

“In Fear and Night” - The Faithful Disciple in The Burial of Jesus: Narrative Reading on John 19:38-42

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Abstract

The burial of Jesus is an important aspect for Christian community to understand the meaning of salvation story. In his narrative on the burial of Jesus, John figure out three characters (Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate and Nicodemus) at the last moment of Jesus in specific way. Pilate who was fear of Jews still has authority, as the reference for Joseph of Arimathea to ask for permission in order to take the body of Jesus. The method used in this study was the exegetical study and narrative reading on John 19,38-42. It used the character study to approach the text as one-unit narrative. This study found how a narrator uses setting, plot, rhetoric, and character to persuade the reader to adopt his evaluative point of view. The burial of Jesus was the moment for them to declare themselves publicly as the true disciple of Jesus and risk their identity as Jews. By touching the death body, they made themselves impure for Jews feast, but they draw themselves near to the one who come to bring the eternal life.

Keywords: burial; character; Jesus; narrative; salvation

1. Introduction

The burial of Jesus is an important aspect for Christian community to understand the meaning of salvation story. It is the transition moment between the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The reality of the burial establishes what comes before it, the death of Jesus, and what comes after it, the resurrection of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea is recorded in the gospels as the one primarily responsible to bury Jesus. He came to Pilate and asked for

permission, if he could take the body of Jesus. Along with him, Nicodemus is also introduced in John 19 as his companion who come for the burial of Jesus.

In his narrative on the burial of Jesus, John figure out three characters (Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate and Nicodemus) at the last moment of Jesus in specific way. Pilate who was fear of Jews still has authority, as the reference for Joseph of Arimathea to ask for permission in order to take the body of Jesus. John identified Pilate and Joseph of Arimathea with the same character “fear of Jews”, even though both of them plays the special role Jews authority. Nicodemus is still identified as the one who came at night to meet Jesus. So, the question is how does the word “fear and night” influence the theological point of view in John’s passion narrative and what does it means for the reader?

2. Research Method

In this exegetical study and narrative reading on John 19,38-42, I use the character study to approach the text as one-unit narrative and find out how a narrator uses setting, plot, rhetoric, and character to persuade the reader to adopt his evaluative point of view. This study will focus on some rhetoric element used by the narrator in building up the narration: “relationships between incidents, inclusions, the use of key word, direct and indirect speech, foreshadowing and retrospection, double-meaning words, the deliberate use of misunderstanding and irony”.¹ I will argue that every character presented the growth of the personal understanding and relationship with Jesus and at the same time represent the other group, and even give the change for the reader to think and reflect on themselves.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Text and Translation

³⁸Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἠρώτησεν τὸν Πιλάτον Ἰωσήφ ὁ ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, ὢν μαθητῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ κεκρυμμένος δὲ διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ· καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν ὁ Πιλάτος, ἦλθεν οὖν καὶ ἤρεν τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ.

³⁹ἦλθεν δὲ καὶ Νικόδημος, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον, φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν.

⁴⁰ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν.

⁴¹ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κήπος, καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καινὸν ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπῃ οὐδεὶς ἦν τεθειμένος·

⁴²ἐκεῖ οὖν διὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ μνημεῖον, ἔθηκαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν

³⁸ After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body.

³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.

⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

⁴¹ Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had

¹ Moloney, F. J., *Belief in the Word*. Reading the fourth Gospel, John 1-4 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 6.

ever been laid.

⁴² And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

3.2. Definition and Context

The burial of Jesus is the last narrative unit in narrative episode on Passion and death of Jesus. “The burial of Jesus is also multiply attested in the gospels and Acts, including 1 Cor. 15:1-5, and its testimony appears very strong and convincing. A number of critical exegetes have come to the same conclusion that the burial of Jesus is historically accurate and undoubted. It is considered from a historical perspective as one of the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus”². The use of “Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα... (v.38)” gives the sign for the beginning of new narrative. Here, Joseph of Arimathea appears for the first time (and also as the last) in John Gospel (v.38) and Nicodemus is coming back as the one who will accompany him for the burial of Jesus. The name of Nicodemus appears 5x in John Gospel (Jn 3:1,4,9; 7:50; and 19:39). Pilate plays his role as the one who give permission for Joseph of Arimathea to take the body of Jesus. He is the man in authority, but at the same time in fear toward the Jews. It will be the last appear for Pilate in John Gospel (Jn 18,29,31,33,35,37,38; 19:1,4,6,8,10,12,13,15,19,21,22,31,38). The focus of narrative is on the body of Jesus. These three characters plays their special own role until the body of Jesus laid in the new tomb. In fear, Joseph of Arimathea asked permission from Pilate. Being identified as the one who came to Jesus at night (Jn 3), now Nicodemus came with special gift for the burial of Jesus (a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds).

The narrative on the burial of Jesus is transition between death and new life; fear and hope; and night and new day of light. This narrative unit (Jn 19,38-42) is placed right after the pierced of Jesus’ side by one of the soldiers (vv.31-37). In the context of preparation for Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to break the leg of the crucified men and to remove their body (vv.31-32). Jesus was already dead, so the soldiers did not break his leg. One of the soldier pierced Jesus’ side and from there came out blood and water (vv.33-34). This episode emphasize that Jesus was really death on the cross in the fulfilment of the scripture. The one who saw it, he gives the true testimony for others to believe (vv.35-37).

And after, the narrative is followed by the resurrection of Jesus (Jn 20,1-10). The remove of the stone from the tomb made a surprise for Mary Magdalene who came to the tomb in the early morning. After hear her report, Peter and the other disciple (the one whom Jesus loved) ran to the tomb to see it. They did not find the body of Jesus. After enter in the tomb, only the other disciple saw and believe. The others disciple, they went home without understand it as the fulfilment of the scripture that “he must rise from the dead”.

² Costa, T., “The Burial of Jesus and Its Relation and Importance to the Gospel Message”, *AJBT* Vol. 2 (Jul-Sep, 2019, 95-122): 101.

The events in Jn 19,38-42 take place in Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified between two others (vv.17-18) and new tomb in the garden near by the place of crucifixion. The narrative begins with the initiative of Joseph of Arimathea who asked Pilate to take the body of Jesus. The narrative develops in three main action: 1. Take the body of Jesus down from the cross (v.38); 2. Preparation for the burial of Jesus (vv.39-40); and 3. The burial of Jesus in new tomb (vv.41-42). The first and second action happen at the cross, then the third action continues in the garden (still in Golgotha). After get the permission from Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus down from the cross. Nicodemus came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds and help him prepare for the burial of Jesus. The gift from Nicodemus indicates the royal burial of Jesus as the king. The wrapped of Jesus' body echoes the resurrection of Lazarus. They did without understanding that they fulfilled the scripture. Then, they moved to the garden and laid Jesus in the new tomb.

Compare to synoptic, John has his own narrative about the burial of Jesus. John and Mathew mentioned Joseph of Arimathea as the disciple of Jesus. John identified Joseph of Arimathea as a secret one through fear of the Jews. In synoptic, we found Joseph of Arimathea as "a member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43), and so a resident of Jerusalem; that he was one who looked for the kingdom of God (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51); that he was rich (Matt 27:57); and that he dissented from the policy and actions of the Sanhedrin regarding Jesus (Luke 23:50-51). Whereas all the synoptists report Joseph's action, none of them knows of Nicodemus' part in the burial of Jesus"³. Here, we find that "Synoptic are not aware of Nicodemus and his help with the burial"⁴. Regarding the place for burial of Jesus "The Synoptic Gospels do not designate the place of burial as a garden"⁵. Something that all the gospel has in common is they report about the initiative of Joseph of Arimathea to require for the body of Jesus and because it was the preparation day for Sabbath.

3.3. Structure and Dynamics

John 19,38-42 is the last text in Passion Narrative. Generally, the passion narrative is divided in three main parts: "The structure of the passion narrative is perspicuously clear; it proceeds through the stages of the arrest of Jesus (18:1-11), his interrogation by the Jewish High Priest (18:12-27), trial by Pilate (18:28-19:16a), crucifixion and burial (19:16b-42)"⁶. Brown emphasized that Within the major divisions, there are signs of careful arrangement and subdivision: "in each of the two units of the first division (arrest, interrogation) there is a subsidiary incident involving Peter (cutting off Malchus' ear, denying Jesus). In the second division the Pilate trial

³ Beasley-Murray, G. R., *John* (WBC; Dallas 1999), 358-359.

⁴ Haenchen, E., Funk, R. W., and Busse, U., *John 2. A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapter 7-21* (Philadelphia, 1984), 196.

⁵ Brown, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)*. Introduction, Translation, and notes (AYB: New Haven London, 2008), 29A, 943.

⁶ Beasley-Murray, G. R., *John*, 320-321.

consists of seven episodes, each of three to six verses in length. They are alternately located outside and inside the praetorium and arranged in the manner of an inclusion. The third division has an introduction (the crucifixion), five episodes on the cross, and a conclusion (the burial)”⁷.

The structure of the narrative on the burial of Jesus is begin with the permission to take down the body of the cross and end by laid him in the new tomb. The initial situation is described by the action of Joseph of Arimathea and his dialog with Pilate (v.38); the present of Nicodemus start the narrative conflict (v.39). The transformation action shown in the collaboration between Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus prepare for the burial of Jesus (v.40). the new tomb in the garden near the place Jesus was crucified give the sign for the narrative denouncement (v.41) and they come to the final situation of the burial of Jesus when they laid his body in new tomb (v.42). Applying the criterion of active characters, the dynamic of this narrative unit can be given the following titles: 1) v.38: Initiative to take the body of Jesus; 2) v.39: The gift for the burial of Jesus; 3) v.40: collaboration in the preparation for the burial of Jesus; 4) v. 41: Finding the place for the burial of Jesus; and 5) v.42: The burial of Jesus in new tomb. These small units can be displayed in the formal structure ABCB'A' with the action toward the body of Jesus as the central point of chiasm form.

A: v.38: Initiative to take the body of Jesus

B: v.39: The gift for the burial of Jesus

C: v.40: Collaboration in the preparation for the burial of Jesus

B': v. 41: Finding the place for the burial of Jesus

A': v.42: The burial of Jesus in new tomb

This chiasm form point out that the body of Jesus is the central point for the development of every character in this narrative unit. Even though in fear of Jews, as the secret disciple of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea has respect to Jesus and ask permission from Pilate that he may take the body of Jesus from the cross. Nicodemus also came with him. The evangelist introduced their identity and character as the secret disciple of Jesus by the word “fear and night”. They remain silent. Then, the narrator reports their role in this narrative by presenting their movement and action upon the body of Jesus from the cross until reach the new tomb.

A- A' : The Body of Jesus: on the cross and new tomb.

The issue in A and A' are about the preoccupation toward the death body of Jesus in the motif of preparation for Sabbath. The dynamic in A and A' are respectively the opening and the closing units of the story. A provides the information about setting of place and time of the narrative. it was right after the dead of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea approached Pilate ask for his permission to take the body of Jesus. then, in A' the reader is informed that they laid Jesus' body in

⁷ Brown, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)*, 802-803

the new tomb. Narrator explain about the motif of the narrative and its result. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus did it with respect to Jesus, but at the same time they did not understand that they are fulfilling the scripture. They prepared for the time of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

B- B' : The gift for Jesus in his burial.

In B and B', the reader encounter with the conflict and solution of this narrative unit. Gift for Jesus in his burial becomes the main topic for these two scene. The conflict is indicated by the coming back of Nicodemus in John's Gospel. In B, the narrator introduces Nicodemus as the same person in illusion to Jn 3. There, he came with question but here he came with the special gift for the burial of Jesus. Then, in B' new tomb in the garden becomes the gift for Jesus. Here, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus found the place to laid Jesus' body.

C : Preparation for the burial of Jesus

In unit C, the two characters, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus plays their role as the disciples of Jesus in secret and represent the Jews. They came to take down the body of Jesus from the cross and prepare for the burial in the custom of Jews. Here, as most scholars comment that they are ambiguity figure. But, reflecting on their initiative to look for and follow Jesus, even remain with him until the end of last moment of Jesus' life figure out their character as the faithful and true disciple of Jesus.

3.4. Study of Characters

Characters reveal themselves in their speech (what they say and how they say it), in their actions (what they do), by their clothing (what they wear), in their gestures and posture (how they present themselves).⁸ Characters are either dynamic (developing) or static. A dynamic character undergoes a radical change throughout the course of a narrative, displaying new behaviors and changed outlooks. The change can be for better or for worse, and may be large or small. But the change is not minor or insignificant: it is a basic and important change in the character. Changes in characters elaborate and develop a narrative's meaning. Since character and plot are intricately bound, a change or development in a character often provides a clue to the direction and meaning of the plot and theme.⁹

3.4.1. Joseph of Arimathea

Joseph of Arimathea appears only one time after the death of Jesus on the cross and then no more coming back in John's narrative. He is being identified as the one who was a secret disciple of Jesus out of fear of the Jews. When the body of Jesus was still on the cross, he came to ask Pilate that he might take the body of Jesus down. His request was granted. This indication tells

⁸ Resseguie, J. L., *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*. An Introduction (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2005), 121.

⁹ Resseguie, J. L., *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament*, 125-126.

the reader that he may already following Jesus and interesting in his teaching. Before, the other Jews already came first to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus (v.31). The motif of request was because of the approaching Sabbath. The Jews act like officials, who negotiate with Pilate to get him to carry out their requests. The reason was “According to the Gospel of John, the approaching Sabbath is also the first day of the festival and therefore especially holy”¹⁰. The Jews want to maintain their tradition: “Jews had extended the practice of Deuteronomy to cover the crucified whose bodies they took down before sunset”.¹¹ Here, Pilate remain silent and gave no answer to them. They find the answer by themselves while looking at Jesus on the cross. The soldier found that Jesus already dead. There are two point to be testify: they become the instrument for themselves and others to believe in Jesus; and to fulfil the scripture without aware of it.

Narrator of the fourth Gospel plays with the action of “request”. Pilate asked Jews so that he may liberated Jesus from the punishment (Jn 18,29-32). This episode pointed out that “concerning Jesus, Pilate naturally asks for the official charge to be presented against Jesus by the high priests. Their response is extraordinarily vague. It is possible that, having already consulted Pilate concerning Jesus, they anticipated that he would not trouble to investigate further, but would simply rubber-stamp their decision”¹². The question from the beginning was who should be responsible for the death of Jesus? I found that showing himself publicly at the moment of the death of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea in one side take the risk for his identity as Jews, and other side expresses his strong faith in Jesus. He plays a very important role in the Johannine narrative about “the Word become flesh”. He made himself being responsible for Jesus’ body as it is moved from the cross to the tomb, from the transition between death to the resurrection. His identity and character is remaining problematic to be solved. But, for those who is familiar with how the Fourth Gospel identifies Jews as group will come to understand Joseph as among the crowds who had heard Jesus speak¹³.

John tells the reader that dialogue with other source from synoptic (Matt 27,57; Mark 15,43; Luke 50-51), the reader come to know that Joseph is “probably a wealthy, respected Jewish leader and a member of Sanhedrin and the one who waits expectantly for the Kingdom of God. his identity as disciple of Jesus in “fear of Jews” could be understood with the other crowds who always follow and listen to Jesus (Jn 7,11,28-32,45-46; 9,19-22). The point of fears was “the Jews had agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Messiah would be expelled from synagogue and becoming socio-religious outcasts”¹⁴. Joseph of Arimathea in his fearful, secret

¹⁰ Haenchen, E., Funk, R. W., and Busse, U., *John 2*, 194.

¹¹ Brown, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)*, 934.

¹² Beasley-Murray, G. R., *John*, 328.

¹³ Lyons, W.J., Joseph of Arimathea. *One of “the Jews” But with a fearful Secret!* Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel. Narrative Approaches to seventy Figures in John (Ed. Steven A. Hunt) (Tübingen, 2013), 653.

¹⁴ Emerson, R.W., Joseph of Arimathea. *Faith and Fear*. Encountering Jesus. Character Studies in the Gospel of John (Ed. Cornelis Bennema) (Colorado Springs, 2009), 191-192.

disciple of Jesus, he showed his courage in publicly honoring Jesus after his death and take risk to loss his public respect in Jews culture and society. John advocates that people should profess their faith or belief openly, even when fear of persecution.

3.4.2. Pilate

In Fourth Gospel, Pilate plays his character as the one who become the reference authority upon the punishment and the death of Jesus. The Jews authorities brought Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate (Jn 18,28-29). Here, the name of Pilate is mentioned for the first time in the Fourth Gospel. We find different character of Pilate in synoptic and John “Whereas the Synoptics appear to rehabilitate Pilate’s character in order to emphasize the Jewish leaders’ guilt in Jesus’s execution, John’s Gospel follows the convention in ancient Jewish literature of depicting Pilate as a cruel ruler, insensitive and even outright hostile to his Jewish subordinate”¹⁵. In his responding to Joseph Arimathea, Mark use the verb “to give”, Mathew “ordered it to be given”, and Luke does not give any response on Pilate part’s. In this perspective, we find that “John is closest to Matthew in the sequence of asking and granting”¹⁶.

Alan Culpepper observed that “the Pilate of the Fourth Gospel is a character who, like Nicodemus, the lame man and the blind man, is caught between the Jews and Jesus. Pilate realize that Jesus is innocent, but he is nevertheless forced by the Jews to sanction the death of Jesus”¹⁷. In this way, Culpepper suggest that “the evangelist give the opportunity for the reader to make a decision regarding Jesus”¹⁸. John presents Pilate as a ruler with all the accoutrements of power, with the authority to take away life, who stands powerless in the face of true power, authority, and life. This remark captures the central theological claim made by John’s narration of the Roman trial of Jesus: true power, authority, and life lie in Jesus, not in Rome and its agents. John pointed out that “Pilate going back and forth between Jesus inside the praetorium and the Jews outside”¹⁹.

In John narrative “structurally, this episode consists of seven rounds with Pilate moving in and out of his place with each round. In rounds one, three, five and seven, Pilate comes out of his palace to interact with the Jews (18,29,38b;19,4,13) and in rounds two, four and six, he goes into his palace to interact with Jesus (18,33; 19,1,9)²⁰. The Jews presenting Jesus to Pilate and would not make themselves unclean and disqualify from participating in the Passover meal. Pilate

¹⁵ Ruiz, G. A., Why Is Pilate So Afraid in John 19:8? *Pilate’s Fear and the Dynamics of Power in John 18:28–19:16*. Narrative mode and theological claim in Johannine literature: Essays in honor of Gail R. O’day (Eds. Huber, L. R., Huyen, S. E., & Wright, I. W. M.) (SBL 2021), 44.

¹⁶ Brown, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (XIII–XXI)*, 939.

¹⁷ Culpeper, R. A., *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*. A Study in Literary Design (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 143.

¹⁸ Tolmie, D. F., Pontius Pilate. *Failing in more Ways Than One*. Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel. Narrative Approaches to seventy Figures in John (Ed. Steven A. Hunt) (Tübingen, 2013), 578.

¹⁹ Ruiz, G. A., Why Is Pilate So Afraid in John 19:8? *Pilate’s Fear and the Dynamics of Power in John 18:28–19:16*., 42

²⁰ Cicero, M.T, Pilate. *Securing a Hallow Victory*. Encountering Jesus. Character Studies in the Gospel of John (Ed. Cornelis Bennema) (Colorado Springs, 2009), 184.

knows that they want Jesus' death. Pilate is in the tension to find and make the decision about: what is the truth? He found that there is no real case and that Jesus is innocent (18,38;19,4). The Jews demand for Jesus' crucifixion. Pilate tries to assert his authority and fails. Pilate knows what the Jews want and while he realizes they have forced his hand to handed over Jesus to be crucified²¹.

In dealing with Jesus, the John showed to the reader that Pilate in one side misunderstood the kingship and rejects the truth in Jesus, but in other side he believed that Jesus is innocent. So, he wants to free Jesus from Jews. The narrator pointed out the inner conflict in Pilate's character. Pilate played a various complex characters, between his role to fulfill juridical law, but at the same time doing it in fear of Jews when he finds the truth in Jesus. in his characters, the reader encounter with the empty space to think and make decision. Pilate was forced by Jews to punished Jesus on behalf of them. He failed to free Jesus, but trough Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus he declares the true identity of Jesus. He gave them permission to take Jesus body from the cross to be buried in Jews tradition and royal ceremony.

3.4.3. Nicodemus

Nicodemus is one of the most interesting character in John's narrative. He is someone who can plays the character of Jesus's disciple; the true Israelites in ruling class; and a fearful secret believer. John identified Nicodemus as the one who come to Jesus by night at the beginning and at the end of his appearance in John's gospel. The character of Nicodemus is related to the theme about recognizing Jesus' identity as the one who come from God to proclaim the kingdom of God. Nicodemus appear in moment of John's narrative: "when he comes to Jesus at night (3,1-12); when he reminds the chief priests and Pharisees that legal procedure requires a hearing before they can pass judgment on Jesus (7,50-52); and when he joins Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus (19,39-42)²². These three episode showed the improvement of his character, but remain irony and unclear when John still use the same identity at the end. Does John want to emphasizes that it is the same person or it refers to symbolical meaning of Nicodemus character?

Narrator presented the development and changes of Nicodemus character in the narrative throughout fourth gospel. It is shown in the changes of his relationship by being part of the ruling group of Jews and move to close with Jesus and his disciples. Initially, he is presented in close affiliation with the ruling group (3,1). In his second scene, Nicodemus is identified as the one who came to Jesus before, but at the same time is still one of those who opposed Jesus (7,50). In his own way, he tried to defend Jesus (7,51). Finally, when Nicodemus is presented at the burial scene, he is characterized by a complete close relationship with Jesus, and Joseph of Arimathea, who is explicitly called a disciple, though a secret one. Joseph of Arimathea could be one of the

²¹ Cicero, M.T, Pilate. *Securing a Hallow Victory*, 184-187.

²² Culpepper, R. A., Nicodemus. *The Travail of New Birth*. Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel. Narrative Approaches to seventy Figures in John (Ed. Steven A. Hunt) (Tübingen, 2013), 249.

secret believers: Nevertheless, many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue (12,42).

The narrator's presentation of Nicodemus also includes changes in speech and actions. He came to Jesus with many question toward being silence in the moment of the burial of before Jesus. In the first scene, Nicodemus initially has quite a bit to say. He begins his dialogue with Jesus confidently proclaiming his allegiance to the religious authorities, and delivering his assessment of Jesus with a confident. Through his encounter with Jesus, Nicodemus is reduced to bewilderment and, ultimately, silence. In his second scene, Nicodemus speaks only once. No longer confidently stating group opinion, he questions his group with regard to their obedience to the Law. When the group responds to him with a rebuke, suggesting that his group affiliation is no longer with them, but with "the Galileans", he is silent once more, and fades from view. By the third scene, Nicodemus does not speak at all but acts, something he failed to do in previous scenes. Nicodemus, who twice before has been reduced to silence, now silently accompanies Joseph to bury Jesus with lavish and loving attention. In the moment of Jesus' burial, Nicodemus give his respect and honor to Jesus. For him, Jesus is the true King that he was waiting for and admire of in his life.

3.5. Theological Message

After analyzing and reading every character presented in this narrative unit, I found that there are three main topics which formulates and communicate the theological message in Jn 19,38-42: 1. The Body of Jesus; 2. secret disciple in fear and at night; and 3. New Tomb. These three topics related to each other and pointed out the central message for the reader about the identity of who Jesus is. In reading this narrative unit, "the readers of the Gospel rise from the story of Jesus' death and burial aware that they exist as a believing community because Jesus has perfected the task given to him by the Father, founded a community and given it life as he made God known to them in a consummate gift of love"²³.

In his Gospel, John uses the word "body" to formulate his theological perspective and help the reader to understand the message in his gospel. The word "σῶμα" appears 6x (Jn 2,21; 19,31,38 2x,40; 20,12) in John's narrative. It forms a chiasm structure. In the beginning (2,21) and at the end (20,12) relates to the theme of resurrection. "John repeats the basic substance of the tradition behind the Markan proclamation: those ruling the temple have profaned it, and Jesus is challenging their authority. In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus himself will become the new temple (2:19–21), consistent with the Markan cornerstone tradition"²⁴. John did not include woman in the moment of Jesus' burial, but as the witnesses of his resurrection. For John, the encounter between the woman with two angels in the tomb give the meaning that "heavenly spokesmen were introduced to clarify the meaning of the empty tomb"²⁵. At the moment of his burial, Jesus' body

²³ Maloney, F. J., *The Gospel of John*. Text and Context (Leiden, 2005), 13.

²⁴ Keener, C.S., *The Gospel of John*. A Commentary Vol. I (Grand Rapids: MG, 2003), 275.

²⁵ Brown, R. E., *The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)*, 988.

is threatened according to Jews tradition. Jesus' body is bound in linen cloths with amount of spice. This action reminds the reader to the story of Jesus raises Lazarus to life (Jn 11,44) and the anointing Jesus as the king (12,7).

John's passion narrative concludes with the brief burial scene. John has some aspect in common with synoptic: the rapid burial accord with Jewish custom; the presence of Joseph of Arimathea; and the use of a new rock hewn tomb. But, other elements are unique to John: the inclusion of Nicodemus and the absence of the women; the use of a massive amount of spices; and the location of the tomb in a garden. (book 1 129-130). In this direction, John invited the reader to understand his theological reflection on the burial of Jesus, for in John Jesus receives an honorable burial. This mission is fulfilled by two Jews who were the secret disciples of Jesus.

John draw some meaning from the presence of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus by the way he identifies them. "The coming of Nicodemus to Jesus by night takes on a symbolical meaning. He is mired in the darkness of misunderstanding and unbelief²⁶. Joseph who asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. The act of Joseph is clearly presented as a public act. Before he was a secret disciple in fear of Jews, now he sheds his fear and publicly proclaiming his allegiance by coming forward to claim the body in order to give honor of a proper burial. In collaborating with him, Nicodemus comes publicly to offer extraordinary homage to Jesus, bringing a staggering amount of spices to honor the crucified body of Jesus. Their character of respect and honor Jesus in burring him new tomb are sign that Joseph was shedding his fear and Nicodemus was being drawn into the light. By doing so, the prophetic declaration of Jesus about the magnetic power of his death was coming true in them: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (12,32)²⁷.

The burial of Jesus is the transition moment between the death of Jesus on the cross and the waiting time for resurrection from the death. "Jesus's final words on the cross, "it is finished" (19,30), possibly an allusion to Moses's and Solomon's words when they finished building, respectively, the tabernacle (Exod 39,32) and temple (1 Kgs 7,51), themselves allusions to God's words in Gen 2,1 when he completes his work of creation"²⁸. By his death on the cross, Jesus offer his body to be the new temple. In this new temple, all the creation encounter with God and has new life.

4. Conclusion

The burial of Jesus is fundamental in establishing both the death of Jesus and his resurrection. The burial relates to both the death of Jesus on one hand, but also serves as the bridge to the discovery of Jesus' tomb, and the eventual conclusion by the early disciples that Jesus had been raised from the dead. This burial was executed by two Jews members who were influence in

²⁶ Senior, D. *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Collegeville: Minnesota, 1991), 131.

²⁷ Senior, D. *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, 132-133.

²⁸ Emerson, M.Y., "Land, Burial, and Temple". Deuteronomy 30:5, John 19-20, and the Burial of Jesus as a Land Claim, *jtheointe.14.2* (2020): 187.

Jew's authority, but they were in fear and might admire at the teaching of Jesus and in secret be his disciples. The burial of Jesus was the moment for them to declare themselves publicly as the true disciple of Jesus and risk their identity as Jews. By touching the death body, they made themselves impure for Jews feast, but they draw themselves near to the one who come to bring the eternal life. John describes Israel's Messiah rising from among the dead ones and thus beginning to renew creation. It is realized in its fullness in the Fourth Gospel through the action of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They gave their respect and honor to the body of Jesus by the royal burial ceremony in Jews tradition. Jesus's body, once dead but now alive, is the sign of his status as Israel's Davidic king and rebuilt temple. And, standing in the garden, it is also the sign of his possession and renewal of all creation.

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