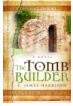


THE TOMB BUILDER



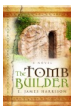
"JOSEPH took the last few steps to the tomb and stopped, waiting for the sense of foreboding to descend upon him as it had every time in the past. ☐ To his surprise, it didn't come. ☐ Instead, there was a strange sense of relief--almost a calm, peaceful feeling..."

HE WAS INSPIRED, but he didn't know why. He worked hard, but he didn't know what for. Now, just days before the Passover, it is finished, and Joseph of Arimathea ponders who might have need of such a magnificent and special tomb--a tomb built for a king.

SET AMID THE TURBULENCE of Roman-ruled Jerusalem, when confusion and contention rage among Jews about a stranger from Galilee, this touching account of love and sacrifice gives the reader a unique perspective of Christ's ministry and the events leading up to his Crucifixion. Skillfully crafted, this story about Joseph of Arimathea, whose determination to follow his heart--even in the face of persecution--is a perfect reminder to put our faith in God in all circumstances.

You can read a few excerpts the *The Tomb Builder* by clicking the "Next" button below.

Author's Note



"JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA is an enigma. Our only glimpse of him is during the final hours of

Christ's life when he courageously comes on the scene, fills a supremely important role, and then slips quietly away, never to be heard of again. No one performed a more selfless act of compassion for the Savior of the world.

Joseph's role in the life of Christ was so significant that each of the Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) mentions him by name, yet we know virtually nothing about him. Biblical scholars have debated for centuries where he came from, for there is no record of a city, town or village--either anciently or in the present--that has ever been known as Arimathea. In fact, the only reference to "Arimathea" in the entire Bible is in connection with Joseph's name...

...One final word before plunging forward: Although this is fiction, the Man from Galilee, Jesus Christ, was not. He lived; he died; and he most definitely lives today, leaving behind an empty tomb.

Chapter One



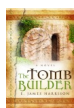
"THE NIGHT AIR HUNG heavy with dew as he cautiously walked up the street, moving silently from the shadow of one massive home to the next. The brown dust kicked up by his sandaled feet clung to the hem of his robes. He didn't mind the dust, it's all he'd ever known--but he'd already stepped in two piles of fresh oxen dung. The slippery green semi-liquid oozed between the bottom of his foot and the leather of his sandal, making walking difficult. Scurrying along in the darkness, he knew the odds of avoiding a third pile were not in his favor.

It wasn't fear for his physical safety that made him slink from shadow to shadow like a common thief, for he was a large man, a man whose very presence commanded respect. Standing over six feet tall, he towered above most people of the day, and his muscular though aging body was imposing enough to dissuade most people from arguing with him. No, it wasn't his physical safety that concerned him--it was his position and reputation. Respected members of the Sanhedrin, and wealthy ones at that, didn't roam the streets of Jerusalem at two in the morning.

He'd managed his way through the squalor of the lower city virtually unnoticed, mostly because the pathetically poor masses who occupied its one-and two-story houses, strung together like bricks in an uneven wall, had bolted the doors and shuttered the windows against thieves or worse. The lower city was a place where rats, both human and animal, roamed at will during the hours of the night.

But now he'd reached the upper city with its palatial homes. These estates, surrounded by high walls, shielded out not only intruders but also the ugliness of the lower city. Inside the walls, slaves and servants skillfully manicured the rosebushes and miniature date palms and fig trees that surrounded spacious courtyards. These rambling multi-storied homes with pillars and opulent furnishings were the residences of the wealthy merchants, Jewish high priests, and the Jewish aristocracy. It was his neighborhood...."

Chapter Four



"TINY DUST PARTICLES SWIRLED in commotion as sunlight streamed through the opening and bounced off the rocky surfaces, allowing Joseph to see clearly, but dimly, every portion of the tomb. Shuffling first to one side and then the other, for he could not stand completely upright in the tomb, he ran his hands along the almost smooth walls. The rock was cool, almost cold. Withdrawing his hand, Joseph looked at his fingers, expecting them to be coated with dust, but there was none. The walls had been wiped clean of any residue from the construction.

Joseph was deeply impressed as he looked around the room. The stone hewer had taken Joseph's vague instructions and expanded on them dramatically, creating a work of art in the process. An intricate arch had been carved into each wall that gave the appearance of a window. Beneath each arch, a small ledge had been chiseled to create a shelf. These shelves, Joseph knew, would hold ornate urns and vases to decorate the tomb. Delicate flowers had been chiseled into each wall just above the floor and gave the impression that they were growing out of the floor. High on the wall, above where the dead person's head would rest, the stone hewer had chiseled a sun with rays streaming out from it.

It was more than Joseph had anticipated. This, Joseph said to himself, was a tomb fit for a

king...."