

Finding Golgotha and The Village of Bethphage

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News Letter 5854-029

The 2nd Year of the 4th Sabbatical Cycle

The 23rd year of the 120th Jubilee Cycle

The 10th day of the 8th month 5854 years after the creation of Adam

The 8th Month in the Second year of the Fourth Sabbatical Cycle

The 4th Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Sabbatical Cycle of Sword, Famines, and Pestilence

October 20, 2018

Shabbat Shalom to the Royal Family of Yehovah,

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

This year in Jerusalem for the Feast of Sukkot 2018 I had the great pleasure of taking my daughter and showing her the various sites. Although many asked me to be their tour guide again this year, I turned them all down and focused all my attention on my daughter and her alone. We did meet some brethren and went out to eat with them or spend the day with them on the Sabbath. But other than that, Natalie had me all to herself. I was excited about this but was unsure if Natalie was until the end of the Feast.

Our first stop was to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

She was excited to see the places where Jesus died and was buried. And was amazed at the lineup of Catholics as they bowed and prayed at each of the sacred places in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. After this, I took her over to the Garden Tomb which is another place that Jesus was killed at and buried. But as I showed her all the places where Jesus was supposed to have died and been buried she quickly grew upset at being shown so many false places and then not knowing what was real and what was fake news.

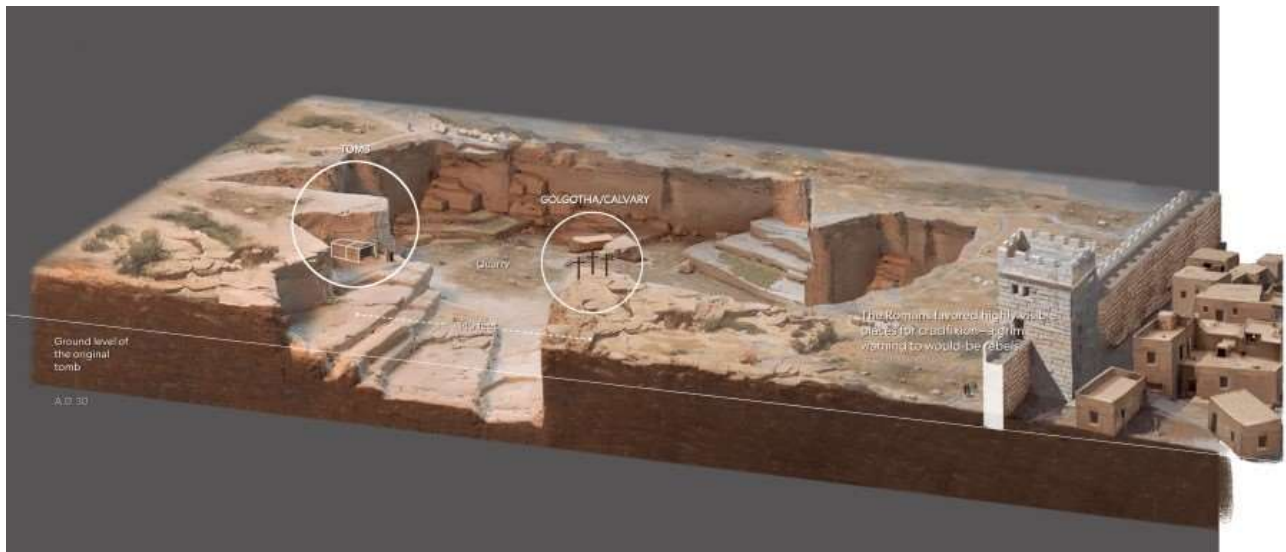
She felt that by touching these “sacred stones” she would become holy or at the least get closer to God. But as I explained these things to her and the history her holy Bubbles were being popped.

So let us begin to unravel the truth by first looking at the lies.

We will start with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and expose what it is and its history step by step. Natalie was very excited at coming into such a “Holy Place”.



The original site was purported to look like this in 30 AD. This is taken from [National Geographic](#) article on the tomb. The tomb today is known as the Edicule which was recently rebuilt and examined by archaeologists in 2016,



During the 2016 restoration of the Edicule, technicians used ground-penetrating radar and other tools to peer behind the shrine's walls. They were stunned to discover earlier walls still intact, including pieces of a tomb cut from the bedrock.

Recent study revealed parts of a tomb from Jesus' day. The "holy rock" hallowed as the bed on which Christ's body lay is covered by later slabs.

Here is the trailer to the video [at this link](#). And again [at this one](#). And finally [this one as well](#).

The altar contains part of the stone said to have been rolled away from Jesus' tomb by an angel.



The Edicule

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre also called the Church of the Resurrection or Church of the Anastasis by Orthodox Christians is a church in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The church contains, according to traditions dating back to at least the fourth century, the two holiest sites in Christianity: the site where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, at a place known as “Calvary” or “Golgotha”, and Jesus’s empty tomb, where he is said to have been buried and resurrected.[3] The tomb is enclosed by the 19th-century shrine, called the Aedicule (Edicule).

The main denominations sharing property over parts of the church are the Greek Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic and Roman Catholic, and to a lesser degree the Coptic Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox. Meanwhile, Protestants, including Anglicans, have no permanent presence in the Church. Some Protestants prefer The Garden Tomb, elsewhere in Jerusalem, as a more evocative site to commemorate Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.

So now we see something developing in our story. The Protestants and Anglicans have their own sacred places for the death and burial of Jesus.

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, the Roman emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD built a temple dedicated to the goddess Venus in order to bury the cave in which Jesus had been buried. [6][7] The first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great, ordered in about 325/326 that the temple be replaced by a church.[8] During the building of the Church, Constantine's mother, Helena, is believed to have rediscovered the tomb (although there are some discrepancies among authors).[6] Socrates Scholasticus (born c. 380), in his Ecclesiastical History, gives a full description of the discovery.[9]

The following two pictures are of the supposed tomb of Jesus that Hadrian builds the Temple of Venus over to hide the tomb.





This is the Church of Helena the mother of Constantine. To the right-hand side, you can see the stairs leading down to the so-called tomb of Jesus.



St Helen Chapel, or Church of St Helena, with its beautiful mosaic floor. This flooring was only laid in 2017 according to the notes below.



Traditional site of Golgotha

Constantine's church was built as two connected churches over the two different holy sites, including a great basilica (the Martyrium visited by Egeria in the 380s), an enclosed colonnaded atrium (the Triportico) with the traditional site of Golgotha in one corner, and a rotunda, called the Anastasis ("Resurrection" in Greek), which contained the remains of a rock-cut room that Helena and Macarius identified as the burial site of Jesus.

According to tradition, Constantine arranged for the rockface to be removed from around the tomb, without harming it, in order to isolate the tomb; in the centre of the rotunda is a small building called the Kouvouklion in Greek^[10] or the Aedicula in Latin,^[c] which encloses this tomb. The remains are completely enveloped by a marble sheath placed sometime in the fourteenth century, probably to prevent pilgrims from laying there hands on the original rock or taking small pieces as souvenirs ^[11] . However, there are several thick window wells extending through the marble sheath, from the interior to the exterior that are not marble clad. They appear to reveal an underlying limestone rock, which may be part of the original living rock of the tomb.

The church was built starting in 325/326, and was consecrated on 13 September 335. From pilgrim reports it seems that the chapel housing the tomb of Jesus was freestanding at first, and that the Rotunda was only erected around the chapel in the 380s.

The site of the Church had been a temple of Venus before Constantine's edifice was built. Hadrian's temple had actually been located there because it was the junction of the main north-

south road with one of the two main east-west roads and directly adjacent to the forum (which is now the location of the (smaller) Muristan); the forum itself had been placed, as is traditional in Roman towns, at the junction of the main north-south road with the (other) main east-west road (which is now El-Bazar/David Street). The temple and forum together took up the entire space between the two main east-west roads

In the south-east of the chapel, there is a chair which was reputed to be a seat that was sat in by Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine when she was looking for the True Cross. [1] There are two apses in the church, one dedicated to Saint Helena and one to the penitent thief on the cross. The chapel is modestly adorned in memory of Saint Helena's simplicity.

The chronicler William of Tyre reports on the renovation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the mid-12th century. The crusaders investigated the eastern ruins on the site, occasionally excavating through the rubble, and while attempting to reach the cistern where the True Cross was believed to have been found, they discovered part of the original ground level of Hadrian's temple enclosure; they decided to transform this space into a chapel dedicated to Helena, widening their original excavation tunnel into a proper staircase.

During 1973–1978 restoration works and excavations were made in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. To the east of the Chapel of St. Helena, the excavators discovered a void containing a 2nd-century drawing of a Roman ship,[2] two low walls which supported the platform of Hadrian's 2nd-century temple, and a higher 4th century wall built to support Constantine's basilica;[3][4] the Armenian authorities have recently converted this archaeological space into the Chapel of Saint Vartan, and created an artificial walkway over the quarry on the north of the chapel, so that the new Chapel could be accessed (by permission) from the Chapel of St. Helena.

The large decorative floor mosaic is modern, from the 20th century, by the Israeli artist Hava Yofe. Part of it depicts churches in historical Armenia. Despite the images being obviously modern in their representational style, some guides tell visitors the mosaic is antique. [5]

In 2017, the chapel underwent renovations which included a new white marble altar railing and new tile flooring.

Damage and destruction (614–1009)[edit]

This building was damaged by fire in May of 614 when the Sassanid Empire, under Khosrau II, invaded Jerusalem and captured the True Cross. In 630, the Emperor Heraclius restored it and rebuilt the church after recapturing the city. After Jerusalem came under Arab rule, it remained a Christian church, with the early Muslim rulers protecting the city's Christian sites. A story reports that the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab visited the church and stopped to pray on the balcony; but at the time of prayer, he turned away from the church and prayed outside. He feared that future generations would misinterpret this gesture, taking it as a pretext to turn the church into a mosque. Eutychius added that Umar wrote a decree prohibiting Muslims from praying at this location. The building suffered severe damage due to an earthquake in 746.[13]

Early in the ninth century, another earthquake damaged the dome of the Anastasis. The damage was repaired in 810 by Patriarch Thomas. In the year 841, the church suffered a fire. In 935, the

Orthodox Christians prevented the construction of a Muslim mosque adjacent to the Church. In 938, a new fire damaged the inside of the basilica and came close to the rotunda. In 966, due to a defeat of Muslim armies in the region of Syria, a riot broke out, which was followed by reprisals. The basilica was burned again. The doors and roof were burnt, and the Patriarch John VII was murdered.[citation needed]

On 18 October 1009, Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered the complete destruction of the church as part of a more general campaign against Christian places of worship in Palestine and Egypt.[14] The damage was extensive, with few parts of the early church remaining. [15] Christian Europe reacted with shock and expulsions of Jews (for example, Cluniac monk Rodulfus Glaber blamed the Jews, with the result that Jews were expelled from Limoges and other French towns[citation needed]) and an impetus to later Crusades.[16][17]

In wide-ranging negotiations between the Fatimids and the Byzantine Empire in 1027–28, an agreement was reached whereby the new Caliph Ali az-Zahir (Al-Hakim's son) agreed to allow the rebuilding and redecoration of the Church.[18] The rebuilding was finally completed with the financing at a huge expense by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos and Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople in 1048.[19] As a concession, the mosque in Constantinople was re-opened and the khutba sermons were to be pronounced in az-Zahir's name.[18] Muslim sources say a byproduct of the agreement was the recanting of Islam by many Christians who had been forced to convert under Al-Hakim's persecutions. In addition, the Byzantines, while releasing 5,000 Muslim prisoners, made demands for the restoration of other churches destroyed by Al-Hakim and the re-establishment of a Patriarch in Jerusalem. Contemporary sources credit the emperor with spending vast sums in an effort to restore the Church of the Holy Sepulchre after this agreement was made.[18] Despite the Byzantines spending vast sums on the project, "a total replacement was far beyond available resources. The new construction was concentrated on the rotunda and its surrounding buildings: the great basilica remained in ruins." [15] The rebuilt church site consisted of "a court open to the sky, with five small chapels attached to it." [20] The chapels were to the east of the court of resurrection, where the wall of the great church had been. They commemorated scenes from the passion, such as the location of the prison of Christ and of his flagellation, and presumably were so placed because of the difficulties of free movement among shrines in the streets of the city. The dedication of these chapels indicates the importance of the pilgrims' devotion to the suffering of Christ. They have been described as 'a sort of Via Dolorosa in miniature'... since little or no rebuilding took place on the site of the great basilica. Western pilgrims to Jerusalem during the eleventh century found much of the sacred site in ruins." [15] Control of Jerusalem, and thereby the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, continued to change hands several times between the Fatimids and the Seljuk Turks (loyal to the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad) until the arrival of the Crusaders in 1099.[21]

Crusader period (1099–1244)[edit]

Many historians maintain that the main concern of Pope Urban II, when calling for the First Crusade, was the threat to Constantinople from the Turkish invasion of Asia Minor in response to the appeal of Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos. Historians agree that the fate of Jerusalem and thereby the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was of concern if not the immediate goal of papal

policy in 1095. The idea of taking Jerusalem gained more focus as the Crusade was underway. The rebuilt church site was taken from the Fatimids (who had recently taken it from the Abassids) by the knights of the First Crusade on 15 July 1099.[15]

The First Crusade was envisioned as an armed pilgrimage, and no crusader could consider his journey complete unless he had prayed as a pilgrim at the Holy Sepulchre. Crusader Prince Godfrey of Bouillon, who became the first crusader monarch of Jerusalem, decided not to use the title “king” during his lifetime, and declared himself “Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri” (“Protector [or Defender] of the Holy Sepulchre”). By the crusader period, a cistern under the former basilica was rumored to have been the location where Helena had found the True Cross, and began to be venerated as such; although the cistern later became the “Chapel of the Invention of the Cross,” there is no evidence of the rumor before the 11th century, and modern archaeological investigation has now dated the cistern to 11th century repairs by Monomachos. [citation needed]

According to the German clergyman and orient pilgrim Ludolf von Sudheim, the keys of the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre were in hands of the “ancient Georgians” and the food, alms, candles and oil for lamps were given them by the pilgrims in the south door of the church.[22]

William of Tyre, chronicler of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, reports on the renovation of the Church in the mid-12th century. The crusaders investigated the eastern ruins on the site, occasionally excavating through the rubble, and while attempting to reach the cistern, they discovered part of the original ground level of Hadrian’s temple enclosure; they decided to transform this space into a chapel dedicated to Helena (the Chapel of Saint Helena), widening their original excavation tunnel into a proper staircase. The crusaders began to refurnish the church in a Romanesque style and added a bell tower.[23] These renovations unified the small chapels on the site and were completed during the reign of Queen Melisende in 1149, placing all the Holy places under one roof for the first time. The church became the seat of the first Latin Patriarchs, and was also the site of the kingdom’s scriptorium. The church was lost to Saladin, [23] along with the rest of the city, in 1187, although the treaty established after the Third Crusade allowed for Christian pilgrims to visit the site. Emperor Frederick II (r. 1220–50) regained the city and the church by treaty in the 13th century while he himself was under a ban of excommunication, with the curious consequence that the holiest church in Christianity was laid under interdict. The church seems to have been largely in Greek Orthodox Patriarch Athanasius II of Jerusalem’s hands, c. 1231–47, during the Latin control of Jerusalem.[24] Both city and church were captured by the Khwarezmians in 1244.[23]

Ottoman and later periods[edit]

The Franciscan friars renovated it further in 1555, as it had been neglected despite increased numbers of pilgrims. The Franciscans rebuilt the Aedicule, extending the structure to create an ante-chamber.[25] After the renovation of 1555, control of the church oscillated between the Franciscans and the Orthodox, depending on which community could obtain a favorable “firman” from the “Sublime Porte” at a particular time, often through outright bribery, and violent clashes were not uncommon. There was no agreement about this question, although it was discussed at the

negotiations to the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699.[26] In 1767, weary of the squabbling, the “Porte” issued a “firman” that divided the church among the claimants.

A fire severely damaged the structure again in 1808, causing the dome of the Rotunda to collapse and smashing the Aedicule’s exterior decoration. The Rotunda and the Aedicule’s exterior were rebuilt in 1809–1810 by architect Nikolaos Ch. Komnenos of Mytilene in the then current Ottoman Baroque style. The fire did not reach the interior of the Aedicule, and the marble decoration of the Tomb dates mainly to the 1555 restoration, although the interior of the antechamber, now known as the “Chapel of the Angel,” was partly rebuilt to a square ground-plan, in place of the previously semi-circular western end. Another decree in 1853 from the sultan solidified the existing territorial division among the communities and set a “status quo” for arrangements to “remain forever,” causing differences of opinion about upkeep and even minor changes,[27] including disagreement on the removal of the “Immovable Ladder”, an exterior ladder under one of the windows; this ladder has remained in the same position since then.

The cladding of red marble applied to the Aedicule by Komnenos has deteriorated badly and is detaching from the underlying structure; since 1947 it has been held in place with an exterior scaffolding of iron girders installed by the British authorities. A careful renovation is undergoing, funded by a \$4 million gift from King Abdullah II of Jordan and a \$1.3-million gift from Mica Ertegun.[28]

The current dome dates from 1870, although it was restored between 1994–1997, as part of extensive modern renovations to the church which have been ongoing since 1959. During the 1970–1978 restoration works and excavations inside the building, and under the nearby Muristan, it was found that the area was originally a quarry, from which white meleke limestone was struck. [29] To the east of the Chapel of Saint Helena, the excavators discovered a void containing a 2nd-century drawing of a Roman ship, two low walls which supported the platform of Hadrian’s 2nd-century temple, and a higher 4th-century wall built to support Constantine’s basilica.[25] [30] After the excavations of the early 1970s, the Armenian authorities converted this archaeological space into the Chapel of Saint Vartan, and created an artificial walkway over the quarry on the north of the chapel, so that the new Chapel could be accessed (by permission) from the Chapel of Saint Helena.[30]

In 2016, restoration works were performed in the Aedicule. For the first time since at least 1555, marble cladding which protected the estimated burial bed of Jesus from vandalism and souvenir takers[31] was removed.[32][33] When the cladding was first removed on 26 October, an initial inspection by the National Technical University of Athens team showed only a layer of fill material underneath. By the night of 28 October, the original limestone burial bed was revealed intact. This suggested that the tomb location has not changed through time and confirmed the existence of the original limestone cave walls within the Aedicule. The tomb was resealed shortly thereafter.[32]

The Garden Tomb

After getting Natalie excited because she thought she was at a very Holy Place I then took her over to the Garden Tomb and she became upset and wondered which was the actual crucifixion and tomb site. So here is the history of the Garden Tomb. Note the Guardians of the Garden Tomb no longer let you take pictures in front of the Sepulchre claiming it to be Holy and to keep the crowds moving.

The Garden Tomb is a rock-cut tomb in Jerusalem, which was unearthed in 1867 and is considered by some Christians to be the site of the burial and resurrection of Jesus. The tomb has been dated by Israeli archaeologist Gabriel Barkay to the 8th–7th centuries BC.[1] The re-use of old tombs was not an uncommon practice in ancient times, but this would contradict the biblical text that speaks of a new, not reused, tomb made for himself by Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60, John 19:41). Also, the trough in front of the tomb and the nearby cistern, described by proponents of the Garden Tomb as part of the tomb's sealing system and as the surrounding garden's source of water, respectively, have both been archaeologically dated to the Crusader period (12th-13th century).[1] Currently the organization maintaining the Garden Tomb refrains from claiming that this is the authentic tomb of Jesus, while pointing out the similarities with the site described in the Bible, and the fact that the Garden Tomb better preserves its ancient outlook than the more traditional, but architecturally altered and time-damaged tomb from the mostly crowded Church of the Holy Sepulchre; for all of these reasons, they suggest that the Garden Tomb is more evocative of the events described in the Gospels.[2]

The Garden Tomb is adjacent to a rocky escarpment which since the mid-nineteenth century has been proposed by some scholars to be Golgotha. It has since been known as Skull Hill or Gordon's Golgotha. In contradistinction to this modern identification, the traditional site where the death and resurrection of Christ are believed to have occurred has been the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at least since the fourth century.

Since 1894, the Garden Tomb and its surrounding gardens have been maintained as a place of Christian worship and reflection by a Christian non-denominational charitable trust based in the United Kingdom named The Garden Tomb (Jerusalem) Association.[3][4] As such, the Garden Tomb stands as a popular site of pilgrimage for many Christians, especially Evangelical Anglicans and other Protestants.



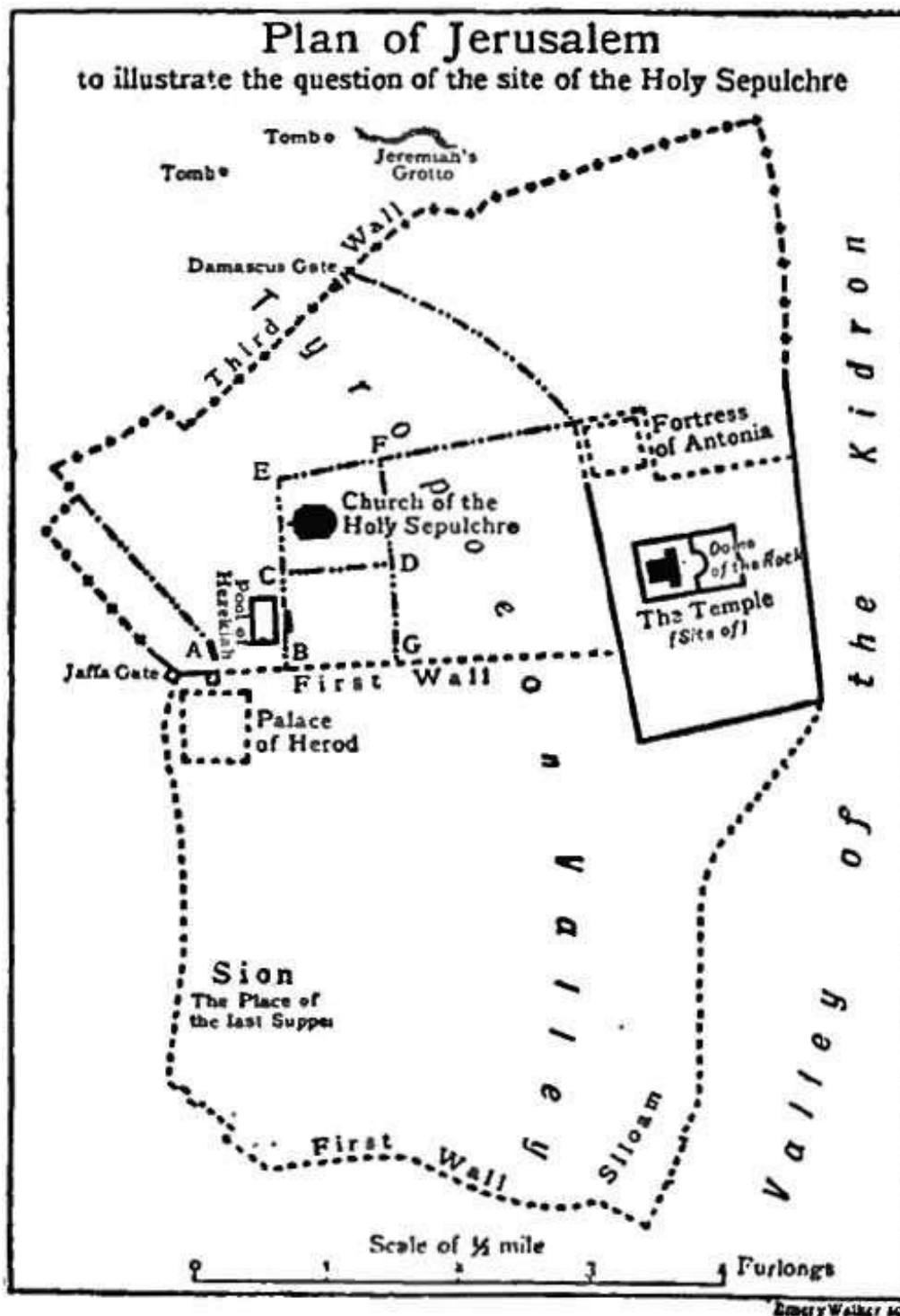


We have now uncovered two of the most popular sites claiming to be the crucifixion and burial sites for Jesus. But let us now look on a map and note where these two sites are in relation to the Temple.

Here is a picture of Jeremiah's Grotto from the year 1900.



The top of the map is North and the left-hand side is West. Jeremiah's Grotto (The Garden Tomb) is north of the Temple and the church of the Holy Sepulchre is west of the Temple.



Mat 27:53 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

:54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

The only way the Centurion could see the veil being torn in two is if he was on the eastern side of the temple looking west. The Temple faced the east and the curtain could only be seen from the eastern side.

Early Church historians indicated that in the first century, Christians revered the Mount of Olives. It was the site of the first church and was considered to be the most significant place in Christian history.

While much tradition is found at these and other places, “the one thing all these sites have in common is that they are all the wrong place,” says the Christian-Biblical historian, Prof. Ernest L. Martin, in an exclusive interview with the Jerusalem Christian Review.

Indeed, several years ago, Dr. Martin, president of the Academy of Scriptural Knowledge in Portland, Oregon, took a fresh look at the question with some startling results.

“The simplest of my findings revolves around some basic New and Old Testament Scriptures, whose significance has been overlooked for centuries,” said Dr. Martin as he described his latest book, *Secrets of Golgotha*.

While working with the renowned Jerusalem archaeologist, Prof. Benjamin Mazar, at the Temple Mount excavations in the 1960s, Martin studied the geographical history of Jerusalem with some of Israel’s leading scholars.

“My initial interest in researching this subject was spawned from... one primary fact,” said Martin. “It appears as though the centurion who was at the foot of the cross was able to observe the tearing of the Temple veil [the outside curtain, called in Hebrew ‘Masach’], something that would have been possible only from a point east of the Temple Mount, and not from any point west of it.”

“While this is not evidence in itself,” said the historian, “it did inspire my curiosity.”

Historical sources are conclusive that the massive 80-foot curtain was located in a spot that was visible only from atop the Mount of Olives. “It would have been a physical impossibility for anyone in Jerusalem to have seen this curtain from the south, the west, or the north – the locations of today’s traditional crucifixion sites,” says Martin.

Throughout Martin’s investigations, he searched through hundreds of contemporary and first century writings, ancient church literature, and the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptural sources.

He found that the Bible itself indicates that the crucifixion occurred in a “holy place” – a place John describes as belonging to the Temple worship ritual – which the Book of Hebrews refers to as an altar called “Outside-the-Camp” (John 19:20; Hebrews 13:10-14).

“‘Outside-the-Camp’ was not a description but the name of a specific place, known from biblical and contemporary sources,” said well-known Jerusalem historian, Prof. Ory Mazar, the author of numerous books on the history of Jerusalem.

Mazar, who worked with Martin on part of his research, explained that this place, “was the location of the ‘Altar of the Red Heifer.’” Although the altar was located “outside the city” on the Mount of Olives and not on the Temple Mount, it was still an extremely important part of the Temple worship ritual – it was the Altar of the major Sin Sacrifices.

“According to the Law of Moses,” said Mazar in an interview with the Jerusalem Christian Review,

“one could not worship on the holy grounds of the Temple without first sacrificing a sin offering ‘Outside-the-Camp.’”

Adding to dozens of additional pieces of evidence, Martin found that the Bible itself identifies the place called “Golgotha” (“the Place of the Head”) in 2Samuel 15. The “Place of the Head” (mistranslated in English translations as the summit of the mountain) was the place on the Mount of Olives where King David stopped to worship as he was fleeing from Jerusalem to Jericho. The original Hebrew is clear, describing a specific site called “the Place of the Head.”

“What strikes me as incredibly significant is that this would mean Jesus was crucified near the Altar of the Sin Sacrifices – a place that had been the traditional site of the Sin Sacrifice of the Red Heifer for over ten centuries,” said Martin.

“The true place of Golgotha is very critical, because it proves that Jesus Christ was indeed sacrificed, as the ultimate Sin Sacrifice for the world, at precisely the same place which was designated by Biblical Law, by tradition and by the ritual custom of the Temple for the major sin sacrifices to be killed,” said Martin, adding, “It happened on the Mount of Olives in the Holy City of Jerusalem. “This evidence was proof positive for all His disciples to see... that His prophesy came true – He was indeed the Lamb of God!”



All four Gospels use the Greek word 'Kranion' to describe the place where Jesus was crucified. Unlike Skufion (skull), Kranion (in English – cranium) [58] is the upper part of the skull excluding the face bones.

Since the temple faced east,[59] the curtain in front of the entrance[60] of the temple would have been in direct view of those gathered on this mount at the Temple Mount, just outside the city wall. And to testify that the curtain ripped at the very moment when Jesus died,[61] there must have been eyewitnesses.

The Gospel of John refers to Golgotha as being very near the city, so near that all who passed by could read the inscription[19:20]. Considering also the prophecy in Psalms 69:12[69:12], his place of crucifixion would have been near enough to the gate that Jesus could hear what the people were saying about him there. And just as Eusebius comments in Onomasticon concerning Golgotha as being

a hill just outside Jerusalem. https://alhatorah.org/Half_Shekels_%E2%80%93_For_Census... The

Final Three Books of the Third Division

The last three books of the Third Division (Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah, and Chronicles) are also Canonical books, but they are books that were not kept in the library rooms within the Temple that were associated with the three main compartments of the Temple. These three books were kept outside the confines of the Temple, but still in a sacred area on the Mount of Olives located just outside the camp of Israel as it existed in the time of Jesus.

These were kept at the walled village of Bethphage of which I spoke earlier. This was a priestly city reckoned in the time of the Second Temple to be an integral part of the city of Jerusalem in which the court of the Sanhedrin gave their official decisions on what the limits of the city of Jerusalem were to be, what the regulations were about the killing of the Red Heifer, the decisions to execute a rebellious elder, and (as we will see) where the census and genealogical records were kept to prove who was an Israelite, a Levite and Priest, etc. 1

Bephage, Outside the Camp

In regard to this latter role for the Sanhedrin in Bethphage, it should be mentioned that the altar on which the Red Heifer and the sin offerings on the Day of Atonement were burnt to ashes was called the Miphkad Altar. The word Miphkad means “numbering” or “counting” (and in this case it meant counting the heads of persons who were Israelites, firstborn ones, Levites, or Priests). In Hebrew the word “head” is golgolet. Indeed, the place where these “heads” were counted (or numbered) was at the site of the Miphkad (Numbering) Altar just to the west of the village of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Because of this, this region on the Mount of Olives became known in New Testament times as Golgotha through the Greek (where heads or the skulls of people were counted in any numbering or census of Israel). 2

In Old Testament times, the Hebrews would have simply said to go to the Miphkad Altar region (the Golgolet Area) to count the heads of people, and in the New Testament period they would have said to go to Golgotha, the place where one gets his head (or, for a dead person, his skull) counted at the times of numbering (or censuses).

So, the village of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives was located just east of the region of Golgotha where people were counted or numbered at or near the Miphkad Altar (the “Numbering Altar”) and the place where the Red Heifer and the sin offerings of the Day of Atonement were burnt to ashes. It was in this very region on the Mount of Olives where Jesus was crucified after the Sanhedrin had given their final decision at Bethphage to have him executed for what they considered to be his blasphemy. 3

In a word, all matters involving genealogical or census records of the people of Israel were kept at the library at Bethphage (which was a village exclusively for priests and where the second court of the

great Sanhedrin was located). Though Bethphage was reckoned to be an official part of the city of Jerusalem, it was actually situated outside the camp of just east of the summit of the Mount of Olives and a little further east of the Miphkad Altar. This eastern entrance to the camp was considered to be the eastern “gate” into the proper city limits of Jerusalem. There was no actual “gate” that we know of at this eastern entrance. 4

This, however, was where the official “counting” or the “numbering” of Israelites (either living or dead, in some instances) took place. The reasons that such things were done “at the gate” was to fulfill the biblical stipulation that the elders of the land were supposed to sit in the gates (or the entrance) to the cities of the Israelites at certain times of judgment. Recall Proverbs 31:23 which says “Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders.” Also: “Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates” (Zechariah 8:16). Thus, the Sanhedrin in the time of Jesus had a second court for decisions involving “counting” or “numbering” (and setting the limits of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, etc.). This was at the eastern entrance to the camp of Israel. This is why the priest village of Bethphage was built and why the Sanhedrin met in that locale.

The reason the official genealogical records of the nation (and those prime biblical records were the books of Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles) were kept in this village of Bethphage was because people who claimed to be Israelites could have their records checked in person at this official place “outside the camp” on the Mount of Olives to see if they were allowed to enter the camp itself or, especially, to enter the Temple. What are the books of Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles? These books are basically genealogical lists of Israelites (with appropriate historical events) to show who was an Israelite, a son of David, a Levite or a Priest. All the checking of these matters was accomplished outside the camp of Israel, that is, outside the city of Jerusalem proper and the Temple.

It would have been inappropriate, of course, to have these books available for inspection inside the Temple. How could one who was not sure of his pedigree or ritualistic status have the books which could prove his claim to be an Israelite (or priest, or Levite, or whatever) located within the restricted area itself? Reason demands that such books and records had to be available for inspection and evaluation outside the camp to determine the ritualistic status of the people.

The Book of Daniel

But why was the Book of Daniel placed in this outside library of the Sanhedrin and not with the other prophets inside the Temple? The answer is simple. In a later chapter I will show that in the Bible a person writing a book was considered a living person who always accompanied the book (whether the person was living or dead). Since Daniel, though of royal blood from David, was a eunuch (Daniel 1:3, 7), this prohibited him by ritualistic law from entering into the camp of Israel and certainly not into the Temple itself. 5

This rule of ritual, however, prevented the Book of Daniel from being positioned alongside the other prophetic books of the Old Testament. This is because the other prophetic books were placed in association with the six pieces of furniture in the priestly section of the Temple. On the other hand,

prophecies principally centered on interpreting the dreams or visions of Gentile kings (who themselves could not enter the Temple) and related the fortunes of the Gentile kingdoms until the setting up of the Kingdom of God. And as mentioned before, Daniel was ritually forbidden to enter the Temple because of being a eunuch. Daniel's book of prophecies (as important as they are) were associated by Ezra with the outside genealogical books at the village of the Sanhedrin (Bethphage) on the Mount of Olives, "outside the camp" of Israel.

What this shows is that the 22 books of the Old Testament have themes to them which demanded that they be kept (or associated) in libraries maintained by the priests that were appropriate for their contexts. The majority of the books were housed (for reference purposes) at the library associated with the Sanhedrin at the Chamber of Hewn Stones. The Sanhedrin (and any legal professionals) could consult them in an easy fashion. This was necessary to do on many occasions because there was a legal basis attached to all of them in helping to govern the nation of Israel.

The first 5 books of the First Division are analogous with the 5 pieces of furniture in the Holy of Holies.

The next 6 books of the Second Division are shown to be slightly less holy by being positioned outward from the Holy of Holies in a counterclockwise order to associate with the 6 pieces of furniture in the priestly section of the Temple.

The first 3 books of the Third Division are associated with the Court of Israel and the men's portion of the court.

The next 5 books are associated with the Court of the Women in the easternmost section of the Temple.

But the last 3 books of the Third Division are associated with the library at the official village of the Sanhedrin called Bethphage which was located "outside the camp" on the Mount of Olives.

The Continuing Importance of Bethphage

This village of Bethphage was an important area of the Sanhedrin in the time of Jesus. Indeed, it was even recognized to be so by later Jews after the time of Islam. There are Jewish records showing this. The Encyclopaedia Judaica under the article "Mount of Olives" has an important survey about the significance of Olivet in these later times. Indeed, the encyclopaedia shows that by the end of the 8th century, when the Jews were no longer allowed to enter the Temple Mount, the Mount of Olives became the place (like in the time Bethphage was in operation in the period of Jesus) for proclaiming the beginning of the calendar years.

This is the precise spot where the Jewish people raised up what the authorities called a "Great Sanhedrin" to regulate legal matters involving the people of Israel. The Jewish authorities stated they had the right to pick this spot on the Mount of Olives because the Shekinah moved to this spot after the fall of the Temple in 70 C.E. They even came to believe that this region on the Mount of Olives was actually "the footstool of God" because it stated in Zechariah 14 that God would certainly stand on the

Mount of Olives. A stone was even shown on the summit which was supposed to represent “God’s footstool.” They reckoned that “the footstool of God” 6 meant that the Mount of Olives was the spot where God would teach His people His laws and directions. But it meant much more than that.

The symbol of the “footstool” for God’s feet meant nothing less than this spot was where God figuratively dwelt on earth and where people were to gather to worship him. In other words, the phrase “footstool” represented God’s holy residence on earth (his Tabernacle and later his Temple) the official place to worship God. Note what the scriptures teach.

“We will go into his tabernacles [the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies]: we will worship at his footstool.” Psalm 132:7

“Exalt you the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.” Psalm 99:5

“How has the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool [his Temple] in the day of his anger.” Lamentations 2:1

“To beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.” Isaiah 60:13

These scriptures show that “the footstool of God” was reckoned as the holiest place on earth and where people were officially required to worship God. It is no accident that the later Jewish authorities (when Islam began) returned to Jerusalem and went directly to the Mount of Olives and called that mount “God’s footstool.” They seemed to know that God had abandoned lower Mount Moriah as the place of his “footstool” and that God was now reckoning the Mount of Olives (upper Mount Moriah) as the proper “footstool of God.” This was the place where people could gather around “His feet” to worship God and to learn of his ways.

Because Zechariah 14:4 stated that God would one day stand on the Mount of Olives (it would become His “footstool”), this may have been a reason why the Jewish authorities in the time of the Second Temple placed the second site of the Sanhedrin at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. They came to this area to worship at God’s “feet.” 7

The Place of Teaching

So, long after the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., it was recognized by later Jewish authorities that the area of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives was also a proper place to have the “Great Sanhedrin” of later times. They reckoned it to be the actual place on earth where God had his footstool (Isaiah 66:1). These later Jewish authorities believed this was the area on earth where God would continue to teach his people his ways. And indeed, we will come to see that the New Testament Gospels and Acts were brought together at this very place on the Mount of Olives, along with the Book of Daniel, the Book of Ezra/Nehemiah and the Book of Chronicles. The Gospels and Acts (we will come to see) were centered for preservation and canonical purposes directly at this spot on the Mount of Olives.

This region on the Mount of Olives is where God's "footstool" for teaching was reckoned to be centered by the later Jewish authorities after the fall of Jerusalem and the Temple. Note this next symbolic point carefully. The Holy of Holies in the Temple was analogous to the Throne of God in heaven. The Holy Place outside the Holy of Holies was reckoned as typical of the heavens where the Sun, Moon, the planets and stars had their abode. The Court of the Israelites (to the east of the Holy Place) was believed to be the symbolic place called heaven where the birds fly and all weather phenomena take place.

But the region of the Miphkad Altar on top of the Mount of Olives (located eastward and outside the camp of Israel) was where God had reckoned to be the place of his "footstool" on earth. It was at this "footstool" where God finally came personally in contact with the earth and people on the earth. Thus, to later Jews, to gather around God's feet for instruction in righteousness meant to assemble on the Mount of Olives, and this was especially the case after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Indeed, this is precisely what the Christian authorities did after 70 C.E. as attested by Eusebius, the first Christian historian (which I will later show in this book).

So influential did the Christian authorities become in this area on the Mount of Olives 8 that the Jewish authorities moved their Sanhedrin away from the region of Jerusalem right after 70 C.E. to the town of Jabneh (Jamnia) on the coast of Palestine. The Sanhedrin remained there until 135 C.E. Then it moved into certain regions of Galilee until 429 C.E. when the Romans had the Sanhedrin disbanded. Only with the arrival of Islam did the Jewish authorities finally raise up another Sanhedrin (which they began to call the "Great Sanhedrin") and they did this by returning to the summit of the Mount of Olives (the place of "God's footstool") in order to be in intimate association with God. 9

The Mount of Olives and the New Testament

There is even more. Without going too far ahead in our discussion, let me recount that the next 5 books of the canon are the 5 New Testament books (the Gospels and Acts). These books were never a part of the Temple apparatus in Jerusalem. The apostle Paul said Christians were to leave the old Jerusalem behind and go to the Altar where Christ carried his crosspiece at the time of his crucifixion (Hebrews 13:9–15). That place was at the summit of the Mount of Olives.

The Gospels and Acts are particularly connected with the life of Christ and his body (the ekklesia), and the Mount of Olives is predominantly a mountain associated with Christ and his ministry as we will see in later sections of this book. Indeed, the first four books of the New Testament (the Gospels) give the history of Jesus Christ while he taught on earth while the fifth (the Book of Acts) gives the historical teaching of and about Christ after he returned to heaven. These 5 New Testament books represent the New Testament Law just as the first 5 Old Testament books represent the Old Testament Law.

Number Symbolism

Since in Hebrew, 5 of the Hebrew alphabetic letters when they end a word (when they are the last alphabetic letter), they take on a different shape while they still retain their alphabetic value, so the 22

books of the Old Testament had a further 5 books (making 27 in all) that would give a different theological slant and a different canonical approach in the full canon. These 5 final forms of the Hebrew alphabetic letters were to show Israel that Israel should expect 5 more books to be attached to the first 22 books in order to make 27 books in all which would lead Israel up to the coming of the Messiah and include the basic teachings of their Messiah.

There is interesting teaching to the Jewish people if they reckon the final forms of the 5 terminal letters as a part of their alphabet. This was using a form of alphabetic interpretation known as Gematria (examples are found in both the Old and New Testaments). The teaching can be considered mystical, but so was the apostle John when he referred to a prophetic interpretation using Gematria. 10 Note that there are actually 27 forms to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet (counting the 5 terminal letters). If one reckons the Hebrew alphabet in this manner, the first letter is aleph and the last letter is tau; but the middle letter (in the 27 numbering) is mem. Now, these Hebrew letters put together are aleph, mem, tav which is the Hebrew word (EMeT) and it means “truth.” 11

I firmly believe that these different shapes to 5 of the Hebrew letters was an esoteric hint to the Jewish authorities that they should look for at least 5 more books to fill up the canon that Ezra had designed. These 5 books would be the terminal books to the Mosaic Law leading up to their Messiah. Since it has long been recognized that the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet answered to the 22 books of the Old Testament canon, adding the 5 terminal letters to that list (making 27 letters) would cause a person to include the further 5 books of the New Testament (the Gospels and Acts) to terminate the scriptures to the Hebrews up to the coming of their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Interestingly, the letters showing the beginning, middle and end of these 27 letters (which represented books of the Holy Scriptures) record the word “truth” in Hebrew and that is precisely what those 27 books do for the final canon for the Jewish people up to the coming of their Messiah. As a matter of fact, when one adds the other 22 New Testament books (note that the addition is 22 more books), then one arrives at 49 books to the complete canon of God (7 times 7 books). These matters are not accidents. This is God’s way of showing his people Israel, and the whole world, what represents the “truth.”

Conclusion

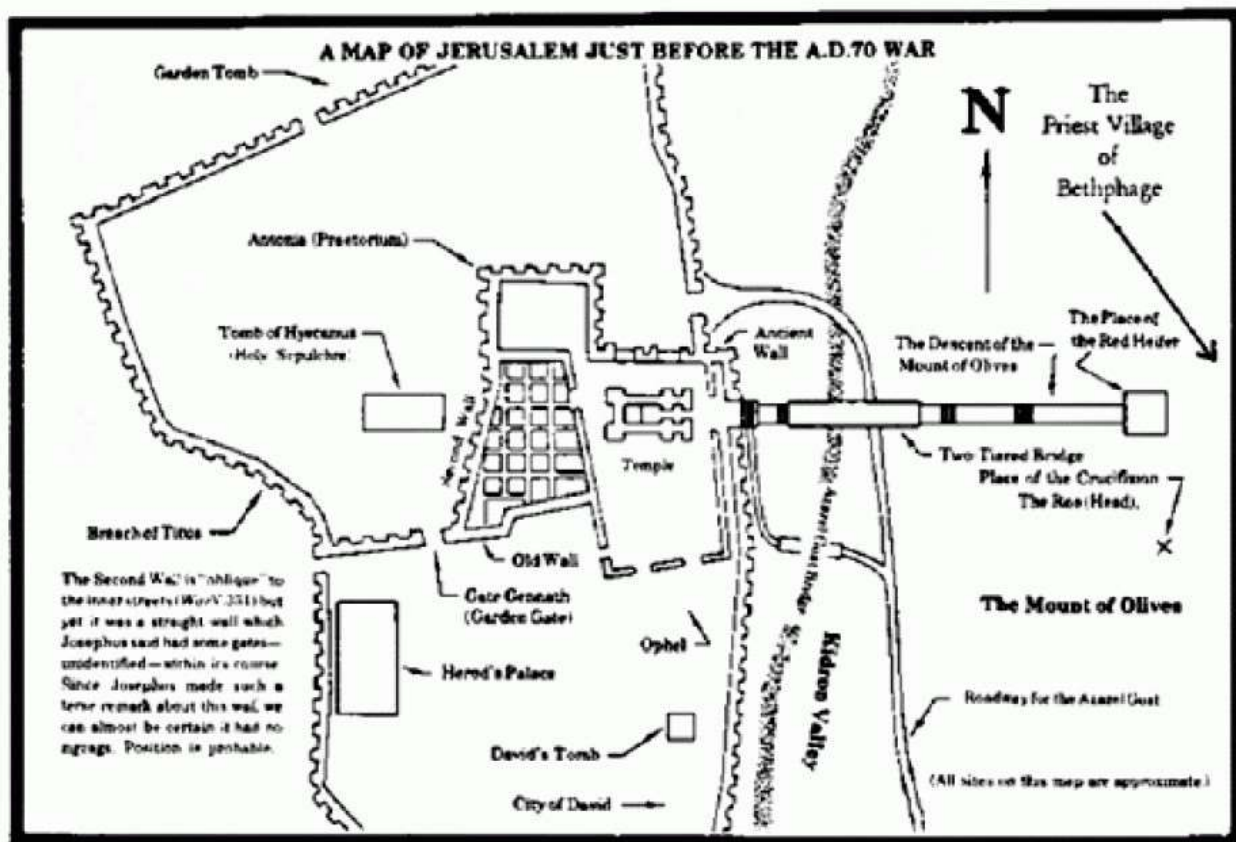
In closing this chapter, let us look at one more important factor. Since the last 3 books of the Old Testament in the original canon of 22 books were kept in the library at the priestly village of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, the next 5 books (the Gospels and the Acts) would center their principal contexts upon the activities of Christ Jesus which occurred at his crucifixion and resurrection on the same Mount of Olives. Ezra placed the last 3 books of the original canon “outside the camp” of Israel. The New Testament begins with focusing on this axial geographical area of the Mount of Olives which was in the same place “outside the camp” of Israel. Where one part of the canon leaves off, the other part of the canon takes over.

This shows a connection between the two main divisions of the full canon (the Old and the

New Testaments). Later Jews came to realize that the summit of the Mount of Olives was “God’s footstool.” This is where one would go to obtain the official teachings of God, just like the apostle Paul got his early teaching at “the feet of Gamaliel.” And we will come to see, that this is where the New Testament was brought together as a part of the divine canon. I will have more to say on this later.

This arrangement of the Old Testament books by Ezra the priest in accord with the divisions of the Temple (God’s own House) and ending up at the threshold area at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, allowed all the 22 books to be given official sanction by the Sanhedrin and the Jewish authorities. It also positioned the Old Testament books according to ritualistic laws which governed the Israelite society from Moses to Christ Jesus. And most importantly, it directed the attention of the authorities in Israel to look for another set of books (27 more books — making 49 in all) which would complete the full canon of the Holy Scriptures for Israel and the world.

It is very needful to have the original arrangement of the biblical books in our modern Bibles. The proper order gives us some essential teachings from God that we could not otherwise observe. The next chapter will explain the importance of these Old Testament books being in their correct canonical arrangement.



- 1 See Sanhedrin 14a–b; Sotah 44b, 45a.
- 2 See Numbers 1:2, 18, 20, 22, 3:47; and 1 Chronicles 23:3, 24 where the King James Version translates the word golgolet (or, in the New Testament it is Golgotha) with the English word “poll.” Indeed, such a counting of people by their polls (their heads, or sometimes when the dead were counted, skulls) is not even of foreign usage to us moderns because we call the place where we elect our officials to government offices as “polling booths.”

- 3 See Dr. Martin's book, *Secrets of Golgotha* (Portland, OR: ASK, 1996) where the issue of "the Camp of Israel" is discussed extensively in relation to the location of Jesus' crucifixion.
- 4 Neither was there any actual "gate" into the camp in the time of Moses — see Exodus 32:26–27 — where Moses counted the dead people, 3000 in number, who died in judgment because they sinned regarding the calf that Aaron raised up — see Exodus 32:28.
- 5 I will have more to say on this principle that the writings of people were reckoned to represent the people themselves when I later discuss the writings of the apostle Paul.
- 6 as mentioned in Isaiah 60:13; 66:1; see Acts 7:49 and connecting Isaiah with Zechariah 14.
- 7 Recall that the apostle Paul gave a symbolic teaching of learning from an elder when he said he was trained at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
- 8 They continued to be influential until Constantine built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the western side of Jerusalem.
- 9 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol XII, 481–483)
- 10 See Revelation 13:18; and see Jeremiah 25:26; 51:41.
- 11 See Benjamin Blech's *The Secrets of Hebrew Words* (Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson, 1991), p. 61.

In 2018 this group from Thailand, Philippines, Norway, USA, Singapore and Canada all met at the secret place in the garden to once again go over the details of the crucifixion at Yehovah's footstool.



Updated Information on the Crucifixion of Jesus by

Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1992

Since the publication of my book “Secrets of Golgotha” in the Spring of 1988, there has been a steady flow of new information which shows that the crucifixion of Jesus took place on the Mount of Olives. Some of the evidence has come from other scholars who have seen the fact that Jesus was executed somewhere near the summit of Olivet. A great deal has also been arrived at by further research of my own. What is emerging is real evidence that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden Tomb located in Jerusalem are nowhere near the proper spot where the actual crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus took place. This fact has revolutionary consequences associated with it. This is because the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Armenian Orthodox churches for the past 1660 years have generally accepted the area associated with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the crucifixion site. Even classical historians have thought the site has most of the historical credentials to justify its acceptance by the scholarly world. But this new evidence shows that the Constantinian Church is thoroughly wrong. The Bible and history plainly establish that the Mount of Olives is the real place of the crucifixion. This new Historical Report has further evidence to prove this conclusion.

Just over 118 years ago in the Palestine Exploration Quarterly (1873, 115; also 1870, 379-381) Dr. Hutchinson suggested that the crucifixion of Jesus must have taken place east of the Temple Mount — which placed it on the Mount of Olives. Until the publication of my book “Secrets of

Golgotha,” that is the last scholarly indication I have found which suggests that the crucifixion happened on Olivet. Since A.D. 1873, the only candidates for the site have been the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which was built west of the second wall of Jerusalem or at the Garden Tomb region north and east of the Damascus Gate. But my book shows from the New Testament and early Jewish records that the southern summit of the Mount of Olives near the altar “without the sanctuary” where the Red Heifer was burnt to ashes (Ezekiel 43:21) has far greater credentials for being the site.

The first point to notice is that the burning of the Red Heifer and Jesus’ crucifixion were symbolically connected in a precise way by Christians who lived during the period of Herod’s Temple. The author of the Book of Hebrews (about AD. 61) stated that Jesus was a ‘sin offering” for the world and that his sin-atonement death epitomized the symbolic role of all the sin offerings sacrificed at the Temple (Hebrews 10:8-14). The major sin offerings were burnt to ashes at an altar region east of the Temple near the top of the Mount of Olives. Besides that, all of the ashes of the other sacrifices offered at the Altar of Burnt Offering in the Temple itself were deposited at the same altar east of the Temple on Olivet (Leviticus 4:12:6:11). The author of Hebrews also connected the ashes of the Red Heifer (which were mixed with pure spring water) with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus which occurred at the precise time of his crucifixion (9:13,14). And particularly note this point. In the Letter of Barnabas(written by a person from Jerusalem about A.D.90), the author stated that the Red Heifer in Christian circles was reckoned as Jesus. “The calf is Jesus: the sinful men offering it are those who led him to the slaughter (8:2).” Remarkably, very few Christian historians have asked: “Where was this Red Heifer altar?”

As explained in my book “Secrets of Golgotha,” the early Jewish records found in the Mishnah plainly state that the Red Heifer altar was located directly east of the Temple that existed in Jesus’ time and that it was just shy of the summit of the Mount of Olives (Middoth 1:3; 2:4; Yoma 7:2; along with the Talmud in Yoma 68a and Zebahim 105b). And here we find the author of the Letter of Barnabas directly stating that “the calf (heifer) is Jesus” and that “the sinful men offering it are those who led him [Jesus] to the slaughter” (8:2). It is well known in Jewish circles that the priests did indeed lead the heifer from the Temple on Mount Moriah eastward across a double tiered arched bridge (called the Bridge of the Red Heifer) to an altar just outside the camp near the summit of Olivet. This is where they sacrificed and burnt to ashes the Red Heifer. This first century identification of Jesus with the Red Heifer is clear proof that early Jewish Christians connected the sacrifice of the heifer on the summit of Olivet with the death of Jesus which took place in the same vicinity.

But no sacrifices of the Temple were ever connected with the western area of the “Holy Sepulchre.”

While we moderns have wondered if we should use geographical features associated with the sin offerings as having literal geographical relationships to actual events in the life of Jesus, such usage were commonly applied by biblical writers. Matthew symbolically associated a prophecy about Israel coming out of Egypt with Jesus and his stay in Egypt. While “Israel” of the prophecy could only symbolically refer to Jesus, Jesus still had to have been literally in Egypt for the symbol to be applied in any sensible way. Also, the symbolic teaching of Rachel weeping in Ramah could only be applied to

those in Bethlehem because that is where Rachel's cenotaph was located. Also, Isaiah's reference to the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali could only apply to Jesus because these lands were in Galilee where Jesus taught. Thus, the geography associated with the symbols must be literal even if the symbols are not.

As an example, note a further geographical reference in the Book of Hebrews associating the sin offerings of the Temple with the crucifixion of Jesus. The author stated that Jesus carried his reproach (the cross-piece for his crucifixion) to an altar located "outside the gate," even "outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:10-14). There was the literal altar on Olivet that matches the author's illustration. Indeed, in this case the author used the Tabernacle of Moses as his standard of reference (the Jewish authorities did the same thing in the Mishnah about a century later). It is important to note that the Tabernacle only had eastern gates. By using the Tabernacle as a standard, this points to the "gate" through which Jesus went to his crucifixion as being the east gate in the outer wall surrounding the Temple. Interestingly, this eastern gate was the same gate through which the major sin offerings and the Red Heifer were taken to Olivet. The roadway through that eastern gate was designed specifically by the Jewish authorities to lead directly to the altar "outside the camp" where the Red Heifer was burnt to ashes. Early Jewish Christians were keenly aware of these ritualistic connections of the sin offerings with the death of Jesus. Geographically, these historical and biblical texts about his crucifixion direct us to Olivet.

Furthermore, this Red Heifer altar was located just "outside the camp" which was at least 2000 cubits east of the Hall of the Sanhedrin then situated at the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the Temple, located on the left side of the Altar of Burnt Offering (Middoth 5:4; Sanhedrin 11:2; Yoma 25a). Indeed, just before Jesus was crucified, he was actually condemned to be executed while he stood before the Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones on the Temple Mount (see Shabbath 15a and Rosh ha-Shanah 31a,b). Since it was then the Passover season, the chief priest (the president of the Sanhedrin who was Caiaphas) and his deputy (Annas, the Sagan) were required to be resident in their quarters within the precincts of the Temple. They were then living in their official "houses" which were located in the Temple compound itself (Middoth 5:4; Encyclopaedia Judaica iii.991). This is when the top priestly authorities left their own private houses (no doubt located on the aristocratic southwest hill of Jerusalem) and they took up residence within the Temple itself.

There were special times in the Jewish ecclesiastical year when residence within the Temple was essential for the High Priest and his deputy. For the seven days prior to offering the Red Heifer, the High Priest had to stay in his Temple "house" called the "House of Stone" (Parah 3:1). For the seven days prior to the Day of Atonement the High Priest had to reside within his "house" on the Temple Mount (Yoma 1:1). Though Josephus did not mention the Temple residency of the priests, he did state that such attendance at the Temple was a requirement for weekly Sabbaths, new moons and annual festivals (War V.230). Since Jesus was judged by the Jewish authorities at the Passover season, Caiaphas and Annas were not at their private homes during Jesus' interrogation. Jesus was judged by the chief priests and condemned by the Sanhedrin while all parties were within the Temple enclosure. From the Christian point of view, this meant that Jesus was judged

to die in his own Father's House. He was sentenced to die "in the presence of God" who symbolically dwelt in the Holy of Holies.

After his judgment by the Sanhedrin on the Temple Mount, Jesus was then taken a short distance to the northwest part of the Temple courtyard where there was a stairway that led to Fort Antonia where Pilate was amongst his troops. Being at Antonia during Passover provided Pilate with a personal command over his resident army in order to properly control the festival crowds in Jerusalem, and especially those within the Temple precincts. After interrogating Jesus, Pilate washed his hands of the matter. Jesus was then led out of Fort Antonia and through the east gate of the Temple (which was also the east gate of Jerusalem) and taken over the two tiered arched bridge of the Kidron Valley to the summit of Olivet near where the Red Heifer was sacrificed — a prominent area in Jerusalem.

This eastern area where Jesus was executed was famous for another reason. Jesus was actually crucified in the official area of Jerusalem that was designed for the execution of criminals and in the region that the Jewish authorities believed was the symbolic place where the whole world would one day be judged by God. This was the area directly east of the Temple but located "outside the camp" of Israel (Numbers 15:35). The limits of the camp were determined in the time of Jesus to be a radius of 2000 cubits (near 3000 feet) from the Court of the Sanhedrin in the Temple (Rosh ha-Shanah 2:5, see also Sanhedrin 1:5 and Shebuoth 2:2 for the authority of the Jewish Supreme Court to set the limits of the camp). This factor alone disqualifies the present sites of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden Tomb from being the place of Jesus' crucifixion (even though outside the walls) because both sites were within the official region of the "camp."

The authorized place of execution for criminals in the time of Jesus had to be at least the Temple Mount, but it had to be in a place where the condemned could see the entrances to the Temple located in a westward direction. The biblical examples for judicial sentencing of people for their criminal acts in the time of Moses show they took place on the east side of the Sanctuary. Women accused of adultery were brought for judgment "before the Lord", that is, to the east entrance of the Sanctuary (Numbers 5:16-31). The two sons of Aaron were judged "before the Lord" on the east side of the Sanctuary (Leviticus 10:1-7). Korah and his Levites were also punished east of the Tabernacle (Numbers 16:41-50).

It was important for official judgments to be rendered and executed east of the Temple. This allowed the judgments to be made "in the presence of God," who figuratively faced east from his Sanctuary. Because of this, both the Sanhedrin and the lesser courts at Jerusalem in the time of Jesus were located in the Temple to the east of the Holy Place (Cohen, Everyman's Talmud, 299). It was reckoned that while God was symbolically sitting in the Holy of Holies, he could watch the proceedings going on in the law courts. God supposedly faced east while sitting on his Temple throne. Thus God in a figurative way had a panoramic view of all the ritualistic and judicial duties of his people which were being conducted east of the Sanctuary. This allowed all ceremonies (both religious and secular) to be done "in the presence of God." It is remarkable that many textbooks written by Christian theologians fail to mention the importance of this eastern area in this regard nor do they show the location of the

altar “without the Sanctuary” (Ezekiel 43:2 1) where the Red Heifer was sacrificed and where the Day of Atonement sin offerings were burnt.

This eastern location was also significant in judicial matters involving capital crimes. Moses demanded that the place of executions had to be “outside the camp” (Numbers 15:35,36). All ritual sacrifices were offered east of the Sanctuary and in full view of God who figuratively dwelt in the Holy of Holies, and the prime sin offerings were burnt “outside the camp” at the summit of Olivet. And in Jewish practice, heinous criminals were required to be their own “sin offerings” in paying for their sins (without having the benefit of an animal sacrifice as a substitute) (Cohen, *ibid.*, 317).

Since the major sin offerings were sacrificed near the summit of the Mount of Olives, this is why criminals were “sacrificed” as being their own sin offerings in the same vicinity. This is precisely the area where the later Jerusalem church believed Stephen was officially executed by the Sanhedrin (Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 185n.1). This was known by the Jews as “the Place of Stoning” (Sanhedrin 6:1,2,3,4). It was just “outside the camp” but in full view of the eastern entrances of the Temple. The Temple curtain in front of the Holy Place could easily be seen from this prospect and the New Testament shows that when the Temple curtain tore in two at the moment of Jesus’ death that the centurion and the others around the crucifixion site viewed that phenomenon taking place (see especially Luke 23:44-47 and Matthew 27:54). From outside the walls of Jerusalem the curtain could only be seen from an elevated site east of the Temple. The area of the “Holy Sepulchre” is disqualified because from there only the back parts of the Temple could be seen. Besides, Josephus shows that the site of the “Holy Sepulchre” was the spot of the Tomb of John Hyrcanus (a respected Jewish king of the Hasmoneans) and such a shrine would never have been selected by the Jewish authorities as a place to execute criminals. But the summit of Olivet is different. Everything fits perfectly.

The Bordeaux Pilgrim in AD. 333 said that at the southern summit of Olivet there was a small knoll or hillock (called in Latin a *monticulus*). In the time of David this region was known as “the Rosh” (that is, “the head”) (II Samuel 15:30) and remarkably the Hebrew word “Golgotha” also means “head” or “skull.” Such a usage shows that “Golgotha” (or “the Rosh”) was a well-known place at the summit of Olivet.

Golgotha was even reckoned among the Jews as being on a mountain. Professor James Tabor in his review of my research in “Secrets of Golgotha” (in the Society of Biblical Literature’s *Critical Review of Books in Religion*, vol.IV, 1991, pp.213-215) gives new information to sustain my thesis for Olivet: “An interesting support of Martin’s thesis, which he does note, is that the Hebrew text of Matthew known as *Even Bohan* refers to the place of crucifixion as Mount (har) of the Skull (see G. Howard, *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988]).” For Golgotha to have been reckoned as a mountain (har) in the Jerusalem area gives the Mount of Olives considerable credentials as being the place of Jesus’ crucifixion. Dr. Tabor, of the University of North Carolina, concludes his favorable review of my research by stating: “All in all Martin’s work is valuable, fascinating, and certainly pioneering. His hypothesis deserves attention from historians, New Testament scholars, and archaeologists.”

There are numerous historical reasons for selecting Olivet as the place of Jesus' crucifixion. In the recently translated Temple Scroll, Yadin pointed out that all people bearing religious defilements which prevented them from entering the holy city or the Temple were directed to stay east of the ideal Sanctuary region mentioned in the scroll (Yadin 177). Evil and defiled people (sinners) were kept east of Jerusalem in order to prevent any "winds of evil" from flowing over the holy city from the west. This is one of the reasons the sin offering of the Red Heifer and those of the Day of Atonement (which were to atone for sins) were burnt to ashes in this eastern area "outside the camp" (Leviticus 4:21; 16:27). Yadin suggested that a part of this eastern region which had been put aside for defiled persons was even referred to in the New Testament (e.g. Mark 14:3).

Since all sin offerings were sacrificed (or "executed") east of the Holy Place of the Temple, and the most important ones were sacrificed further east at the Red Heifer altar on Olivet, this easterly region of the Temple became known as the place where God dealt with sin — where all the sins of the world will be judged. This is one reason why the Kidron Valley separating the Temple from the Mount of Olives became known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the valley where "God judges"). Even to this day Jews, Muslims and Christians consider the summit and western slope of Olivet as the ordained place where God will judge all people in the world for their sins. Charles Warren in Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible listed over fourteen Christian authorities (from the deaux Pilgrim onward) who attested to this belief (II.562). This is why it was important, from the Christian point of view, that Jesus died in this eastern region which was reckoned the judgment place for all mankind. For Jesus to be judged as dying for the sins of all mankind, Christians thought he had to be judged in the place where all mankind were designed to be judged for their sins.

Even Muslims (who inherited many traditional beliefs from the Jews and Christians) firmly believe that the summit and the western slope of the Mount of Olives is the judgment area for mankind. The Encyclopaedia Judaica has an interesting excerpt about this. "All the dead will congregate on the Mount of Olives and the angel Gabriel will move paradise to the right of Allah's Throne and hell to its left. All mankind will cross a long bridge suspended from the Mount of Olives to the Temple Mount, which will be narrower than a hair, sharper than a sword, and darker than night. Along this bridge there will be seven arches and at each arch man will be asked to account for his actions" (IX col.1576). This is the Muslim account.

It is easy to see that this traditional Muslim belief is based on the geography of the Temple and the Red Heifer arched bridge over the Kidron Valley that existed in Jesus' time. Indeed, the Hebrew word for the altar where the Red Heifer was burnt to ashes is miphkad (see Ezekiel 43:21). This word means "muster" or the place where people "congregate" or "gather together." And in traditional teaching, it was at or near this site on Olivet where all mankind would "congregate" to be judged. This teaching can be seen in the New Testament itself. When the Son of Man returns with all his angels, he shall sit on his glorious throne and he will then "gather together" before him for judgment all the nations of the world. Those selected to be on his right hand will go into the Kingdom of God while those on his left will go into the fire of perdition (Matthew 25:31-46). The geographical features of this teaching of Jesus (from the Jewish point of view in the first century) shows Jesus sitting on his glorious throne (which was in the Sanctuary of the Temple) and all

the nations were then depicted as gathering to western slope of the Mount of Olives to face him for judgment. This allowed them to be judged “in the presence of Jesus.” The Book of Revelation also spoke of the wicked being tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (Revelation 14:10). To be judged “in the presence of God” while he sits on his throne locates these individuals at the summit or on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Again, this is why, even to Christians, the region of the Kidron Valley became known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat — the place for God’s judgment.

Conversely, the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre as well as the Garden Tomb are located west and north of the Temple. These sites were in no way areas of judgment, as was Olivet and its western slopes. These sites are further disqualified, though they were outside the western and northern walls of Jerusalem, because they were still located within the 2000 cubits’ zone of the “camp of Israel” as measured from the Sanhedrin located in the Temple.

In conclusion, Christians in Jerusalem as late as the early fourth century knew that Jesus was crucified and buried on the Mount of Olives. In fact, Eusebius (the first Christian historian) stated that the only area to which pre-Constantinian Christians paid any attention in the environs of Jerusalem was the Mount of Olives, and specifically to a cave near its summit (Proof of the Gospel, VI.18). The Acts of John also mentioned the importance of this cave a hundred years before Eusebius (Charlesworth 1.30 1). In another work (The Acts of Pilate), we find that it was described as both a cave and as a tomb in the same context (bk. XII,XIII). Even the tomb of Lazarus had been a cave before it was a tomb (John 11:38).

When one views the evidence carefully, it can be seen that pre-Constantinian Christians reckoned this cave on Olivet to be the ruins of the tomb of Jesus. Prior to Constantine, there is no evidence (either orthodox or heretical) that the later site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the western part of Jerusalem was in any way significant to Christians nor was the southwest hill important that came to be called “Sion” after the time of Constantine. Indeed, when Eusebius first heard in A.D. 326 that Constantine and his mother were selecting a Venus

Shrine as the site of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, he stated that such was “contrary to all expectation” (Life of Constantine 111.28). At the dedication of the “Holy Sepulchre” in A.D.335, Eusebius requested Constantine to inform the assembled bishops his reasons for building that church, The reasons were “SECRET to us [Eusebius and the bishops], but known TO YOU ALONE. . .which caused YOU to RAISE UP this sacred edifice” (Oration of Eusebius, XVIII, emphasis mine). There were no historical documents or traditions which were retained by Christians at Jerusalem to support its legitimacy. It was selected because of the dreams, visions and supposed miraculous signs associated with Constantine and his advisors. The early church historian Sozomen felt that historical records were not necessary when visions and dreams presented the “real facts” to the Christian world (History 11.1).

Eusebius showed in his works written before A.D.326 that Jesus was actually crucified on what he called the symbolic “Mount Sion” for Christians. Three times in his Proof of the Gospel (I.4; VI.13; IX.14) he identified the Christian “Mount Sion” as being where Jesus spent most of his time when he

was in the area of Jerusalem and that spot was on the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:1; Luke 21:37; 22:39; John 18:2). Eusebius also said the Shekinah left Mount Moriah and went eastward to abide on this Christian “Mount Sion” that was located “adjacent to” or “opposite” Jerusalem and the Temple Mount — an apt geographical description of the Mount of Olives (Proof of the Gospel, I.4; VI.18). To Eusebius, Olivet was where the New Covenant began when the Temple veil tore in two (VIII.2). Eusebius even stated that the Christian church was founded on Olivet (VI.18) and Jerome reiterated the same belief (Letter CVIII.12). And in his commentary on Isaiah (written before A.D.326), Eusebius made the plain statement that this new “Mount Sion” (Olivet) was actually the site of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (Isaiah 2:1-4; see Walker, Holy City, Holy Places?, pp.302,305), This makes the top of Olivet to be Calvary. For more details see my book “Secrets of Golgotha.”

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