

~MEMORIAL TOMB (330)

- Not Ornate
- Jesus Tomb
- Tombs Opened At Jesus Death
- Remembrance By God

• A burial place in which the remains of a deceased person were placed with the hope that he would be remembered, especially by God.

• Concerning the Greek words used to refer to a burial place or tomb, A. T. Robertson in *Word Pictures in the New Testament* [1932, Vol. V, p. 87] states: *Taphos*, grave presents the notion of burial *thapto*, to bury as in

• The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the seat of Moses. (**Matthew 23:2**)

• *Mnemeion*, from *mnaomai*, *mimnesko*, to remind is a memorial sepulchre as a monument. Related to *mne-mei'on* is the word *mne'ma*, which appears to have a corresponding meaning, referring also to a memorial or record of a thing or a dead person, then a sepulchral monument, and hence a tomb. [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 1981, Vol. 2, p. 173]

• Such a tomb might be an excavated grave in the ground or, as was often the case among the Hebrews, might be a natural cave or a rock-cut vault.

• And they were transferred to Shechem and were laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a price with silver money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. (**Acts of Apostles 7:16**)

• And after that Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah in front of Mamre, that is to say; Hebron, in the land of Canaan. (**Genesis 23:19**)

• Thus the field and the cave that was in it became confirmed to Abraham for the possession of a burial place at the hands of the sons of Heth. (**Genesis 23:20**)

• As has been seen above, whereas the word *ta'phos*, grave, gives emphasis to the idea of burial, the words *mne'ma*, tomb, and *mne-*

mei'on, **memorial tomb**, lay stress on the thought of preserving the **memory of the deceased person**.

- These latter words, therefore, appear to carry a greater idea of permanence than *ta'phos*, they are related to the **Latin** word *monumentum*.
- It seems evident that Jewish burial tombs were customarily built outside the cities, a major exception being those of the kings. The references to such tombs in the **Christian Greek Scriptures** would all appear to place them outside the cities, except the reference to David's tomb at;
- Men, brothers, it is allowable to speak with freeness of speech to you concerning the family head David, that he both deceased and was buried and his **tomb** is among us to this day. (**Acts of Apostles 2:29**)
- Being thus withdrawn and also being avoided by the Jews, because of the ceremonial uncleanness connected with them, the areas in which such **tombs** were located were at times the haunt of crazed or demonized persons.
- When he got to the other side, into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two demon-possessed men coming out from among the **memorial tombs**, unusually fierce, so that nobody had the courage to pass by on that road. (**Matthew 8:28**)
- And continually, night and day, he was crying out in the tombs and in the mountains and slashing himself with stones. (**Mark 5:5**)

•• Not Ornate

- While serving as a remembrance of the deceased person, the Jewish **memorial tombs** in general do not appear to have been ornate or ostentatious. Some were so unpretentious and inconspicuous that men might walk upon them without being aware of it.
- Woe to you, because you are as those **memorial tombs** which are not in evidence, so that men walk upon them and do not know it! (**Luke 11:44**)

- Although it was the custom of the pagan peoples around them to make their tombs as lavish as their circumstances allowed, the early Jewish **tombs** that have been found are notable for their simplicity.
- This was because the Jews worship allowed no veneration of the dead and did not foster any ideas of a conscious existence after death in a spirit world, ideas such as those held by the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Babylonians.
- Thus, while many critics make the claim that the worship of the nation of Israel was, from early times, syncretistic, that is, resulting from the union of conflicting beliefs and having developed by the addition of tenets and practices from earlier religions, the fundamental resistance to such religious corruption is evidenced once again in the plainness of their **tombs**.
- Deviations, however, did occur. Jesus shows that in his day it was the practice of the scribes and Pharisees to decorate the **memorial tombs** of the prophets and others.
- Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the **graves** of the prophets and decorate the **memorial tombs** of the righteous ones. (**Matthew 23:29**)
- And you say; If we were in the days of our forefathers, we would not be sharers with them in the blood of the prophets. (**Matthew 23:30**)
- Under Greek and Roman influence, the tendency among the wealthy at that time was toward more **pretentious tombs**.
- Aside from the **tomb** of John the Baptizer
- When his disciples heard of it they came and took up his corpse and laid it in a **memorial tomb**. (**Mark 6:29**)
- The principal **tombs** considered in the **Christian Greek Scriptures** are those of **Lazarus** and of **Jesus**. Lazarus **tomb** was typically Jewish, being a cave with a stone lying against the opening, which opening may have been relatively small, if we conclude that similar tombs found in Palestine are comparable. The context would indicate it was outside the village.
- Jesus had not yet, in fact, come into the village, but he was still

in the place where Martha met him. ([John 11:30](#))

- Therefore the Jews that were with her in the house and that were consoling her, on seeing Mary rise quickly and go out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the **memorial tomb** to weep there. ([John 11:31](#))
- And so Mary, when she arrived where Jesus was and caught sight of him, fell at his feet, saying to him; Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ([John 11:32](#))
- Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping and the Jews that came with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and became troubled. ([John 11:33](#))
- And he said; Where have you laid him? They said to him; Lord, come and see. ([John 11:34](#))
- Hence Jesus, after groaning again within himself, came to the **memorial** tomb. It was, in fact, a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ([John 11:38](#))
- Jesus said; Take the stone away. Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to him; Lord, by now he must smell, for it is four days. ([John 11:39](#))
- Jesus said to her; Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God? ([John 11:40](#))
- Therefore they took the stone away. Now Jesus raised his eyes heavenward and said; Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ([John 11:41](#))
- True, I knew that you always hear me, but on account of the crowd standing around I spoke, in order, that they might believe that you sent me forth. ([John 11:42](#))
- And when he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice; Lazarus, come on out! ([John 11:43](#))
- The man that had been dead came out with his feet and hands bound with wrappings, and his countenance was bound about with a cloth. Jesus said to them; Loose him and let him go. ([John 11:44](#))

· Jesus Tomb

- The tomb used for Jesus burial was a new one belonging to Joseph of Arimathea, it was not a cave but had been quarried in a rock-mass situated in a garden not far from the place of Jesus impalement. The **tomb** had an entrance requiring a big stone to close it, and this stone apparently was of the circular type sometimes used.
- Now as it was late in the afternoon, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who had also himself become a disciple of Jesus. ([Matthew 27:57](#))
- This man went up to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given over. ([Matthew 27:58](#))
- And Joseph took the body, wrapped it up in clean fine linen. ([Matthew 27:59](#))
- And laid it in his new **memorial tomb**, which he had quarried in the rock-mass. And, after rolling a big stone to the door of the **memorial tomb**, he left. ([Matthew 27:60](#))
- And they were saying one to another; Who will roll the stone away from the door of the **memorial tomb** for us? ([Mark 16:3](#))
- But when they looked up, they beheld that the stone had been rolled away, although it was very large. ([Mark 16:4](#))
- Incidentally, at the place where he was impaled there was a garden, and in the garden a new **memorial tomb**, in which no one had ever yet been laid. ([John 19:41](#))
- There, then, on account of the preparation of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the **memorial tomb** was nearby. ([John 19:42](#))
- It may have had, within it, bench-like shelves cut into the walls or burial niches cut vertically into the wall on which bodies could be placed.
- When they entered into the **memorial tomb**, they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a white robe, and they were stunned. ([Mark 16:5](#))

- Claims are made for two principal sites as being the original location of Jesus **tomb**. One is the traditional site over which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been erected.
- The other site is that known as the **Garden Tomb**, which is cut out of a huge stone protruding from the side of a hill and is outside even the present city walls. No definite proof exists, however, that either of these places authentically represents the **memorial** tomb in which Jesus was laid.

See Also GOLGOTHA

•• Tombs Opened At Jesus Death

- The text at;
- And the **memorial** tombs were opened and many bodies of the holy ones that had fallen asleep were raised up. (**Matthew 27:52**)
- And persons, coming out from among the **memorial** tombs after his being raised up, entered into the holy city, and they became visible to many people. (**Matthew 27:53**)
- Concerning the **memorial** tombs that were opened as the result of an earthquake occurring at the time of Jesus death has caused considerable discussion, some holding that a resurrection occurred.
- However, a comparison with the texts concerning the resurrection makes clear that these verses do not describe a resurrection but merely a throwing of bodies out of their tombs, similar to incidents that have taken place in more recent times, as in Ecuador in **1949 C.E.** and again in Bogotá, Colombia, in **1962 C.E.**, when 200 corpses in the cemetery were thrown out of their tombs by a violent earth tremor. [**El Tiempo, Bogotá, Colombia, July 31,1962**]

•• Remembrance By God

- In view of the underlying thought of remembrance associated with *mne-mei'on*, the use of this word, rather than *ta'phos*, at;
- Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the **memorial tombs** will hear his voice. (**John 5:28**)

- With regard to the resurrection of all those in the **memorial tombs** seems particularly appropriate and contrasts sharply with the thought of complete repudiation and effacement from all memory as represented by Gehenna.
- And do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. (**Matthew 10:28**)
- Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna? (**Matthew 23:33**)
- And if ever your hand makes you stumble, cut it off, it is finer for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go off into Gehenna, into the fire that cannot be put out. (**Mark 9:43**)
- The importance attached to burial by the Hebrews is indicative of their concern that they be remembered, primarily by Yehowah God in whom they had faith as the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.
- Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld. (**Hebrews 11:1**)
- For by means of this the men of old times had witness borne to them. (**Hebrews 11:2**)
- Moreover, without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him. (**Hebrews 11:6**)
- Inscriptions of the tombs of Israelite origin are very rare and, when found, often consist of only the name. The outstanding kings of Judah left no magnificent monuments with their praises and exploits engraved thereon, as did the kings of other nations.
- Thus it seems evident that the concern of faithful men of ancient times was that their name be in the book of remembrance described at;
- At that time those in fear of Yehowah spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and Yehowah kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance began to be written up before him for those in fear of Yehowah and for those thinking upon his name. (**Malachi 3:16**)

- A name is better than good oil, and the day of death than the day of ones being born. ([Ecclesiastes 7:1](#))

See Also NAME

See Also BURIAL, BURIAL PLACES

- The **basic** idea of remembrance involved in the original Greek words for **tomb** or **memorial tomb** also gives added meaning to the plea of the thief impaled alongside Jesus to remember me when you get into your kingdom.
- And he went on to say; Jesus, remember me when you get into your kingdom. ([Luke 23:42](#))