

# **THE MAN WHO NEEDED TWO GRAVES**

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# **CONTENTS**

- 1 The Metal “King” ... page 4**
- 2 Civilized “Savages” ... page 10**
- 3 Julius Invades the Isles ... page 17**
- 4 Why Joseph Could Claim the Body ... page 20**
- 5 Dangerous Enemy ... page 24**
- 6 Surprise Visitor ... page 26**
- 7 Joseph a Marked Man ... page 29**
- 8 Unable to Stop It ... page 32**
- 9 Cast Adrift ... page 35**
- 10 Enter the Druids ... page 38**
- 11 Destination Britain ... page 42**

**12 The Isle of Avalon ... [page 45](#)**

**13 Saul's "Gestapo" Begins to Collapse ... [page 49](#)**

**14 Amazing Twist of Events ... [page 51](#)**

**15 Joseph's End ... [page 61](#)**

# **1 THE METAL “KING”**

“Wow!” exclaimed Jody.

“Yeah... it’s awesome.”

Riveted to the floor, I simply stared.

“It gives just his initials,” I finally spluttered out, as the truth began to impact. “He was rich. He was famous. And he gave it up. But his tomb says nothing about the great drama of his life!”

“I can’t believe we’re really HERE!” Jody exclaimed again. “Is this a dream?”

“No dream,” I mused. “Here lies a man whose life took an astonishing turn. He never knew he would need a second tomb. And he certainly never guessed it would be on this remote island 2,500 miles away!”

## **A business tycoon**

This man Joseph was well educated, talented and a man of refinement. He was one who possessed many talents.

His political and business ability was extraordinary. In fact, he was reputed to be one of the wealthiest men in the world of his time.

We would term Joseph a metal magnate. He has even been called the Carnegie of his age. The tin and lead industry which he controlled was akin in importance to that of steel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Tin, you understand, was the chief metal for the making of alloys. By the warring Romans it was in great demand.

A number of authorities claim that Joseph's world control of tin and lead was built on his huge holdings in the British tin mines. (See *St. Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury*, pp. 31-32.)

He had acquired and developed this interest, it seems, early in life. Reputedly, Joseph owned one of the largest private merchant fleets afloat. His ships traversed the world's sea lanes. Tin mined in Cornwall was smelted into ingots and exported largely, so it is claimed, on Joseph's ships.

### **“The tin isles”**

The tin trade between Cornwall and Phoenicia is often referred to by classical writers. Julius Caesar also describes it at considerable length.

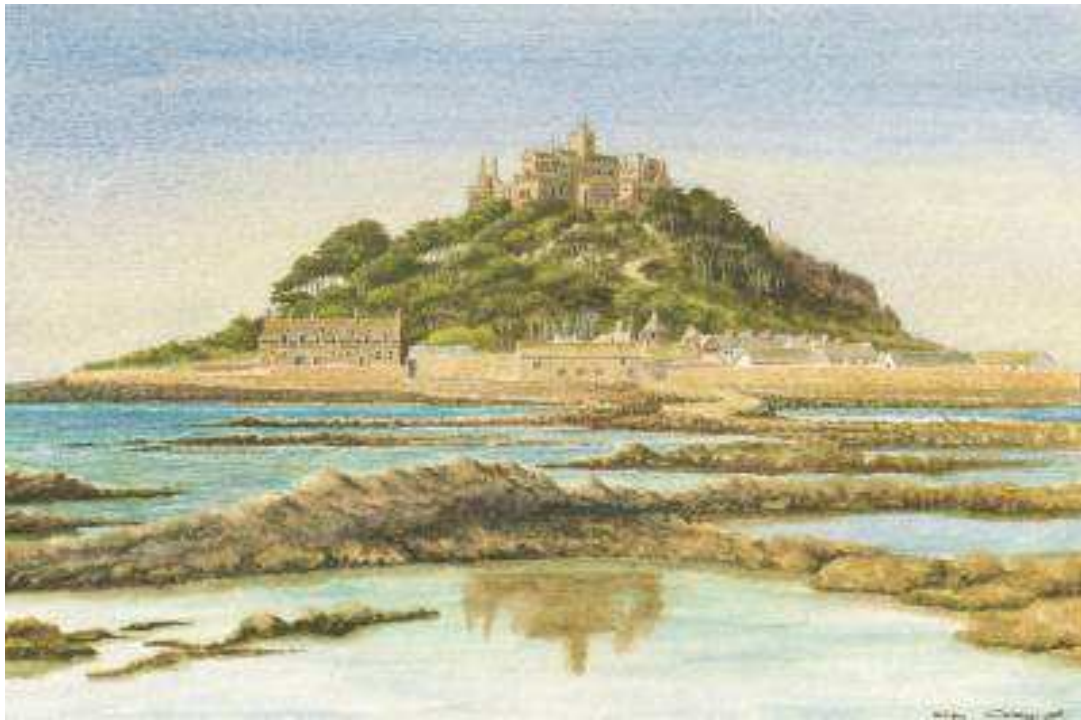
Here's what Diodorus Siculus had to say about the British tin mining industry:

“They that inhabit the British promontory of Belerium, by reason of their converse with the merchants, are more civilised and courteous to strangers than the rest. These are the people that make the tin, which, with a great deal of care and labor, they dig out of the ground, and that being rocky, the metal is mixed with some veins of earth, out of which they melt the metal and then refine it. Then they beat it into four-square pieces like a Die, and cart it to a British island, near at hand, called Ictis. For at low tide, all being dry between them and the island, they convey over in carts abundance of tin.” (Diodorus Siculus, *Historical Library*)

The island he called Ictis is none other than St. Michael's Mount, just offshore from Marazion in Cornwall, and exactly fits Diodorus' description.

Tin was shipped from the Bay of Penzance or “Phoenicia”.

In 1969, in the little harbor on the island, skin divers found a stone bowl with a handle, which was subsequently identified by the British Museum as Phoenician, and dating back as far as 1500 BC.



*St. Michael's Mount (Ron Cornish)*

Further valuable information comes to us from Herodotus. Aptly described as the "Father of History", Herodotus was a Greek historian who lived in the 5th century BC. During his life he traveled widely, and within his writings we find him referring to Britain as the Cassiterides or Tin Islands. (*Herodotus, 3.115*)

The reason for Herodotus' assertion was that Cornwall had almost the world monopoly of tin production. Archaeological evidences show clearly that the Tin Islands were exporting tin as early as 1500 BC. Biblical "ships of Tarshish" (a name given to ocean-going vessels, and used in the same way that Victorians spoke of "East-India-Men"), which operated mainly from the Phoenician port of Tyre, were the main agents in transporting this valuable metal to different parts of the world.

Another to mention the Cassiterides was the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C Greek navigator and geographer, Pytheas, who lived at Massilia (now the French port of Marseilles) and explored the coasts of Spain, France and the British Isles.

So does the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 - 322 BC); as well as Polybius, author of *Histories* (205 - 125 BC); and Posidonius, the Greek Stoic philosopher, of the first century BC. All of these deal at length with the British tin industry in the centuries before Jesus Christ.

## Trade between the Middle East and Britain as early as King Solomon's time, 1000 BC

Sir Edward Creasy, the English barrister, professor and historian (1812 - 1878), said in one of his books, as a result of his research, that:

“The British mines mainly supplied the glorious adornment of Solomon's Temple.” (Sir Edward Creasy, *History of England*)

Who were the people who worked the mines? Undoubtedly ancient British men. But records show that others were also involved. The eminent English antiquarian and historian, William Camden (1551-1623), wrote a book called *Britannia*, which was published in Latin in 1586 and in English translation in 1610. It was a landmark in the topographical study of Britain. In this work he said:

“The merchants of Asher worked the tin mines of Cornwall, not as slaves, but as masters and exporters.” (William Camden, *Britannia, Vol.1*)

How did this come about?

In my book *Ark of the Covenant* (chapters 10 and 11) there is assembled abundance evidence of Hebrew-Phoenician cooperation in trading. The Greek geographer Strabo (63 BC - 24 AD) wrote concerning the traders:

“Anciently the Phoenicians alone, from Cadiz, engrossed this market, hiding the navigation from all others. When the Romans followed the course of a vessel that they might discover the situation, the jealous pilot willfully stranded the ship, misleading those who were tracking him, to the same destruction. Escaping from the shipwreck, he was indemnified for his losses out of the public treasury.” (Strabo, *Geography*)

And in fact this ploy worked satisfactorily until 450 BC, when the Carthaginian general Hamilcar sailed through the straits of Gibraltar and northward, thereby discovering Cornwall.

Many of those who used the Phoenician port of Tyre were Israelites, who sailed to various destinations, and even set up distant colonies and settlements.

## Hebrews in the tin business

In many of the places where Israelites set up their colonies, we find inscriptions and tombstones bearing witness to the fact. The south of Spain is not wanting in this respect. Neither is Cornwall.

Our particular concern is Cornwall. And this is where the story of Joseph of Arimathea begins to unfold.

In times long ago, Cornwall was literally riddled with mines. The remains of their shafts are still in evidence, and care must be taken in certain areas not to fall into these when hiking. Of all these mines which had operated for thousands of years, the last one closed in 1997.



*The author exploring one of the ancient tin mines*

However, traditions still linger with considerable strength concerning Joseph's involvement. The miners have always sung songs during their work underground, and the refrain has always been:

“Joseph was a tin miner. Joseph was in the tin trade.”

Is this an empty 'boast'? Hardly. Throughout the world there are very persistent traditions that just will not die, and when investigated, they are



found to contain memories of important historical events. They say that there is no smoke without fire. Likewise there is no tradition without historical fact, even though in the process of time the facts get covered over with the barnacles of human embellishment. And this appears to be true here.

## **2 CIVILIZED “SAVAGES”**

Were the pre-Roman British really civilised?

It is generally assumed that pre-Roman Britain was an island populated by wild savages and painted barbarians completely devoid of culture and conscience. Any ancient records of those times are claimed to be myth, legend and folklore.

It seems that historians have been the worst offenders in erecting barriers to the truth. Nonchalantly, they take it for granted that Britain was uncivilised, following like sheep the first writer who perpetrated this error. And this fallacy is blindly followed by Press, radio, and thus public opinion.

This has grown into an amazing distortion of ancient British history. Yet it is not as though the truth were unavailable.

One need only to read the classical histories of other nations – Greece, Gaul, and Rome, for example - as their course affected Britain. The clues are there. Then compare these with the early British Triads. It does not take much effort to search the stored tomes and even the old church records in libraries, including the British Museum Library. These are replete with concrete evidence which contradicts the spurious history that we've been fed.

There are also thousands of Cyinric Triads and monastic documents surviving, particularly in the Vatican Library. And to top it off, there are the records left to us by the earliest British historians, both Celtic and Saxon.

You would be amazed at the extent to which truth that has been distorted. It's an unbelievable accomplishment!

Yet even some of the antagonists of these British islanders spoke candidly of their admirable culture, a patriarchal religion, and a majestic history that extended far beyond that of Rome.

Did you know that the city of London (Llandn) was founded in 1020 BC, which was two hundred and seventy years before Rome? (E. O. Cordon, *Prehistoric London*)

### **Ancient international trade**

Did you know that the eminent archaeologist Sir Flinders Petrie, discovered Egyptian beads at Stonehenge? And that he found at Old Gaza (in the Middle East) gold ornaments and enamelware of Celtic origin, dated 1500 BC? This indicates trade or travel between Britain and the other ancient civilisations.

Many early British coins have been discovered in France and Belgium, attesting to pre-Roman international trade.

We are informed by Strabo that the British merchants of his time navigated the Seine and the Rhine. They imported cattle, corn, iron, hides, and other produce. They exported, among other things, brass, ivory, amber ornaments, and vessels of glass.

### **High standard of living**

Discoveries at Bagendon, in the Cotswolds, during 1958 supplied important evidence of the high standard of living enjoyed **before** Roman authority controlled only part of the islands.

There were imports of fine glass from Egypt and Syria, pottery from Italy and Gaul, and from the Belgi of the Continent.

Some pottery bore makers' names, and valuable items had been repaired with small tin rivets.

Sandal nails found at Bagendon showed that the Britons were well shod. A door key argued the presence of locks.

Perhaps the most remarkable and revealing find there concerned the thriving iron industry carried on between about 10 BC and 45 AD at the site of this ancient capital, near present-day Cirencester.

The analysis of the slag showed clearly that the workers were highly skilled ironmasters, and that they produced metal so fine that it almost qualifies as steel.

The remains of the iron industry showed that considerable care was taken in building. The floor was a massive stone platform. And there was a carefully laid dry stone wall at one side.

Water was supplied through a conduit of masonry and stone, covered with stone slabs.

There were two processes for the metal production. In the first, an oven and bloomery was used, and for the second, a crucible.

At this site copper was also worked. There was even an example of copper smelted onto iron, an early form of “Sheffield plating”. Lead was desilverised. And metals were tested with a touchstone of lydite.

### **Silver-plated coins**

In the mint were a quantity of coin-moulds, as well as a number of coins. The coins consisted of copper ore, silver-plated.

Speaking of coins, many ancient British coins have been unearthed in other places as well, with royal names stamped upon them – names unknown to Roman and other history.

This is further evidence of a pre-Roman civilized nation in Britain.

### **Good roads**

Iron ore was probably brought from the Forest of Dean, which suggests a reasonably good all-weather road connecting Bagendon with the mines.

A nation which was expert in making and operating fast chariots was surely capable of constructing large wagons for carrying heavy loads. And a heavy-duty surface would be essential for such transport.

One can argue, of course, that pack animals might have been used, requiring only a narrow track. However, there is plenty of evidence of pre-Roman roads in Britain – as well as the expert use of vehicles in war – which supports the belief that paving or surfacing may well have been used on roads.

The Icknield Way, in use about 2000 BC, and 200 miles long, runs dead-straight on level ground and widens out in some places to the equivalent of a modern four-lane highway.

Many so-called ‘Roman roads’ bear old Briton names such as Erming Street, Stane Street, Watling Street, and so on. Not only that, but they are studded with ancient Briton town sites.

So we may presume that these were some of the pre-Roman roads mentioned in the ancient British Chronicles. In actual fact, they were engineered by the ancient Britons and merely repaired by the Romans.

Yes, in many cases, the later Romans built their famous straight roads on already existing ones.

### **Skill beyond the ability of modern craftsmen**

It was the ancient Britons who invented the art of enamelling. Perfectly preserved evidence of this ability is seen today in items such as the famous Glastonbury bowl, over 2,000 years old, and the beautiful Desborough mirror, items on show in the British Museum and the Glastonbury Museum. They are magnificent examples of "La Tene" art, as the Celtic design is named. More than that, their geometric beauty and excellence are beyond the ability of modern craftsmen to duplicate.

As Jacquetta Hawkes informs us:

“The Yorkshire Celts, beyond all other groups, seem to have been responsible for establishing the tradition of La Tene art.... Nearly all the finest pieces are luxuries reflecting the taste of warriors who enjoyed personal magnificence and the trapping out of their wives and horses. Brooches to fasten the Celtic cloak, bracelets, necklaces, pins, hand mirrors, harness fittings, bits and horse armour, helmets, sword scabbards and shields were among the chief vehicles of La Tene art. They show on the one hand strong plastic modelling, and on the other decorative design incised, in low relief, or picked out in coloured enamel. Both plastically and in the flat the Celtic work shows an extraordinary assurance, often a

kind of wild delicacy, far surpassing its Greek prototypes. In these the finest artists achieved a marvellous control of balanced symmetry in the design and equally in its related spaces.” (Jacquetta Hawkes *Early Britain*, p.32)

And S. E. Winbold concurs:

“The Celtic curvilinear art, circa 300 BC and of which the famous Glastonbury bowl is a good example, reached its zenith development in Britain.” (S. E. Winbold *Britain B.C.*)

According to the Romans, they learned the craft of enamelling from captive Britons.

Around 450 BC, Herodotus, “the father of history” wrote of Britain and its population under the name of Cassiterides. He remarked on their talent in the metal industry. (Herodotus, *Book 3:115*)

## **The people themselves**

Julius Caesar, after returning from his 55 BC invasion of Britain, wrote with admiration concerning the Britons. He spoke of their culture, their sterling character, their ingenuity in commerce and craftsmanship. He was amazed at the size of the population, the number of large cities, the architecture, universities of learning, and their religion with its belief in life after death.

Strabo, the Greek geographer, left us a good description of a Briton of his time:

“He came, not clad in skins like a Scythian, but with a bow in his hand, a quiver hanging on his shoulders, a plaid wrapped about his body, a gilded belt encircling his loins, and trousers reaching from the waist down to the soles of his feet. He was easy in his address; agreeable in his conversation; active in his despatch; and secret in his management of great affairs; quick in judging of present accuracies; and ready to take his part in any sudden emergency: provident withal in guarding against futurity: diligent in the quest of wisdom, fond of friendship; trusting very little to fortune, yet having the entire confidence of others, and trusted with every thing for his prudence. He spoke Greek with fluency, that you would have thought he had been bred up in the Lyceum, and conversed all his life with the Academy of Athens.” (Strabo, *Geography*)

Here is what the Roman poet Martial wrote about the British princess Gladys, daughter of the British King Caradoc, after he was treacherously captured and taken to Rome as a prisoner. The Emperor Claudius adopted Gladys and renamed her Claudia. The epigram reads:

“Claudia! Rose of the blue-eyed Britons! Capturer of hearts! How is it thou’rt such a Latin person? Such graceful form? It makes believe thou’rt Roman! Thou’rt fit to be Italian or Athenian maid.”

Claudia became the wife of the Roman Senator, Rufus Pudens, who was a half-brother of the Christian evangelist Paul (Rufus is mentioned in *Romans 16: 13*). This couple became close friends of Paul, entertaining him in their home when he came to Rome in 58 AD.

The ancient British will compare more than favourably with the best eras of Greece or Rome.

After the Julian invasions, the Briton walked the streets of Rome the only freeman in Europe, pointed out as the exception to the world:

“Invictus Romalio Marte Britannus” (“The Briton unconquered by the Roman Wars”).

Julius Caesar writes that the people of Britain were agriculturists, living under kings of whom there were no less than four in Kent alone. He states that the people of Kent, the only people he passed among, had customs similar to those of the Gauls; that is to say, they were civilized and richly and luxuriously clothed.

He writes that Britain “is well peopled and has plenty of buildings, much of the fashion of the Gauls, they have infinite store of cattle, make use of gold money and iron rings which pass by weight, the midland counties produce some tin, and those nearer the sea iron.”

It was only the uncivilized people of the interior (“interiores”, Caesar called them) who stained their skins blue and “they seldom troubled themselves with agriculture, living on milk and flesh and are clad with skins.” (Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*.)

Long before they were known as Kimmerians, the biblical prophet Isaiah addressed himself plainly to the inhabitants of “the Isles”. (*Isaiah 49:1; 66:19*)

One is baffled as to why historians have submerged the antiquity of Britain in myth and mystery, mutilating the facts.



## **3 JULIUS INVADES THE ISLES**

It is certain that Britain was NOT civilised by the Romans.

In fact, it seems more likely that the Romans destroyed far more than they constructed in Britain, on account of the fierce resistance they met with.

At that time Britain was the only country of Europe that was free of Roman imperial domination.

The people of Gaul (today known as France) shared a common religion with the Druids. Gaul had encountered Roman persecution long before. It was the constant aid given the Gaulish brethren by the warriors of Britain which caused Rome to turn her attention on Britain.

The first invasion of the Isles was led by Julius Caesar, in 55 BC. This was solely a punitive expedition against the Britons for thwarting his military activities in Gaul.

### **Julius Caesar did *NOT* conquer Britain**

This may come as a surprise. But Caesar's attack was not a conquest. It was a disappointing failure. In as little as eight weeks Julius' forces were routed and he was forced to pull back into Gaul.

Here is what happened. On August 5, 55 BC Caesar's fleet, with the Emperor himself in command, crossed the channel from Whitsand near

Calais. King Cassibellanus of Britain, with 4,000 war-chariots opposed him.

As Caesar himself recalls: “The legionary soldiers were not a fit match for such an enemy,” and “the enemy's horse and war-chariots . . . inspired terror into the cavalry.”

Julius' first campaign lasted 55 days and he failed to advance beyond seven miles from the place of his landing.

Upon his return to Rome, Julius was openly ridiculed by Pompey's Party in the Triumvirate. Julius Caesar's famous legend, ‘Veni, Vidi, Vici’ (I came, I saw, I conquered’) was satirized by the pens of the Roman elite. In their rebuke of Julius, they changed it to, ‘I came, I saw, but failed to stay.’

His second invasion the very next year was in more than 1,000 ships. The campaign went on for four months. Peace was concluded on September 10 at Gwerddlan (Verulam, or St. Albans). This was the furthest point (70 miles) from the coast that Julius Caesar had been able to attain. No Briton of eminence left the island a hostage or a prisoner.

During the succeeding ten years, Rome's mightiest armed forces, led by its best generals, fought to establish a foothold in Britain. But they failed to penetrate more than just a few miles inland.

In fact, 160 more years would elapse before Britain was incorporated within the Roman dominions – during the reign of Hadrian, in 120 AD). And this was not by conquest, but by treaty. (Spartians, *Vita Hadriani*)

By this treaty the Britons retained their kings, lands, laws and rights. But they agreed to accept a Roman nucleus of the army, for the defence of their country.

This, surely could never be misconstrued as a conquest.

Just think about this.

No mob of naked, untrained savages could have held its ground against the powerful Roman legions under Caesar himself. But twice Caesar failed to invade Britain. Those island folk were able to defy and defeat armies which had been all those years led by Rome's emperors and greatest generals.



## 4 WHY JOSEPH COULD CLAIM THE BODY

Joseph's association with the tin business would probably have been connected with the Israelites of the tribe of Asher who worked in Cornwall.

As we have seen from ancient records, the inhabitants of the region conversed in Greek and had a highly sophisticated way of life. Celts and Israelites, these were no savages, but people who had built up a contact with most other places in the known civilized world through their trade.

Ultimately Joseph was to become the 'patron saint' of tin miners, and his memory is still vivid in the minds of Cornishmen to this day.

### **A man of importance**

*Mark 15 :43 and Luke 23 :50 (Latin Vulgate)* both refer to Joseph of Arimathea as 'Decurio'. This term was used by the Romans to designate an official in charge of metal mines.

In Jerome's translation Joseph's official title is rendered as 'Nobilis Decurio'. This would suggest that Joseph held a prominent position in the Roman administration as a minister of mines. This is surprising for a Jew in the Roman State. It can only indicate that Joseph was remarkably gifted.

As well as this, Joseph was an influential member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious council.

It is believed that he was also a legislative member of a provincial Roman Senate.

When you consider that he owned a palatial home in Jerusalem, as well as a fine country estate, you can estimate his financial and social standing.

His country residence was at Arimathea (present day Ramallah). This sat on the caravan route between Nazareth and Jerusalem. Everything known of Joseph shows him to be affluent and influential within both the Jewish and Roman hierarchies.

### **Closely related to Jesus**

The Talmud records that Joseph was the younger brother of the father of Mary the virgin. As Mary's uncle, he would be a great uncle to Jesus.

Other secular reports state that Joseph was a married man. Also that his son, Josephes, left a mark of distinction in British history.

History and tradition point to a close association of Jesus and his family with Joseph. The weight of evidence implies that the husband of Mary died while Jesus was young. Such a circumstance would, under Jewish law, appoint the next male kin of the husband (in this case Joseph) to be legal guardian of the family.

If this was the fact, then much is explained. History and tradition both declare that as a boy Jesus was in the company of His uncle, especially at the times of the religious feasts. The same records claim that Jesus made occasional voyages to Britain with Joseph in his ships.

Cornish traditions abound with such testimony. Also there are numerous ancient landmarks bearing Hebrew names which record such visits.

There was evidently a close affinity between Joseph and Jesus.

Then finally, at the notorious trial of Jesus, Joseph stood by Him as a bold, fearless defender. Also he went to Pilate boldly to claim the body when all others feared to do so.

It was Joseph's arms that cradled the broken corpse when taken from the cross. Then Joseph donated his own unfinished tomb for the placement of Jesus' body.

Joseph risked everything he had - wealth, power and position - in those crucial years which followed. He fulfilled his obligation loyally, as guardian of the family. He loved Jesus dearly. We find that Jesus' disciples spoke of Joseph affectionately – as a 'just man', a 'good man', 'honourable', and 'a disciple of Jesus'.

The indications are that right through their association Joseph must have encouraged Jesus in His great work.

It appears that Joseph believed in the validity of what Jesus claimed and ultimately died for.

It is generally assumed that Jesus was of obscure relatives. However, His relationship with the affluent Joseph proves differently. The evidence suggests that Jesus in His own right was a property owner - but that long before He began His mission He had renounced all material wealth.

### **Joseph claims Jesus' body**

When Jesus was executed as a criminal, his body was destined (according to both Jewish and Roman law) to be tossed into a common pit with others whose total physical record was completely obliterated. Unless the next of kin immediately claimed it.

So we might well ask, Why did not Mary, Jesus' immediate next of kin, claim the body of her beloved Son?

Was it because the disciple John, fearing for the safety of Mary, restrained her? Was it that they knew Joseph, the family guardian, would make the request?

What we do know is this. Joseph did go to the Roman governor and obtain permission to claim the body. Joseph himself removed it from the cross. And Joseph prepared it for burial in his own private tomb that lay within the garden of his estate.

But why did Joseph go to the highest authority in the state? It was not normally necessary to go to the governor himself. All he had to do was approach the Sanhedrin.

Joseph did not do this, because he knew they sought the total extinction of Jesus, even in death.

After three years and eleven attempts on Jesus' life, the Sanhedrin had at last succeeded in their diabolical, murderous scheme to have Jesus executed.

To have His body disposed of in the common criminal pit would be their wish. Then all memory of Him would be steeped in shame. His extinction would be total. That's what would have been in their best interest.

If Jesus were honourably interred in the tomb of a respected public figure like Joseph – that would ensure a martyr image for Jesus. It would popularise Him further. Surely that would doom the Sanhedrin more than anything else.

Joseph could reasonably expect them to thwart such plans. And with Mary they could interfere with reasonable success. Not so with Joseph. He feared them not. He could block their schemes. So he went "boldly" to Pilate instead.

## **5 DANGEROUS ENEMY**

When they heard what Joseph had done – providing his own tomb for Jesus – the Jewish leaders were furious.

Joseph didn't know it yet, but had just created for himself a dangerous enemy. A man called Saul, if only he knew, was about to turn this into a personal vendetta.

### **The Sanhedrin steps in**

But other things would happen first. The Jewish Council (the Sanhedrin) quickly made their next move.

Jesus had claimed that He would die and rise again after three days.

They feared that Jesus' body might be snatched from the tomb by His followers, to make the claim that He was risen. Speed was of the essence. So they moved fast for Roman help to keep that body in the tomb. At their own suggestion and under their supervision, the tomb was sealed.

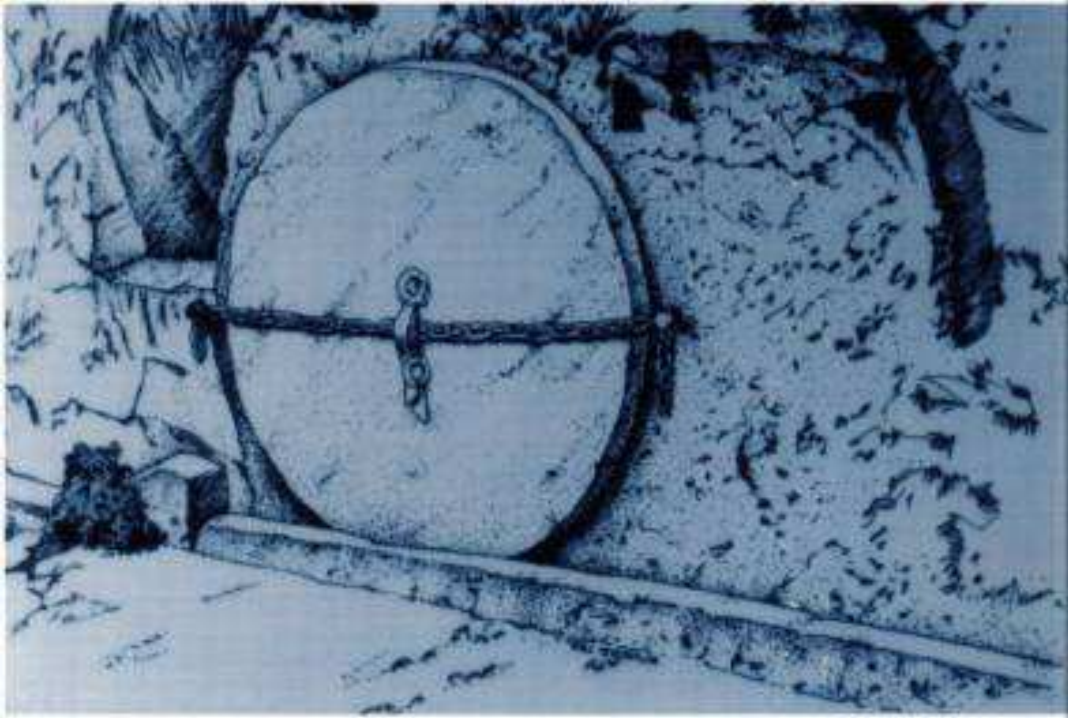
*(Matthew 27:62-66)*

The tomb was closed by rolling a great stone over the entrance. Then two thick metal pegs were banged into the rock wall tightly against each side of the great stone. These two pegs were then linked by a chain, and after that the Roman seal was attached. To break that seal would mean death.

So secure was it made, that no one could break it open – and Roman guards were ordered to watch it.

Humanly speaking, they had won.





*Joseph's Tomb No 1 – which he gave away to Jesus*



*The tomb today*

## **6 SURPRISE VISITOR**

Any supernatural element intruding into this, is out of the Sanhedrin's thoughts.

But, unseen to everybody, a heavenly host surrounds the burial spot. Angels that in strength are guarding the tomb, and waiting to welcome the Prince of Life. And behold, there is a great earthquake. For a heavenly being descends from heaven. Clothed with radiance from the Creator Himself, this messenger leaves the heavenly courts.

The bright beams of God's glory go before him, illuminating his pathway. His countenance is like lightning, and his clothing as snow. And for fear of him the keepers shake, and become as dead men.

Now, priests and rulers, where is your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power, are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the messengers of God. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Lucifer fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem announced Jesus' birth.

The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to earth.

The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, "Son of God, come forth. Your Father calls you."

As he exits the tomb in majesty and glory, the angel host bow down in adoration before him and welcome him with praise.

The decree of heaven has loosed the captive. Mountains piled upon mountains over His tomb could not have prevented Him from coming forth.

### **A clue that someone else used his tomb**

My first visit to the site was a powerful experience.

Entering that ancient tomb, which is still there just north of Jerusalem, one is impressed with the size. Certainly, only a rich man could have afforded a tomb such as this. Inside the tomb, to the right, was a spot for the owner of the tomb to be laid – and close to that, another spot, perhaps for his wife. To the left, a large room was cut out for mourners to stand.

But this tomb was NOT used by the person for whom it had been cut. Inside the tomb, one section carved out of the rock to fit one man, had clearly been enlarged for someone else – someone who was taller than the man for whom the tomb had been measured. The hastily cut out section of about six inches more to make room for the feet indicates that not the owner, but some other person, was laid in this rich man's tomb.

The ancient record says that Joseph took the body of Jesus and “laid it in his own new tomb”, “wherein was never man yet laid.” (*John 19:41*)

Indeed, it was a highly emotional experience... to stand alone inside that tomb, staring at the empty space.

And the truth crashed over me like an avalanche: Jesus, the One who had lain here, had actually died for me. Personally.

That was overwhelming. It shook me.

### **So what happened to Joseph?**

Soon I got to thinking about the man who stuck his neck out in donating that tomb for the burial of Jesus.

Joseph must have known that he would be in the firing line, after that.

So what really happened to that man - Joseph of Arimathea?

Did he survive the rage of Jesus' enemies? Was there any information concerning him?

We do know that after Jesus broke out of the tomb, sorrow turned into triumph and an unquenchable zeal to tell the world. Joseph was no longer guardian over a dead body, but over a greater treasure - Christ's sacred mission on earth.

As it turned out, Joseph was to become a guardian of all the beloved against the arch-enemy. He began to dedicate himself to his amazing destiny. His wealth would be channeled in this direction, from now on.

As Peter, Paul and others travelled to proclaim the Good News, Joseph himself was to plant the roots of Christianity in a location where it would flourish and never perish.

## 7 JOSEPH A MARKED MAN

After Joseph of Arimathea had buried Jesus in his own tomb, he was a marked man. The religious leaders were infuriated.

The 4th century *Evangelium Nicodemi* says that Joseph was imprisoned by those leaders, but was miraculously delivered.

This and other events simply enraged them.

To say that Jesus' disciples were causing a stir, would be an understatement. Since the resurrection, the disciples - now called apostles - had become courageous. "Filled with the Holy Spirit" and strengthened with a courage they had not known before, they hurried into the streets and began speaking about Jesus.

In the days that followed, thousands of people were convicted in their hearts and made a personal commitment to Jesus and were baptised. The news just kept going.

Such success brought opposition from the Establishment. They arrested the speakers, threatened them, whipped and even imprisoned them.

The response of the apostles was to become even more courageous. When ordered not to speak, they answered the authorities, "Is it right in God's eyes for us to obey you rather than God? Judge for yourselves. We cannot possibly give up speaking of things we have seen and heard." (*Acts 4:19,20 NEB*)

No wonder they were so astonishingly successful!

You see, they were not discussing philosophical ideas which might, or on the other hand might not, have some merit.

Since the resurrection, they had actually seen Jesus, talked with him, eaten with him, walked dusty roads with him. They knew that what they were saying was true. They knew well that peoples' eternal lives depended on him. Without the Messiah, all mankind was doomed.

When again arrested, they told the authorities, "There is no salvation in anyone else at all, for there is no other name under heaven granted to men, by which we may receive salvation." (*Acts 4:12 NEB*)

Now an evil, brooding passion for vengeance seized upon the ruling priesthood of the Sanhedrin. In secret meetings, they plotted a campaign of persecution to the death.

And this is where Saul enters the picture.

### **Saul the murderer**

The 'Gestapo' of the Sanhedrin was placed under the control of the vengeful Saul.

He lost no time. Quickly and viciously, he hunted down followers of 'The Way', as Christianity was at first called. Openly and in secret, he struck without mercy. According to records of the time, the prisons were crammed with victims.

His first notable victim was Stephen, who had led a brilliant defence of Jesus before the Sanhedrin. Now he was defying the Sadducees by preaching throughout the city. Fate now caught up with Stephen. He was dragged from his pulpit and publicly stoned to death for speaking about Jesus.

Saul's henchmen enjoyed their victory. And Saul himself was ecstatic, holding the coats of the killers who did this dastardly act.

Stephen died by the gate that still bears his name.

After this, a reign of terror broke out in Jerusalem. No follower of 'The Way' was safe from their bloody hands. Now it was a blind, cruel, unreasonable, black hatred.

## Joseph versus Saul

As the havoc continued, Joseph fearlessly protected men and women. At every opportunity he stood as a tower of strength.

How Saul hated Joseph! But he was aware of Joseph's influence. Every fibre of his body was bursting to get Joseph. But he couldn't do it... not yet!

And Saul grew more furious. There can be little doubt that Joseph's wealth – and his ships - aided the Christian underground in eluding Saul's 'Gestapo'.

But Saul waited his opportunity. It would come soon.

## **8 UNABLE TO STOP IT**

Try as they might to stop the news about Jesus' resurrection, the enemies of Jesus could not stem the tide. Prophecy foretold it. The message of 'Jesus, The Way, the Truth and the Life' would reach the whole world as a witness to the nations.

The persecution began to backfire. It was by this very persecution that the Christians were scattered. And everywhere they went, they took 'The Way' with them. Seed was planted to spring up in new localities.

As we for the first time discover more of the ancient writings and parchments for centuries filed away in great libraries, more evidence of these events is surfacing. Also old martyrologies and menologies have now been partly explored. And what an astonishing story they tell! Much of this evidence can at last be told.

### **'The Way' goes to Britain**

There is one more clue we must establish before continuing the story of Joseph of Arimathea. It is widely assumed that Christianity in England was founded by Augustine, sent there in 597 AD on a mission by Pope Gregory.

Nothing could be further from the truth! Augustine, after being in Britain for just three years, sent a letter to Gregory, in which he said:

“In the Western confines of Britain, there is a certain royal island of large extent, surrounded by water, abounding in all the beauties of nature and necessities of life. In it the first neophytes of catholic law, God beforehand acquainting them, found a church constructed by no human



art, but by the hands of Christ Himself, for the salvation of His people.”  
(St. Augustine, *Epistolae ad Gregorium Papum*)

Well, however we take Augustine's words, amazingly enough there is a fund of early documentary evidence that Britain received the gospel of Jesus Christ soon after Jesus' resurrection.

One of Britain's earliest historians was the monk “Gildas the Wise”. In 550, he penned the following lines:

“We certainly know that Christ, the true Son, afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts to our Island in the last year of Tiberius Caesar.” (Gildas, *De Exidio Britanniae*)

According to Roman history, Tiberius Caesar reigned for 23 years. His last year was 37 AD. Since the resurrection of Jesus was in 31 AD. (see my book *Ark of the Covenant*, Chapter 17), then the gospel arrived in Britain just six years after Jesus rose from the dead.

The early Christian writer Tertullian (155 - 222 AD) declared:

“The extremities of Spain, the various parts of Gaul, the regions of Britain which have never been penetrated by Roman armies, have received the religion of Christ.” (Tertullian, *Tertullian Defensor Fidei*, p.179)

Now this is an interesting statement, because Roman Britain had been established gradually from the days of Julius Caesar in 55 BC. But the regions of Devon, Cornwall and Somerset (known then as the Land of Dumnonii) had never been penetrated by the Roman armies. And this is further proof that the Christian message was already established on that “certain royal island” mentioned by Augustine, and which we now recognize as Glastonbury.

(But of course the whole area has long since been drained, and Glastonbury is no longer an island. However, much of the ground around Glastonbury is still below sea level, and becomes marshy in wet weather.)

Another lead comes from the Church Councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1417), Sienna (1424) and Basle (1434), through whom it was written:

“The churches of France and Spain must yield in points of antiquity and precedence to that of Britain, as the latter church was founded by Joseph

of Arimathea immediately after the passion of Christ.” (A. and R. Eadle, *The Prophetic Telegraph*, No.76, p.5)

And Roman Catholic Archbishop Ussher (1550 - 1613) wrote:

“The British National Church was founded AD 36, 160 years before heathen Rome confessed Christianity.” (Archbishop Ussher, *Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*)

According to an inscription in the vestry of the church of St. Peter-Upon-Cornhill in London, that local church was founded in 179 AD in the time of Lucius, Christian king of Britain.

In Britain about 300 AD, 10,000 Christians, including bishops, died for their faith under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, which was three hundred years before Augustine ever set foot on British soil.

Mind boggling, isn't it? Another common misconception has come crashing down.

### **Augustine did *NOT* introduce Christianity to Britain**

Here is history we never knew existed. So it WASN'T Augustine who introduced Christianity to savages in the 6th century!

Before we leave this point, here is a final quotation on the matter.

Sabellius, Roman Catholic prelate and theologian, who was excommunicated by Pope Calixtus in 220, writing in 250 AD, said:

“Christianity was privately confessed elsewhere, but the first nation that produced it as their religion and called it Christian, after the name of Christ, was Britain.” (A. and R. Eadle, *The Prophetic Telegraph*, No.76, p.5)

When Augustine was sent from Rome in the 6th century, Britain had already known Christianity for 500 years! Primitive, pure Christianity.

It was former American president Franklin D. Roosevelt who said, “All histories should be rewritten in truth.”

## 9 CAST ADRIFT

But back to our story on Joseph of Arimathea... the man who had given his own tomb to Jesus.

We left him in the land of Judea, fearlessly protecting men and women from the persecution of Saul's 'Gestapo'. At every opportunity Joseph stood as a tower of strength. And Saul was growing more furious. There can be little doubt that Joseph's wealth - and his ships - aided the Christian underground in eluding Saul's 'Gestapo'.

So what happened to Joseph?

### Cast adrift in a boat

It is the year AD 35. (Boroniuss, *Annales Ecclesiastica*, Tom. 1, f.327, 1601)

The scene moves down to the coast... to Joppa.

"Get in!" shrieks the uniformed officer. "There's room for one more."

He nudges the woman off the quay. She stumbles, almost crashing, into the boat. Stabs of pain shoot up her leg as she strikes something.

Marcella sighs... and looks around her. There is Joseph... Lazarus... and twelve others crammed in with her. She knows every one. All dear friends. One of them smiles at her.

Another boat comes in close, to tow them out to sea. Four strong men give their craft a push.

From now on, they are castaways. Without oars or sails. At the mercy of the Mediterranean.

Yet... not afraid. That is the wonderful part. Each is very calm and at peace with God.

Several medieval traditions agree that Joseph was cast adrift on a boat, from which oars and sails had been removed. We do not know the origin of these accounts.

As for Joseph and his party, they were being put out to sea. Joseph had made his choice. All his wealth was no longer important to him. He had something that was more precious.

**“I’ll never set eyes on you again, Joseph... forever!”**

One could see this as a malicious act of the Sanhedrin ‘Gestapo’. Saul dared not openly destroy the respected Joseph (which would have brought down ignominy on his own head). And so finally he thought up something shrewder. He could keep this fairly quiet. And it was hoped that this treachery would eventually consign Joseph and his companions to a watery grave.

So very quietly, Joseph and his friends were rounded up, hustled down to the coast, then herded into a small boat with no safety equipment.

According to the records, Joseph was then aged 51 and Saul 37.

Saul smugly believed this was the end of the story. He would never have to look upon Joseph again.

But how little did the Sanhedrin foresee that, by this subtle act in ridding themselves of this hated band, the very hope for their destruction would be overruled by an act of providence!

### **Others exiled with him**

Do we have any further information in the records?

One snippet comes from the pen of Cardinal Baronius, who asserts that he obtained his information from ancient documents in the Vatican Library. (We do know that many important documents have been hidden away here, which ought to be public property.)

Baronius quotes Frederic Mistral (1859) and earlier (unnamed) sources, saying:

“These were the names of the castaways - Joseph of Arimathea, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Martha, Lazarus, Eutropius, Salome, Clean, Saturninus, Mary Magdalene, Marcella (maid to the Bethany sisters), Maximin, Martial, Trophimus, and Sidonius.” (Frederic Mistral, *Mireio*)

But a good number of other sources from early times (which I have not personally seen) state emphatically that Mary the mother of Jesus also accompanied Joseph.

John the apostle, who, after the crucifixion, was to care for Mary as though she were his own mother, was apparently unable to fulfill this task when on apostolic missions. After ministering at Ephesus, he had entrusted her to Joseph of Arimathea, who, as we have noted, was reportedly Mary's uncle and sole surviving relative.

### **Voyage to Marseilles**

Another ancient manuscript contains the following account of the castaways' journey from Palestine to France:

“Leaving the shores of Asia, and favored by an east wind, they went round about, down the Tyrrhenian Sea, between Europe and Africa, leaving the city of Rome and all the land of Italy to the right. Then happily turning their course to the right, they came near the city of Marseilles, in the Viennoise province of the Gauls, where the river Rhone is received by the sea. There, having called upon God, the Great King of all the world, they parted, each company going to the province where the Holy Spirit had directed them, presently preaching everywhere, ‘the Lord working with them, and confirming His word with signs following.’ ”  
(Rabanus Maurus, *Acts of Magdalen*)

The records show that Joseph of Arimathea, together with his band of castaways, landed at Marseilles in the south of France.

Other sources tell us that this was the center of evangelism for the apostle Philip, who became a dear friend of Joseph. (Isidore, *Historia*)

## **10 ENTER THE DRUIDS**

Joseph did not stay long in Gaul.

Upon learning that Joseph had landed in Gaul, a Druid delegation from the British Isles was swiftly despatched to meet with him there. They were anxious to obtain the information first hand. Contrary to the false accounts of later historians, it was not a confrontation. There was no argument, no bloodshed.

Now, you may ask, why would pagan, sun-worshipping, child-sacrificing Druids be interested in Joseph?

Unfortunately, we have been brainwashed with many false stories about the past. In our present study, we find ourselves exploding four of these myths:

1. That the Romans conquered Britain. FALSE.
2. That the invading Romans found only uncivilised savages there. FALSE.
3. That Britain was pagan until Augustine brought Christianity from Rome. FALSE.
4. That the Druids of Britain were pagans who practised human sacrifice. FALSE.

This propaganda was deliberately promoted by their enemies, to defame a gentle people they could neither coerce nor conquer.

## **World's best education centers**

At that time the Druidic universities were the largest in the world, both in size and attendance. Records from that time list sixty large universities, with an average attendance of over 60,000 students. (Gildas, *Cottonian Ms.* See also Morgan, *History of Britain*, pp.62-65) This fact is substantiated both by Greek and Roman testimony. Records affirm that the noble and wealthy of Rome and other nations sent their children to Britain to study law, science and religion.

## **Religious integrity**

Examination of the ground around and under the altar at Stonehenge by the eminent archaeologist Sir Flinders Petrie has completely demolished such accusations. His discovery of only the fossilized bones of sheep and goats established, rather, the affinity of the Druid religion with the patriarchal Hebrew faith. In each case the sacrificial burnt offerings were as stated in the biblical record.

Organized by Hu Gadarn (Hugh the Mighty) the faith took on the name of Druid. Some claim that the term 'Druid' is derived from the Keltic word 'Dreus', meaning 'an oak', from their custom of worshipping in the open within the oak groves of the island. However, it is more likely derived from 'Druthin', which means 'Servant of Truth'. The motto of the Druids was, in fact, 'The Truth against the World'.

## **Druids awaited the Messiah**

The Druid Triads emphasised the omniscience of One God, the coming of the Messiah and life beyond the grave. They believed that the Coming One would sacrifice his life to atone for each man's sins.

They looked for the coming of a "Curer of all ills", who was symbolised by the emblem of the mistletoe – which was identical to the expected "Branch" of which Israel's prophets spoke.

An interesting statement was made by an arch-Druid of the early Christian days, named Taliesin:

"Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our teacher, and we never lost His teaching. Christianity was a new thing in

Asia, but there never was a time when the Druids of Britain held not its doctrines.” (Frederick Haberman, *Tracing Our Ancestors*, p.88)

Research now suggests that the Druids, simultaneously with the wise men of Persia, discovered in the sky the Star of Prophecy, which heralded the long-expected One who was to lighten the world – “the Star” that should “arise out of Jacob”.

And here is an astonishing fact: not only did they know of the coming Messiah, His actual name was known to them – hundreds of years before Jesus Christ actually appeared! It was a name familiar on the lips of every Briton. This has astounded students of theology.

### **They even knew the coming Messiah’s name**

Let me explain.

In the ancient Celtic Triads it was recorded:

“The Lord our God is One.  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be  
Ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the  
King of Glory shall come in.  
Who is the King of Glory? The Lord Yesu;  
He is the King of Glory.” (George F. Jowett, *The Drama of the Lost Disciples*, p.78)

Did you notice? The Druidic priesthood knew the name ‘Yesu’ (‘Jesus’) long beforehand. The name ‘Yesu’ was incorporated in the Druidic Godhead. In Britain the name ‘Jesus’ was always the pure Celtic ‘Yesu’. It never changed. (Procopius, *De Gothici*, bk. 3)

Druidism’s influence on the ancient world, as well as its peaceful and ready reception of the Christian faith, proves its noble structure. Druidism prepared the way for Christianity in Britain.

### **Similarity between Druidism and Christianity**

It is noteworthy that Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, as well as the Claudian and Diocletian decrees recognised the similarity between Christianity and Druidism. These Roman persecutors made acceptance of Druidic and Christian faith a capital offence, punishable by death.



This mutual understanding between the Druids and those who were becoming Christians readily opened the door to general acceptance of 'The Way', as it was then called. So it can be no accident that the refugee followers of 'The Way' found a natural haven in Gaul, and that their apostolic leaders found an even safer sanctuary in Britain.

As we have already noted, Joseph, through his tin mining interests in Cornwall and Devon, had a long, well established association with the Britons. The comings and goings of his ships would have undoubtedly kept the British informed of world events. They were also in regular contact with their brothers in Gaul.

### **Druids recognise the prophecy as fulfilled**

Long before Joseph arrived in Gaul, the news of Jesus' crucifixion had come to their ears. This scandalous event had become a cause of grave concern to the Druidic people. With their patriarchal faith and prophetic knowledge, the Druidic leaders recognized the death of Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy.

"We know about Him. We've been waiting for Him!"

So it was that with an open acceptance, they now enthusiastically urged Joseph to head their British faith. And from that time onward, the old religion in Britain and Gaul, and the name Druid, began to be superseded by the Christian faith and the name Christian.

## **11 DESTINATION BRITAIN**

Records state that before Joseph departed Gaul, Philip consecrated him for the work in Britain.

And Baronius writes:

“From Massilla (Marseilles) Joseph and his company passed into Britain... preaching the gospel there.” (Baronius, *Ecclesiastical Annals*)

John Capgrave, a voluminous writer of English history, quotes an ancient manuscript which asserted that:

“Philip sent from Gaul a hundred and sixty disciples to assist Joseph and his companions.” (John Capgrave, *De Sancto Joseph ab Aramathea*) These were sent progressively.

You might wonder, who were the others who sailed with Joseph from Gaul to Britain?

Baronius quotes from Mistral, in *Mireio*, and another ancient document in the Vatican Library. He names them one by one:

- Mary, wife of Cleopas
- Mary Magdalene
- Martha
- Marcella, the Bethany sisters' maid
- Lazarus

- Maximin
- Eutropius
- Martial
- Salome
- Trophimus
- Clean
- Sidonius (Restitutus)
- Saturninus
- Joseph of Arimathea

All other writers speak of Joseph and twelve companions. You may notice, however, that fourteen are listed here, including Joseph.

### **Mary 'the virgin' travels with Joseph**

Many other accounts insist there was another member to the group who was not recorded in the Mistral report - Mary, the mother of Jesus. Apart from historical tradition, there is a substantial amount of extant documentary testimony substantiating the presence of Jesus' mother on this journey.

Since the disciple John had appointed Joseph as her guardian, or 'paranymphos', she had to be with him. John himself ended up an exile on the island of Patmos, off the coast of Turkey. And we know that Mary remained in Joseph's safe keeping until her death.

This event in British history may come as a surprise to you. However, let me assure you that there is a mass of corroborative evidence by many reliable Greek and Roman authorities. And the the *Yewish Encyclopaedia* affirms the same, under 'Arles'.

The studious pronouncement by Cardinal Baronius is not merely revealing. It is incontrovertible. He delved into the treasured archives of the Vatican at Rome. You can be sure the Vatican would be the first to repudiate any testimony from their archives to support the priority claim of Christian Britain, if it were untrue.

This much we can say with certainty: Joseph DID come to Britain. And the Christian gospel WAS first brought to Glastonbury.

## Arrival in Britain

Bidding farewell to Philip and their friends in Gaul, Joseph and his group set sail for Britain in company with the Druidic delegation.

Reaching the shores of Britain, they rounded Land's End and sailed up the waterway of the west, the Severn Sea.

At length they came within sight of a distant lofty green hill, Glastonbury Tor. They sailed up the estuary of the Brue and the Parrot, until about twelve miles inland, where they came upon a cluster of islands.



*Glastonbury Tor*

## **12 THE ISLE OF AVALON**

The travellers' hearts swelled with joy as they looked upon the scene. It was a beautiful spot indeed. So many lovely little islands.

The most majestic of these was an island whose shores were sheltered in apple orchards. This was the "Sacred Isle of Avalon". The island derived its name from Aval, Celtic for Apple.

Here Joseph of Arimathea and his companions were met by another assemblage of the Druidic priesthood, King Guiderius and his brother Arviragus, and a gathering of nobles.

Arviragus was Prince of the Silures, in the Dukedom of Cornwall. He was the son of King Cunobelinus (Shakespeare's "Cymbeline"), as well as cousin to the celebrated warrior Caradoc, called by the Romans, Caractacus.

These noble persons represented the Silurian dynasty, the strongest warrior kingdom in all Britain. The later Tudor kings and queens descended from them.

Arviragus' first act was to present to Joseph, as a perpetual gift, free of tax, twelve hides of land, or a total of 1,920 acres.

Sanctuary at last! Now they were safe and free!

This was the first of many charters this historic spot was to receive from the kings and queens of Britain. One can find these charters officially

recorded in the British Royal archives. In the famous *Domesday Book* of William I, first Norman king of England, AD 1066, we find the detailed record of this original charter.

### **The famous thorn tree**

It is reported that the new arrivals made their way up the hill. Joseph, weary from his travel, stopped to rest, thrusting his staff into the ground. He is said to have left the staff there, stuck into the ground. It later took root and blossomed into a thorn tree.



*A descendant of the original thorn tree*

To this day the spot bears the name it received in Joseph's time – 'Weary All Hill'.

For a tree to sprout from a stick is not at all uncommon. Tree experts assure us that under favourable circumstances it is a natural process.

But there is one thing different about this Glastonbury thorn tree. Over the centuries this individual tree became famous for its twice-a-year blossoming habit – both in winter and in May each year – a totally unique phenomenon for a thorn tree.

Every year without fail it blossoms in December (the Middle East flowering season) and in May (the British flowering season). It blossoms both those times – the only thorn tree in the world to do so!

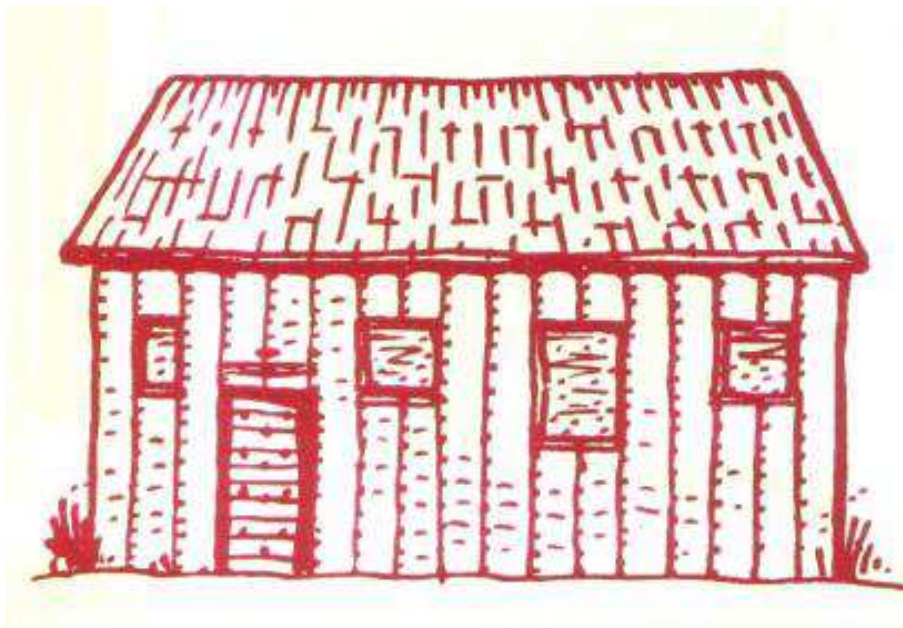
The original tree survived until the regime of Oliver Cromwell, AD 1649-1660. Sometime during this period, it was cut down by a fanatical Puritan.

Fortunately, its scion, already planted, survived to continue the strange phenomenon, just as had the mother tree. It can be seen at Glastonbury today, healthy, thriving and gloriously blooming with snow white petals every year at the same two seasons. Other shoots taken from it and grafted to wild stock, bloom twice a year in the same unexplainable manner.

### **Joseph's wattle-built church**

Soon after their arrival, Joseph and his helpers built a place of worship. Their church was constructed out of wattle, thatched with reed.

For their church they were not choosing a material that was inferior. Wattle happened to be the common building material in Britain in those days. The British constructed their homes of wattle, in much the same way that cabins of log and mud and houses of sod were commonly built in the colonizing years of North America.



This building was 60 feet in length and 26 feet wide, following the pattern of the Hebrew tabernacle. The construction was finished between 38 and 39 AD.

### **Man-made hill bigger than Cheops pyramid**

Behind it rose the great Tor, a Druid ‘high place’ of worship. This tor (hill) was a hand-piled mound of earth more enormous in its dimensions than the Great Pyramid of Egypt! The terraces which wound around it to its summit can even still be traced.

The Druids used to study the heavens from astronomical observatories on tors such as this. In fact, the Greeks and Romans extolled the Druids as the best teachers of astronomy.

### **The gospel spreads**

Soon, with the help of his Druidic hosts, Joseph and his companions went throughout Britain to share the Christian way of life.

Polydore Vergil (1470 - 1555), the learned Italian historian living in England, wrote:

“Britain, partly through Joseph of Arimathea, partly through Fugatus and Damianus, was of all kingdoms the first that received the Gospel.”

*(Polydore Vergil, Anglicae Historiae Libri, Liber II)*

Here these faithful, dedicated people were able to teach the good news of Love and Truth in all its beauty and simplicity – safe and free from the persecution of the Jewish Sanhedrin and from the tyranny of pagan Rome.

They were protected by the valiant might of the Silures, whom Rome could never conquer. And so they devoted their lives to the teachings of their Lord, in the quiet restful sunlight of this green land.



## **13 SAUL'S "GESTAPO" BEGINS TO COLLAPSE**

In trying to prevent the spread of Christianity by casting Joseph adrift in a boat, Saul's Gestapo had failed... miserably! The despised ones had survived – and found freedom to spread the Good News without fear of molestation.

Saul's organisation began to collapse soon after. And here is what triggered it.

Filled with revenge and hate, Saul was personally on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians there. Suddenly there was a burst of light. Saul saw the Being who appeared. Then he was instantly struck blind. He heard the Person's voice. To those with him, it sounded like thunder. But Saul heard the words, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

A conversation followed. The speaker identified Himself as Jesus. Saul was then instructed where to go and what to do. Still blind, the 'Gestapo' chief was led into Damascus. His sight was restored in the house of a Christian.

Saul's life was dramatically and unexpectedly changed forever! He was converted to 'The Way'.

This linked chain of events was so sensational, no one believed it at first. Even the Christians were skeptical.

The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem were stunned. In fury, they ordered an all-out manhunt. Instructions were to kill Saul on sight. The hunter became the hunted!

### **Saul (Paul) sets the world alight**

Saul's fearless testimony (now as Paul the apostle) began to set the world on fire. This was one of the turning points in early Christianity.

He travelled constantly. In every city he went, the result was either a revival or a riot. His enemies pursued him from city to city.

Paul had been born a freeman by Roman law, in Tarsus, which was a southern city of Asia Minor. So when he was ultimately arrested for his new Christian faith, Paul appealed to the Roman Emperor. This decision was fateful. It was to lead him to Rome itself.

## 14 AMAZING TWIST OF EVENTS

And here we come to an odd sequence of events... a twist in Paul's destiny that would eventually take him to Britain.

### Emperor Claudius: "Exterminate Christianity"

Roman records of the time reveal that the Roman Emperor Claudius issued an edict for the express purpose of invading of Britain. The Edict of Claudius was for a war of religious extermination, designed to crush Christianity at its source.

By this time, Rome had conquered "all the world" except Britain.

The Emperor selected Aulus Plautius as his Commander-in-Chief for the invasion of Britain. The personal aid-de-camp to Aulus Plautius was *Rufus Pudens Pudentius*. (This last name is an important link. Please remember it. We shall meet it again later.)

Aulus Plautius landed in Britain in AD 43, making his headquarters Chichester.

In the various battles that followed, to his surprise, the Roman general realised that he was confronted with a military intelligence that matched his own, as well as an army of fearless ferocity, such as had never been encountered by the veteran soldiery of Rome.

In fact, for nine years the greatest Roman generals, skilled in conquering nations in Africa, Asia, and Europe, failed to take Britain. The Romans had never met their match. They fought on the sands, on the fields, in the streets and the lanes and by-ways, to the very death.

The British commander, Silurian King Caradoc (Caractacus) and his family had accepted the “new” Christian faith and some of them had been baptised by Joseph of Arimathea.

The British were fighting in defence of their new faith, the Gospel of Jesus.

Brutally destroying all in their path, yet the Romans were never able to pierce through to their objective, the Isle of Avalon, where Joseph and his Bethany companions had planted the saving message of Jesus Christ.

For the first time, the Romans met women warriors fighting side by side with their men. For the first time the Roman soldiery heard the amazing motto shouted by the British, “The Truth Against the World”.

The Roman campaign in Britain went badly against the Romans.

### **Emperor calls a truce**

After two years of ceaseless fighting, Claudius saw the futility of the struggle and the terrible drainage on his finest Legions. In AD 45, at Brandon Camp, he took advantage of a temporary reverse against the British to seek peace through an armistice.

During the 6-month truce, Caractacus and his co-general Arviragus were invited to Rome to discuss the possibilities for peace. Hoping to clinch the peace, the Emperor offered his daughter Venus Julia in marriage to Arviragus. And amazingly, the marriage took place during the truce period.

Here is the strangest of twists to history – that of a Christian British king becoming son-in-law of the pagan Roman emperor Claudius, who had sworn to exterminate Christianity and Britain.

### **The war continues**

But the truce failed, and war was resumed for another 7 years.

The British royal commander Caractacus now found himself confronted by four of the greatest commanders in Roman history. But their attacks were futile.

In desperation they sent an urgent appeal back to the emperor himself for help. Emperor Claudius hastened to Britain to direct the battle personally and save the day for Rome.

It took the united military genius of four great Roman generals, the Emperor and an army that vastly outnumbered the British, to get the victory. This in itself is a great tribute to the military excellence of Caractacus.

In battle, so it seemed, he was undefeatable. The only option left to the Romans was to get him betrayed by someone on his own side.

### **British royal family betrayed**

And so it happened. Finally, the British, under Caractacus, met destruction at Clune, Shropshire, in AD 52.

The British royal commander, his wife, his daughter Gladys, and his brother, were betrayed by Caractacus' own cousin Aricia – taken prisoner while asleep, then chained and handed over to the Romans.

They were shipped to Rome. The news of their capture sped like wild-fire throughout Rome. (Tacitus, *Annals*, bk. XII, ch.36) A warrior who had repeatedly out-manoeuvred the greatest combination of Roman military strategy ever, was, even now as a prisoner, still looked upon with awe mixed with admiration.

Heavily chained, he walked proudly with his relations and family behind the chariot of the Emperor, through the crowded streets of Rome, to his trial.

On the day of the trial, Gladys refused to be separated from her father, though it was against Roman law for a woman to enter the Senate. (*Ibid.*)

Never before or after was such a challenging speech heard by the Roman Tribunal in the Roman Senate. It is the one solitary case in history. Spoken by a Christian Briton, vibrant with the courageous conviction of a free man.

His speech was recorded by the Roman historian Tacitus (Tacitus, *Annals*, 12:37)

As the trial ended, Emperor Claudius rendered a remarkable verdict – one which has puzzled students of Roman history. Why did not the emperor demand the customary Roman revenge?

Was it because of the already strange fact that his own daughter had married a Christian general? In any case, the extraordinary verdict was that Caractacus, with all members of the royal Silurian family be immediately set free.

The only restriction was that they must remain at Rome, on parole for 7 years, and that they were never to bear arms against Rome.

A son was permitted to return to Britain and rule over the Silurian kingdom located in Wales, in the stead of his father.

It must be remembered that Claudius hated Christianity. He was at that very time waging persecution against known Christians.

Christians at Rome were unorganised, moving in fear. They met secretly in small home groups. The majority of them, however, went underground, mostly in catacombs among the dead. Roman soldiers would waylay these worshippers as they entered or left the catacombs. To avoid capture the Christians made secret entrances and outlets.

But as for this royal captive family, Christians though they were, the Emperor Claudius had a great respect for them and “pardoned” them.

He also greatly admired the character and extraordinary beauty of Caractacus’ younger daughter Gladys. This grew into a deep paternal affection – and he adopted her... despite the fact that she was a devout Christian! He renamed her *Claudia*.

It is quite surprising that the Emperor did not require her to abandon her Christian religion.

The very next year AD 53, at the age of 17, she married *Rufus Pudens Pudentius*, who had fought in the Roman campaign against the British. Rufus had become a Christian. They were married at the the Palatium Britannicum (the British Palace) in Rome. Caractacus bestowed the

palace as a bridal gift upon them, with all its spacious grounds. Adjoining it, were two magnificent baths, the largest in Rome.

And here is where Paul re-enters the picture... five years on. He was now around 60 years of age.

### **Paul arrives in Rome**

Arriving in Rome in AD 58, Paul met up with his half-brother, this same Roman Senator Rufus Pudens.

The known facts seem to indicate that the mother of Rufus and Paul was now living with the Pudens family. Paul, writing a letter to those at Rome prior to his arrival, said, “Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” (*Romans 16: 13*).

In another letter, this time to Timothy, a co-worker, Paul also mentions Claudia (*2 Timothy 4:21*). “Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia...” Rufus and Claudia now became close friends of Paul, entertaining him in their home.

Indications are that Paul came to live with the Pudens for eight of his ten years in Rome, and that “The children of Claudia were brought up at the knee of St. Paul.” (*Roman Martyrologies*).

The Pudens home also became a favourite place for other apostles to stay during their visits to this city.

In fact, the Pudens eventually donated their palatial home, the Palatium Britannicum, to be openly declared the first established Christian church at Rome. It was a magnificent property with large grounds.

And what a courageous act this must have been, with Nero, the mad Emperor, now sitting on the throne of the Caesars!

And here in the home of the Pudens, Paul planned one of his greatest adventures.

### **Paul establishes Rome’s first open church**

Up to now, a band of Christians had met secretly at the Pudens residence. Their “underground” church was led by a man called Hermes.

Now Paul proposed to openly establish the church in Rome, the capital of the Empire. The year was AD 58. And the honour of Bishop for this fledgling church was conferred upon Linus (Claudia's brother, and the son of Caractacus, the exiled British hero).

The whole family was now living here. They comprised the first Christian group meeting above ground in Rome.

In our own time, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has acknowledged that Linus was the first Bishop of Rome. This fact is not disputed.

Another false assumption comes crashing down – the assumption that Peter was the first Bishop. Not so.

In fact, the original church building (originally the Pudens' home) still stands in Rome, on Mons Sacer Way. It is now called St. Pudenziana.



*Façade of the Basilica Di S. Pudenziana at Rome*



A memorial was carved on its walls in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, following the execution of Praxedes, the youngest daughter of Pudens and Claudia. It says:

“In this sacred and most ancient of churches, known as that of Pastor (Hermas), dedicated by Sanctus Pius Papa (St. Paul), formerly the house of Sanctus Pudens, the Senator, and the home of the holy apostles, repose the remains of three thousand blessed martyrs which Pudentiana and Praxades, virgins of Christ, with their own hands interred.”

As noted, this inscription dates all the way back to the second century.

You notice, then, that it was Paul who established the first Christian church here, and not Peter. It was Linus who was the first Bishop here, and not Peter.

Meanwhile, Paul would be drawn to visit Britain. Eventually three factors could have persuaded Paul to do this.

### **An amazing twist of events**

But I want you now to notice this extraordinary coincidence. Or was it?

Before his capture by the Romans, Linus had been baptised in Britain. And who had baptised him? Joseph of Arimathea, none less! Joseph had also baptised Paul’s sister-in-law Claudia.

And now Linus, as an exile in Rome, was personally appointed as the First Bishop of the Christian church in Rome. And by whom? Who else but Paul!

So a man baptised by Joseph is now ordained by Paul!

Joseph the hunted... and Paul the hunter! The two former arch enemies... and the threads of their two lives beginning to merge. Can you imagine a more astonishing turn of events!?

Now notice some other things that were bringing them together.

### **3 factors draw Paul to Britain**

As mentioned earlier, there were possibly three factors that could have prompted Paul to eventually visit Britain.

### ***1 – The new British connection in his family***

The first was Claudia's family. For a start, Claudia the British princess (daughter of King Caractacus, betrayed into Roman hands) was now Paul's sister-in-law. Through her family, Paul became familiar with the situation in Britain. And his sympathies were aroused.

One can understand why Paul without much delay sent his friend and colleague Aristobulus, who had already come from Britain, to go back into an area of Britain where Joseph was not working. This was to pave the way for Paul's own visit later.

Unfortunately, the aged Aristobulus in his zeal journeyed far beyond the safe territory of the Silurians and he was to meet with a tragic end within one year of his return to Britain. This undoubtedly brought shock and sadness to Paul.

### ***2 – Some of Paul's converts had British connections***

Secondly, among the peoples to whom Paul addressed his epistles were the Galatians, who lived in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

The Galatians, a numerous branch of the Gauls of France, had pushed their way into Asia Minor (Turkey). With all the fiery nature of the Celtic race, they had invaded and subdued Italy and sacked Rome in the fourth century BC. (Ridgeway, *The Early Age of Greece*, vol. 1, p.356)

Not satisfied with this success, they broke into Asia Minor, and, settling there, became the founders of the province of Galatia.

Paul had already planted the gospel among the Galatians, in the heart of the large Celtic branch of the human family. The Celts (Galatae) of Galatia were of the same family, and spoke the same language as the Irish, Scots, British, Welsh and French. (Menzies, *Saint Columba of Iona*, pp. xi-xiii; Fitzpatrick, *Ireland and the Making of Britain*, p.160)

These Celts in Asia Minor had then taken Christianity to the Celts in Gaul (France). And from both the Celts of Asia Minor and the Celts of southern France the gospel was conveyed by sea to Ireland.

And this was another connection with the isles. Paul would have also been aware that the Gauls shared a common bond of religion with the Druids of Britain.

This must have deepened his desire to help boost the work in Britain.

### *3 – Paul’s heart was now for Joseph*

Thirdly, it would be reasonable that Paul would want to meet up with Joseph again. Years before, as the bitter, vengeful Saul, he had set Joseph adrift in a boat, hoping that would be the end of him... that he would never have to look upon Joseph’s face again.

Oh, but how things had changed! Paul felt for Joseph and all the people he had persecuted. He himself had now been persecuted by the same mob. He knew Joseph had forgiven him. But he owed it to Joseph. Now that they were both one in heart, mind and purpose, he felt so close to Joseph, he just wanted to throw his arms around him.

This new joy they could share together could perhaps bring them both comfort... make up for that painful, terrible act he had performed. There was nothing like the love Paul now had for Joseph. He felt a rapport that could bring them both joy.

He had wanted to be rid of Joseph forever. How he longed to see Joseph’s face now!

Before coming to Rome, Paul had already laid plans to go to Spain (*Romans 15:24*). And now he would go from there to Britain.

There are old documents which trace Paul’s journey to Britain. Paul landed, it is said, near where Portsmouth now stands. ‘Paul’s Grove’ commemorates the area. This was twenty years after the arrival in Britain of Joseph.

Paul knew his time was short, and he sought to make the best use of it in his fervent evangelizing mission. But we can be sure he was also aching to meet Joseph, whom he had persecuted.

And that eventual meeting... what a glorious event it must have been!

Joseph was now 79 and Paul 65. And 28 years had elapsed since Paul (then Saul) had pushed Joseph out to sea to die.

## Paul executed in Rome

On his final return to Rome, Paul was arrested for his faith.

From a prison cell prior to his execution, Paul would write a final letter to Timothy asking him to deliver his fond farewell to the ones closest to him on earth – to his sister-in-law Claudia, and her husband and his half-brother Pudens; to their children (Paul’s own nieces and nephews, whom he had personally taught); to Linus whom he had consecrated and appointed head of the church in Rome; to Eubulus (Claudia’s cousin) and to “them which are of the household of Aristobulus”.

Paul was beheaded for his faith on June 29, 67 AD.

Claudia and Pudens, with the help of their children, rescued his body from its initial burial place, to inter it in the private burial grounds of their own estate. And this is where they still all rest together.

This act of retrieving Paul’s body was a dangerous operation. Persecution of Christians was reaching fever pitch. Fortunately Pudens was a Senator and Claudia was still respected as the adopted daughter of the late Emperor Claudius. This couple still had influence with the Imperial Senate.

There is some similarity here with what Joseph of Arimathea had done. His wealth and influence had enabled him to claim the body of Jesus and lay it in his own tomb. Now the wealth and influence of Pudens and Claudia enabled them to rescue the mutilated body of Paul and rebury it in their own grounds. Their eldest children were at that time 12 and 13 years old respectively.

Amidst worsening persecutions, hoards of Christians were to be murdered. The Pudens family personally buried 3,000 of these on their own estate.

Claudia was mercifully spared the agony of seeing her four children butchered one by one for their faith. The first child to be executed was Pudentiana – in AD 107, on the eleventh anniversary of her father’s death. Claudia’s son Novatus was executed in AD 137. Her third child to be murdered – Timotheus – lived almost to 90, before suffering martyrdom in Rome. And Claudia and Pudens’ youngest daughter Praxedes was also executed.

## **15 JOSEPH'S END**

According to ancient sources, Joseph stayed in Glastonbury until the death of Mary fifteen years after arriving in Britain. On the basis of this chronology, she would have died in 52 AD. She was said to be buried in Glastonbury.

Surviving records inform us that Joseph frequently journeyed to Gaul to confer with fellow disciples, particularly Philip.

After the passing of Mary, Joseph is recorded as having returned to France for a few years, then again to Britain to work.

Most of Joseph's companions eventually returned to France. And French historical records are replete with traditions and mentions of each one, where they worked, how they lived and how they died. Lazarus, for example, became Bishop of Marseilles, living there for seven years before he died in 41 AD.

Joseph ministered in Britain until his death on July 27, 82 AD at the grand age of 98. Fifty-one years after Joseph had placed the body of Jesus in His Jerusalem tomb, Joseph now was laid to rest in a tomb in Britain.

The written testimony of Maelgwyn Llandaff, Lord of Anglesey and Snowdonia (450 AD) states:

“Joseph of Arimathea, the noble decurion, entered his perpetual sleep with his XI companions in the Isle of Avalon.” (Maelgwyn Llandaff, *Historia de Rebus Britannicis*)

Loving hands and heart laid him to rest among his companions who had preceded him in death, close beside the grave of Mary the virgin, and near to the tiny wattle church they had built over forty years earlier.

Cressy, in *Church History of Brittany*, writes: “Joseph was buried near the little wattle church he built.”

### **And what happened to the wattle church?**

Later, to protect it from dissolution, the wattle church built by Joseph’s group was encased in lead. In the year 630 the chapel of St. Mary’s was erected over it. It enclosed also the remains of Joseph and his band of missionaries.

The building survived intact until after the Norman invasion. Sadly, in 1184, a great fire gutted the whole abbey. And with it perished the structure of the first Christian church above ground.

Within a mile of the isle of Avalon was another island called Inis Wytren, or Glass Island. Excavations show that this was the site of a busy glass industry, for which the Britons were famous. Later the Saxons named it Glastonbury. It continues to be known by that name.

During the Saxon period, the land around the islands was drained, forming a plain. So the islands now cease to exist.

It’s a charming place, Glastonbury. This quiet little town is encircled by verdant meadows, all of them being part of the area given to Joseph.

### **Joseph’s tomb**

Is it possible to know where Joseph was buried?

Cressy writes:

“Joseph was buried near the little wattle church he built.” (Cressy, *Church History of Brittany*)

As we have just noted, eventually an abbey was built over the original site. It enclosed the wattle church encased in lead for its preservation, as well as the remains of Joseph and his band of missionaries. The magnificent ruins of Glastonbury Abbey are the remains of the church

erected over the very spot where Joseph and his friends built their first wattle church.



*Ruins of Glastonbury Abbey*

About 450 AD Maelgwyn of Avalon described Joseph's burial place as lying in the southern angle of the bifurcated line of the Oratorium of the church. This church is today known as the Church of St. Mary.

Lionel Smithett Lewis, former Vicar of Glastonbury, devoted most of the eighty-six years of his life to searching the age-old archives, examining ancient tomes, official documents and yellowed manuscripts. He was able to substantiate the validity of the story of the life and death of Joseph and the Bethany family at Avalon. He has also preserved the fascinating record of the church that Joseph built here. He writes:

“The body of St. Joseph, whose burial at the wattle church of St. Mary was recorded by Maelgwyn of Avalon, writing about AD 450, lay undisturbed till the year 1345, when Edward III gave his licence to John Bloom of London to dig for the body if the Abbot and monks permitted, and just as the discovery of the bones of King Arthur at Glastonbury in 1190 were recorded in far-away Essex by the monk Ralph de Coggeshall, so in a far-away monastery in 1367 we find a monk recording that ‘the bodies of Joseph of Arimathea and his companions were found at Glastonbury’.



“The remains of St. Joseph were put in a silver casket which could be raised at will from a stone sarcophagus, the base of a shrine to which the frequent pilgrimage was made. This stone altar tomb, the base of the shrine, like the Holy Thorn, survived the Reformation.” (Lionel Smithett Lewis, *St. Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury*, p.151)



*Joseph's Tomb No. 2*

In 1662, fanatical Puritans cut down Joseph's thorn tree, claiming it might become an object of worship. Fearing a similar fate might befall Joseph's stone sarcophagus, some others silently, hastily at night, removed it from its location in a ruined shrine and buried it in the nearby graveyard. It remained there unknown, for 266 years. In the autumn of 1928, the sarcophagus was exposed again by the elements, recognised and placed under the Arthurian window of St. Katherine's Chapel, in St. John the Baptist Church in Glastonbury. It rests there today.

The stone sarcophagus shows evidence of having been "wrenched" in haste from its original resting place. this was accomplished by some strong metal lever. The silver casket, which contained Joseph's bones, allegedly reposing in the tomb, are missing. However, the sarcophagus does contain a base ("plinth"), which would have held such a casket. (E. Raymond Capt, *The traditions of Glastonbury*, p.94)

Roger of Boston, in the 14th century, recorded that the tomb had an



epitaph attached to it across the stone lid of the sarcophagus, under the initials of Joseph of Arimathea (J. A.). In Latin were inscribed these immortal words:

“Ad Brittanos veni post Christum Sepelivi. Docui. Quievi.” (To the Britons I came after I buried the Christ. I taught, I have entered my rest.)

Simple words. But telling of a life filled with more tragedy, romance, and drama than any other inscription ever written.

Yes, I have seen Joseph’s two graves... the one in Jerusalem which he gave to Jesus... and the tomb he was given in England. To visit each of them was a moving experience.

This is a story like no other. I just had to tell you!