

## The Graving Yard in Port Angeles



The economy in Port Angeles in Western Washington has been based on logging and fishing for years, but recently with the closing of the big Rayonier Lumber Mill the town has gone through hard times. When the state announced it was going to build a huge graving yard in Port Angeles, many residents were pleased about the money it would bring into the local economy. A graving yard is a long trench dug next to the sea where construction projects can be completed on dry land and then the trench flooded and the work floated out to sea. The graving yard was necessary to build large replacement pontoons for the aging mile long Hood's Canal Floating Bridge

The twenty-two acre site was purchased, and the contracts for the work were signed, but trouble began almost at once when contractors started excavating the trench. They unexpectedly discovered an unmarked, ancient, burial ground. For perhaps thousands of years before the town became a Spanish outpost, and then later a logging center, the Native Americans had buried there dead in the site. It seemed as if workers could not excavate any amount of dirt without locating a skeleton or some ancient artifact. Archaeologists were called in to professionally assist in the digging. Excavation of the trench slowed to a snail's pace. There seemed to be no end to the archaeologist's findings. After many months of delay, and the state spending upwards of fifty million dollars, the project that meant so much to the community in the way of jobs ground to a halt.

Building on such an extensive gravesite seemed unconscionable and there was no other choice but to call it quits. It was a difficult decision indeed, but the officials couldn't continue the project as if the graves didn't exist. There are just some things that can't be ignored without doing damage to yourself.

Nearly two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus was slain and buried in a grave. Many people today would like to continue on with their lives as if the death of Christ has nothing at all to do with them. But like it or not, it has everything to do with them, and if they ignore it they will end up doing great damage to themselves.

Other men in the history of the world were unjustly slain and then buried, but the case of Jesus Christ is vastly different. You see he wasn't just a man; he was the world's only

thoroughly Just man. He was God's beloved Son, the One who always did the will of his Father, the One who so fully revealed the Father's love and wisdom in all that he did, that he could say to one of his disciples, "Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (Jn.14.7) He was the One whose coming was foretold by countless prophecies from the Old Testament. He gave sight to the blind, healed the lame, and raised the dead. When Jesus Christ came to earth it was God fully revealing himself in grace and truth to mankind. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," a verse from the Bible reads. (Jn.1.17)

However, men loved darkness instead of light. Instead of receiving him and his words, a great multitude gathered together and called out, "Crucify him."(Luke23.21) The hands that did so much good, the feet that tread so many weary miles in order to spread the message of God's love, were nailed to a cross of wood. While he hung in the air suspended between heaven and earth men walked by and mocked him. In excruciating hours of torture the only perfectly Just man the world ever knew hung on the cross as an object of derision. What was the reaction of this Perfect One to his mistreatment? He prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke23.34)

After being nailed to the cross for nearly six hours, he dismissed his own spirit, and died. A rich man named Joseph of Arimathaea went to the Roman Governor and asked for the body that he might bury it. The governor consented. There you have all that the world ever gave the Lord Jesus Christ, which was a cross and a grave.

Stop, and consider your life in the light of what happened at Calvary. Can you go on living your life as if Christ never died at the hands of sinful men? In a world that is guilty of the torture death of God's dear Son can you seek to find all your pleasures as if all is well and he was never rejected? Can you seek to find your happiness in this world that gave him a grave? Can you close your eyes to the truths of the rejection, and death of this great Person without wanting to know more about him?

There is more about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ of which no one should be ignorant. When he died, he died not only by the hands of sinners but also on the behalf of sinners. "God commendeth his love towards us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom.5.8) Now should any person look to him in faith, they will be saved. "Look unto me all the ends of the earth and be ye saved. For I am God and there is none other." (Isa.45.22) There is "None Other" to whom you may look to find forgiveness and eternal life. The Lord Jesus paid for your salvation with his life's blood. You may never earn this great gift of salvation bought at such a great price, but God who is rich in mercy is pleased to give it to all who will look to his Son in faith.

Death which seems so final for the rest of us wasn't the final word in his life, for the Lord Jesus rose out of the grave. The victim of man's cruelty became the victor over man's cruellest enemy -- death. It is a victory that he is longing to share with all those who see the ruined lost condition of their own soul and turn to him as their Savior.

The world gave the Lord Jesus a cross and a grave, but to all who look to him in faith he will give the gift of eternal life. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." (Jn.3.14, 15) Won't you look to him in faith and receive the gift he offers?

Almost three hundred graves were opened in Port Angeles before the state shut down the construction of the graving yard. The remains were respectfully placed in coffins to later be reburied.

Soon, not only in Port Angeles but all across the globe, millions that lay in graves will respond to the voice of the Son of God as he calls them forth in resurrection. The power of God will put together what ever dust or ashes remain of all those who have died from beginning of the world and make their bodies anew. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (Jn.5.28, 29)

The resurrection of the just shall take place first. All those who have been washed from their sins in the precious blood of Christ will have part in the first resurrection. Not one body belonging to a soul saved by God's grace will be forgotten, nor left behind. In less than a moment of time, their spirits will be united with bodies made fit for heaven. In their resurrection bodies they shall never know sorrow, death, or grief again but joy unspeakable will be their portion. For the believer the truth of the resurrection should bring immeasurable comfort to their hearts.

After the first resurrection a lengthy period of time shall elapse before the resurrection of damnation occurs. At this time all those who have died apart from Christ shall be reunited with their bodies. The final result for all those who have part in the second resurrection will be the "lake of fire," and never ending misery. "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev.21.8)

All who have died will have part in one of these two resurrections As long as you have breath in your lungs it is not too late to change your ways and turn to the Savior. "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believeth thou this?" the Lord Jesus said. (Jn.14.25, 26)

If you continue to live as if the death of Christ means nothing to you, at the end of this life you will have nothing but the fearful judgment of the "lake of fire" awaiting you. Oh be wise, don't close your eyes to the great facts of the gospel, but come the Savior before it is forever too late.

**End**