. (m. *Sanh.* 6, 4-6). Therefore, "even in the case of the executed criminal, proper burial was anticipated. Various restrictions may have applied, such as being forbidden burial in one's family tomb—at least until the flesh had decomposed—or not being allowed to mourn publicly, but burial was to take place, in keeping with the scriptural command of Deut. 21: 22-23 and the Jewish customs that had grown up alongside it."

BURIAL AND NON-BURIAL OF EXECUTED CRIMINALS

Josephus mentions many mass executions/crucifixions but does not mention the burial. This may be indicative of an assumption that they would not have been buried. Cases explicitly mentioning no burial are those of executions of Jewish rebels. On this behavior Josephus remarked "Jews are so careful about funeral rites that even malefactors who have been sentenced to crucifixion are taken down and buried before sunset." These cases, however, are not representative of peace time Roman administration.