

Dear Mark,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked why Jesus' tomb was "borrowed."

Jesus owned no tomb or burial place of his own. Isaiah 53:9 says, "He was *assigned* a grave with the wicked, and *with the rich* in his death." His burial arrangement is attributed in all four Gospels to Joseph of Arimathea, a man of wealth and high social standing. He was apparently a member—most likely a dissenting one—of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council that had condemned Jesus. Described as one who was "looking for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51), Joseph is identified by both Matthew and John as a disciple of Jesus; but the relationship was kept secret according to John. At some risk to himself, Joseph approached Pontius Pilate and asked that Jesus' body be removed from the cross and given to him. Joseph was performing a pious act by obeying the Jewish law that said if a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, the body could not be left on the tree overnight, but must be buried the same day. (See Deuteronomy 21:22-23.) According to John 19:38-42, Joseph and Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin, anointed Jesus' body with myrrh and aloes and wrapped it in a linen shroud. Jesus' body was then placed in a new rock-hewn tomb, which may have been one that Joseph had recently obtained for his family's use, and a stone was rolled against the door.

Jesus told his disciples on at least two occasions that he would be put to death and on the third day he would be raised to life (Matthew 17:23; 20:19, Mark 9:31; 10:34, Luke 9:22; 18:33). Just as Jesus said, He was resurrected on the third day. But his resurrection was spiritual, not physical. God had removed his human remains. Only the linen and burial cloth around Jesus' head remained in the tomb.

You asked why Jesus' tomb was "borrowed." Jesus had no need for a permanent place to house his dead body because God removed it. When Jesus was resurrected, He was elevated to a high spiritual plane and after forty days he ascended to heaven in order to sit at His Father's right hand where he must remain "until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." (Acts 3:21) Jesus' sacrifice of his perfect human body on the cross not only ransomed the entire human race from the curse of death, but it also opened up a new and living way for those who choose to follow in his footsteps now. The world unknowingly waits eagerly for these sons of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19, 22-23) so that blessings can flow to the entire human family. "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55)

We hope we have answered your question. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio