

EASTER

Easter 2013 – Brought to You By...

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Note: The following content is a raw transcript and has not been edited for grammar, punctuation, or word usage.

Early on the first day of the week while it was still dark Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. Mary Magdalene was Jesus' most famous female follower and like those who had followed Jesus for quite some time she had extraordinary faith. In fact she believed about Jesus what many of you do, what many people in the world do, she believed he was a great teacher, she believed he was from God, she believed that he was a miracle worker, she believed that he introduced a brand of compassion that was unknown to the Roman world and had been lost to the Jewish world, she believed he was a revolutionary, she believe he was an extraordinary communicator, she believed he was like no other person that she had ever met. But, on Easter morning Mary Magdalene believed that Jesus was dead and that he was going to stay dead. Perhaps you know the story, Jesus was arrested, tried and on Friday he was crucified and generally they would leave a body on the cross for days and days, sometimes weeks but Jesus bled to death and so they were able to take his body off the cross and a man named Nicodemus and a man named Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and they begged Pilate for Jesus' body. Generally when a body was taken off a cross it was put in the dump and it was illegal to bury a crucified body. It was part of the punishment for the crime, whatever the crime was. But if you paid the centurion enough or if you had connections you could get a body and bury it. And, Joseph of Arimathea was a connected person and a wealthy person. He went to Pilate and he asked for Jesus' body. He probably bribed Pilate to get Jesus' body and just as the sun was setting, just as the Sabbath was about to begin in the middle of Passover they took his body and these two men perhaps with servants quickly prepared his body for burial, put him in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb and rolled the stone in front and went home as sad as they had ever been in their lives.

The way it worked back then the body was left in a tomb until nothing was left but the bones and this took a different amount of time because of the climate in that part of the world. And then they would go back into a tomb and they would collect the bones and they would put the bones in a bone box or an ossuary that looks exactly like this. In fact, this particular picture is a picture of an ossuary from the first century and there is usually a name or something inscribed on it but on this particular one, this is actually a relative of Caiaphas who was the high priest during the time of Jesus. In fact, the relative of the person in this box, Caiaphas was actually the one that had Jesus arrested and oversaw the fact that he was beaten, flogged, sent to Pilate and ultimately crucified. They would find thousands and thousands of these bone boxes, these ossuaries all over what we would call the Middle East or all over what we would call the Holy Land. So the thought was they would put Jesus in this tomb and then they would go back later and collect his bones and put his bones in an ossuary and perhaps give it to his mother or a family member.