



The Half Shekel Journals of 2022 by Pastor Ed Rice
#04 Tue 1 Nov AM Pool of Bethesda, Via Dolorosa, The Cardo
 Somehow we came down off the Temple Mount and started

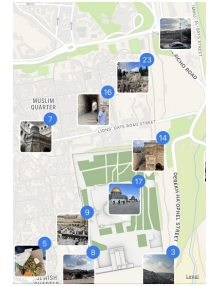
wandering on the narrow streets of Jerusalem. Bev and I thought we were hurrying pretty good for a couple in their 70s, but we were a block or more behind our guide Joe who talked on and walked on out in the lead (Joe was also in his 70s, but very spry). I really had no idea where we were or how we got there, but I saw an El-Ghazali Square sign and clicked a picture, we went out of or into the Lions Gate, and then I clicked a picture of what was promised in



Bev and I caught up with our group in the court of St. Anne's Church, where we sang Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs. Above: Pastor Chalie confers with Pastor Hawkins as Bob & Mellic listen in.



stone to be the birthplace of Mother Mary (I could not read the Latin in the Archway). Eventually we were waiting for entry into what was Saint Anne's Church, "a medieval church, with notable acoustics." Later I found that Shane, Kathy, and Micah's i-cameras had i-locators that produced i-maps showing exactly where



every i-picture was taken. That i-feature was i-amazing and in hindsight, very i-informative, Ae. And, turns out we did go both out of and in through the Lions Gate.

The acoustics were indeed commendable. The group singing when we entered Saint Annes were a blessing to my soul even though I could not understand a word they sang. Our group of fifty assembled in the center of the old church and the building swelled with words I did understand, and the harmonies that echoed and reverberated through that medieval Roman Catholic Church thrilled all our souls. Pastor Chalie and Pastor Hawkins led in several hymns we knew well. There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth, ... we did, and we closed with the building resonating with Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound, and it was indeed Amazing.



We barely walked a block or so from the church before our guide, Joe, had us assembled at the recently (1888) excavated Pool of Bethesda. Pastor Chalie preached it eloquently.



After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water (Jn.5:1-3).

Before its excavation, liberal “scholars” thought this portion of scripture was fanciful storytelling, they still do, but they will soon be “smiling out of the other side of their face”, (as my mother eloquently and often put it). The modernist ecumenical bibles still rip verse 4 right out of their copyright versions¹, because it, with twenty other complete verses, were ripped out of the corrupt manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt. I hold my KJV Holy Bible a little closer every time I read their omission:

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years (Jhn.5:4-5).

Sure enough, the pool called in the Hebrew tongue *Bethesda* was found next to the sheep market, right where the Bible said. The truth that our Lord Jesus Christ said to a certain man that was there, which had an infirmity thirty-eight years, “*Rise take up thy bed, and walk ...*”, that is believed by faith. Bible believers are a strange lot, they believe the Bible. That is one deep excavated pool just inside what is now called the Lions Gate.



We made our way back to the Lions Gate Road and just outside where the Praetorium would have been located we intercepted the Via Dolorosa. Consider here the Via Dolorosa.

And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear

his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, (Matt.27:31-35).

“Via Dolorosa” is a Catholic Latin term meaning “the way of suffering.” Catholics greatly value “suffering” as a means of



And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 2:5)

¹ It is proven by scholars and accepted by liberals, cultists, modernists and now even by the popular evangelicals and fundamentalists, that Matt 17:21 is not supposed to be in my Bible. Should you take your pen knife and cut it out? Would you? You would have to also cut Matt 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, and 46; 11:26; 15:28. So too Luke 17:36; 23:17 and John 5:4. You would have to trash Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom 16:24; and of course I John 5:7. You would also have to rip out most of Matt 5:44 and Luke 9:56 and in Col 1:14 cut out the phrase "Through His Blood." (Ref my Syst Theology for the 21st Cent. Vol 02 Bibliology pg 364.)

punishing themselves until they deserve forgiveness for their sin. Anyone who has been in a Roman Catholic Church probably knows that they venerate and pray through the Stations of the Cross. Here, on the streets of Jerusalem, they venerate and pray through the Stations of the Via Dolorosa.

Now I am not a Roman Catholic, but my mother, Doris Romano Rice, was. She was converted from Catholic to Christ in 1958 when a Baptist preacher named Cecil Palm was going door to door in Gang Mills, New York and knocked on the door of 40 Platt Street. I was born-again saved two years later, and I know some things about Roman Catholic error. “Via Dolorosa” is big-time error.

Rat poison is 99% good rat food and 1% deadly poison. Roman Catholicism has a much higher percent of deadly poison than that, but it always does have a portion of truth mixed in. Indeed our Lord Jesus Christ carried a cross through the narrow streets of Jerusalem. We do not know the exact route taken, or even where such streets were located 1,992 years ago, but we are very very close. That is the truth. Christians, holding a Bible, believe he carried



the cross out of the city to a hill called Golgotha. Catholics esteeming Helena, Empress of the Roman Empire and mother of Constantine I, believe he carried it down a Via Dolorosa to a venerated holy sepulcher under the cathedral she had constructed².

The Roman Catholic deadly error is in the idea that piously and patiently praying through the Stations of “The Way of Suffering”, or their fourteen Stations of the Cross, constitutes “doing penance” which therein secures forgiveness of sin.

Penance is “punishment inflicted on oneself as an outward expression of repentance for wrongdoing ... A sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church often called *sacrament of reconciliation*.”³ Black robed

priests taught Catholics that doing penance, with pious suffering as their punishment, is what forgives sin. Catholics step out of the confessional with an assignment of doing penance for the forgiveness of their sins. If you do not do an adequate amount of penance or suffering in this life, they suppose, you go to Purgatory until the lack is made up. That is Roman Catholic deadly rat poison.



2 After allegedly seeing a vision of a cross in the sky in 312 AD, Constantine the Great began to favor Christianity, and sent his mother, Helena, to Jerusalem to look for Christ's tomb. Three crosses were found near a tomb; one which cured people of disease, the story goes, and this was presumed to be the True Cross Jesus was crucified on. Helena had found Calvary, she supposed, and in 326 AD Constantine ordered that the temple to Jupiter/Venus be replaced by a church. After the temple was torn down and its ruins removed, the soil was removed from a cave, revealing a rock-cut tomb that Helena identified as the burial site of Jesus. A shrine was built, enclosing the rock tomb and it is venerated, prayed to and worshiped by Roman Catholics to this day. (From multiple sources researched by a Baptist Preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Feb 2009.)

3 Oxford Dictionary, MobiSystems, Inc., 2022 sv “penance”.

The Holy Bible says, “*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Lu.13:3,5), but the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate says, “except you **do penance**, you perish.” Every time God says “*repent*”, the Roman Catholic bible says “*do penance*.” Over sixty times in the Latin, or in their finally released, after 1,582 years, English Douay–Rheims Catholic bible, they miss translate “*repent*” to “*do penance*”, when the real Bible, the Holy Bible, never mentions penance! Not one time!

It is corruption, it is Roman Catholic conspiracy against God; every time he says *episcopal*, they say *priest*, and every time he says *repent*, they say *do penance*. Jesus said what he meant and meant what he said when he said, “*I am the way the truth and the life*”, when he said “*call no man father*”, and when he said from the cross, “*It is finished.*” There is no forgiveness of sins found in punishing oneself with penance, nor in any “way of suffering”, or in beads, or “hail Marys” or purgatories, or in water baptisms. His sacrifice paid the full debt, ... and it is finished. Priests prescribing self punishments via penance is feckless; it is rat poison, no matter how well Mel Gibson portrays it.

If you will be forgiven from sin it will only be via the Bible way, as portrayed in Isaiah 53:6 and Romans 10:9 -10.



All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ... That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Isa.53:6, Rom.10:9-10,13).



So we walked the streets of Jerusalem where Jesus carried his cross, for us it was not a way of

suffering, or a way of pious penance; it was a sobering reminder of the price Jesus paid for sin, and it reminded us of the Apostle Paul's charge, “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*”(1Tim.2:5).

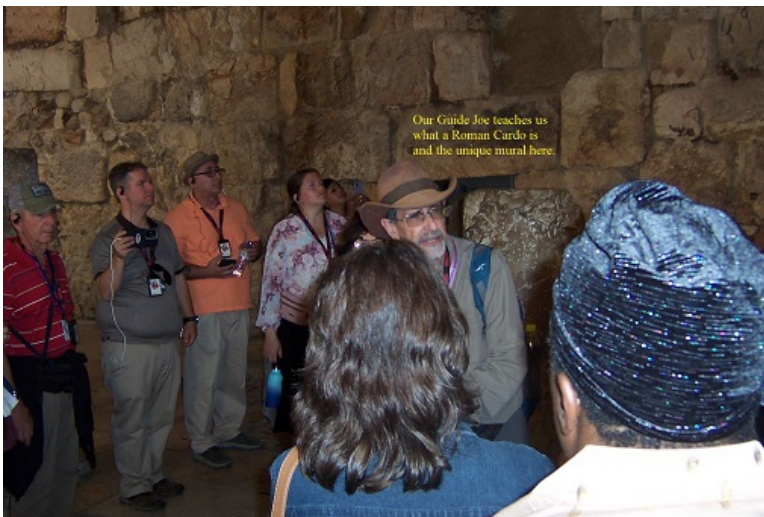


The very narrow streets of Jerusalem were very crowded with tour groups crisscrossing on main avenues lined with shops and sale barkers. Cars, motorcycles, and even miniature garbage trucks squeezed past tourists on other avenues, while some streets

stood completely naked and exposed. It was exhilarating to be here. What an awesome thing, to be making our way across the backside of Jerusalem where markets and souvenir shops selling Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic artifacts all clambered for attention. We turned a corner and, voila, we were in Alabama.

On the narrow David Street, leading from Jaffa Gate to the Western Wall, Hani Imam opened a store called “Alabama The Heart of Dixie.” Whoda thunk Nick Saban would have an autographed picture just off the Via Dolorosa? The autograph says, “To Hani, Roll Tide, Nick Saban.”

The Palestinian born Hani Imam studied engineering at the University of Alabama and lived in Tuscaloosa from 1984-1994. ... “I went to school in Alabama, and I am a big Alabama fan. My family and I love Alabama football and are very proud of Coach Saban and the program,” Imam said. “No one expects an Alabama store here, but everyone loves it. ... I have to say 'Roll Tide' quite a few times a day in the summer.”⁴ Imam sells T-shirts with the



University of Alabama logo along with the state’s name in Arabic and in Hebrew. University of Alabama logos are printed on mugs, plates, hats, car tags and just about everything you can think of. Jerusalem is an amazing mix of cultures. We had followed the Via Dolorosa from the Muslim Quarter to the Christian Quarter and we were now headed toward “The Cardo” in the Jewish Quarter.

Jerusalem proper, after 1860 called the Old City, is today traditionally divided into four quarters; it has been since the 19th century. The Jewish Quarter is the western hill of the historical Old City, which has been part of the pre-medieval walled city since the First Temple period in King Hezekiah's day. The Muslim Quarter is the north-west corner of the Old City, from the Temple Mount area around the Lions Gate, Herod's Gate and the Damascus Gate. The Christian Quarter is the south-west corner of the Old City; it should be called the Catholic Quarter as it contains the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and forty other Catholic holy places.

4 Shamsi-Basha, Karim, blog article, January 21, 2016, <https://alabamane.wscenter.com/2016/01/21/nick-saban-and-the-alabama-crimson-tide-found-on-the-streets-of-jerusalem/> accessed 11/22/2022



The Armenians have a quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem because Armenians have had a strong presence in the city since the fourth century. Armenia, the nation, in the mountainous Caucasus region between Asia and Europe, is among the earliest Christian civilizations; it is a former Soviet republic, and their Jerusalem quarter is its oldest living Armenian diaspora⁵ community. Our guide Joe explained (on Day 5



as we passed by the quarter on our way to/from Caiaphas' Palace) that the Armenian Quarter is completely closed off with their own wall within a wall. The Armenians parallel Judaism in that they have their own language that no one else speaks, their own homeland always occupied by foreigners, they marry only their own, and they have been continually persecuted and have tasted the hatred of genocide.



After leaving Alabama-Jerusalem with large smiles we came to “The Cardo.” Romans liked to decorate the main thoroughfare in the heart of a city with spectacular stone columns. Joe explained, the Cardo in Jerusalem was first evidenced in a mosaic map of Jerusalem found on a church floor in Jordan. A portion of the 6th century street was excavated in the 1970s and Joe enjoyed explaining the mural uniquely displaying what it might have looked like.

As we made our way toward the Zion Gate we had a relaxing lunch hour before we were to reunite with Eiad and the tour bus that would take us to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane. Oh, and Kathy found a jewelry store named after our granddaughter, Moriah, she took i-photos.



5 Oxford Dictionary, MobiSystems, Inc., 2022 sv “diaspora” people who have been dispersed from their homeland.



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#05 Tue 1 Nov PM Mount of Olives, Gethsemane