



The Half Shekel Journals of 2022 by Pastor Ed Rice
#13 Fri 4 Nov Caiaphas' Palace, Golgotha, and Garden Tomb.

We were up at dawn on our fourth morning at the Dan hotel in Jerusalem. The highlight of the holy land tour is visiting the empty tomb and today was the highlight. The kosher buffet breakfasts each morning were superb. We enjoyed breakfast with Shane and Kathy, Micah and Harrison. We talked about the plans for the day but knew very little about our first stop at Caiaphas' palace; and no one here knew enough Latin to understand what “Gallicantee” was all



words to memorize¹, gave the translations for the Latin “Gallicantee”, and explained, with unguarded excitement, what we would be doing in the south west corner of Jerusalem. We passed by Zion's Gate, pictured here. It was a war torn stalwart, and riddled with 50 cal bullet holes. They caught my attention because a 50 cal Gatling gun was mounted in the tail of the B-52 I worked on in another life. We mounted a similar Gatling on the A-10 Warthog – Tank Killer and it blasted out such a trail of lead that the recoil actually stopped the forward progress of the airplane. It actually propelled the 14 ton aircraft backward! One does not forget things like that. I put my thumb in a hole in the old gate of Zion where a 50 cal round had chipped out a significant chunk of rock. I was sure it did not come from a Gatling gun. The thousands

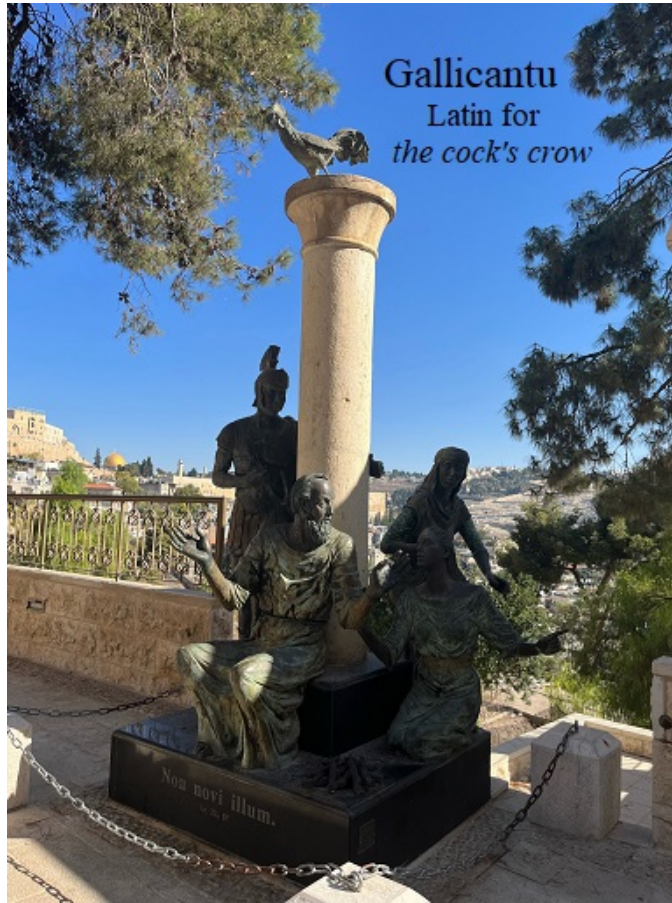
about.

We did not linger over breakfast; it was wise to avoid being the last on the bus. Every bus excursion through Jerusalem was a great adventure; today’s trip all the way to the Zion gate was through some new territory, as near as I could tell. Our guide Joe pointed out some places of interest that whizzed by, gave us a couple more Hebrew



¹ I jotted all these Hebrew words down in my notebook, but the Hebrew phonics I jotted down in a jostling, bouncing bus doing high-speed maneuvers through narrow streets, turned out quite unintelligible; in hindsight, I should have noted the English equivalent, not the Hebrew phonics, then I could have translated to Hebrew in retrospect

of rounds that struck this gate were quite insignificant to the massive old gate of Zion. I tried to quote Palms 2: 1– 4, as I stood at Zion's war torn gate.



“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision ... Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.” (Ps.2:1-4,6)

When I was a teen in Tuscarora Baptist Church we sang a song that said, “We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion, we are marching upward to Zion the beautiful city of God.”

I asked a deacon of the church, “Where in the world is Zion, and why are we marching there?”

Mr. Sylvia said, “I have no idea, but I sure do love that song.” Today, I believe 2Timothy 2:15 is pertinent to every believer. God wrote things down so we can “know”, and “rightly divide” the word of truth.

Pastor Chalie opened his Bible in a small meeting area outside of Caiaphas' palace. There was a statue of Peter nearby, he was crouching by a fire in a crowd of hostiles. A rooster stood on a pole overhead. We are not listening for “Gallicantee”; because of what Jesus did, we are listening for a trumpet, and we’re marching to Zion.

Pastor rehearsed the scriptures that brought Jesus from Gethsemane to Caiaphas' palace. Very familiar scriptures, but they reverberated with life anew as we stood here and saw in our minds eye Caiaphas all robed up, and Peter hovering in the shadows. We descended into a dungeon beneath the palace. We all squeezed in. It was tight for 50 people, very tight. The stairs were full, the atmosphere was laden with somber worship. Pastor Chalie read some more scriptures and then he read from psalms chapter 88.



“O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee: 2 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; 3 For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. 4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: 5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. 6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. 7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. 8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.” (Ps.88:1-6)



It became clear what happened here 1,950 years ago. Almost spontaneously the dungeon filled with singing, Blessed Assurance Jesus is Mine,... I Stand Amazed in the Presence of Jesus the Nazarene,... I love you Lord,... , and my favorite:

Alas and did my saviour bleed and did my sov'reign die; Would he devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?

Chorus: At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, And the burden of my heart rolled away; It was there by faith, I received my sight, And now I am happy all the day.

2 Was it for crimes that I have done he groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity grace unknown and love beyond degree.

3 Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut His glories in, When Christ, the mighty Maker, died For man, His creature's sin.

4 Thus might I hide my blushing face While His dear cross appears. Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, And melt mine eyes to tears.

5 But drops of grief can ne'er repay, The debt of love I owe; Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'Tis all that I can do.

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light, And the burden of my heart rolled away; It was there by faith, I received my sight, And now I am happy all the day.

As we came up from the dungeon, there was a placard on the wall which said:

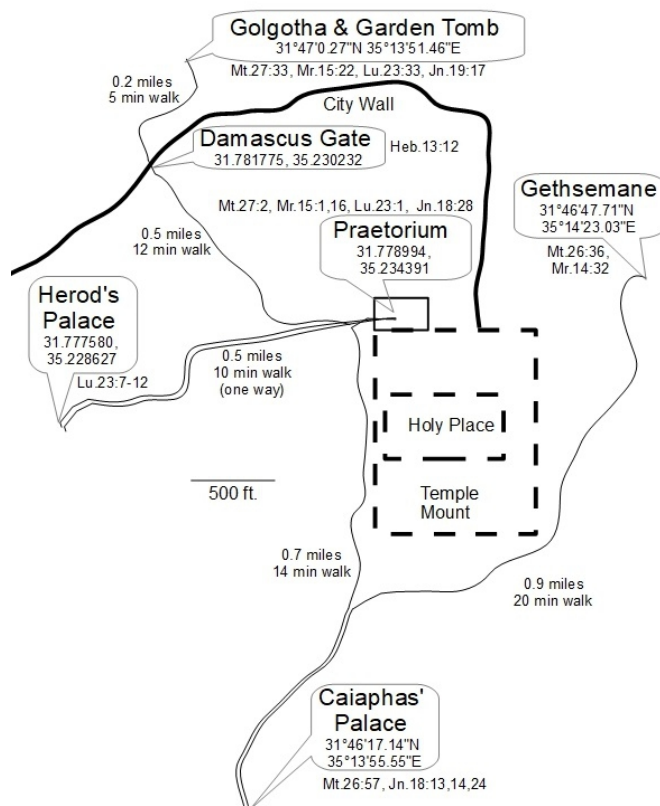
“Underground caves (Prison) When these underground caves were rediscovered in 1889, their physical characteristics, their proximity to Caiaphas palace, and their contiguity with the Sacred Pit (dungeon), all suggested the public jail where, according to a 4th- century Jerusalem tradition not recorded in the gospels, Jesus would have been scourged not only by Pilat, but also by Caiaphas, and where the apostles Peter and John would have been held and scourged for preaching the name of Jesus in the temple area after the resurrection (Acts 4:15-22).



Aided by the context, Christians traditionally recall here some of the painful sufferings endured by Jesus during his Passion, regardless of where they took place, as well as by the apostles, the first believers in his name.” (From a wall placard in excavated caves near Caiaphas' Palace)

As we came out of the dungeon, I was disturbed that in scripture, I had only vaguely visited these premises before. In all the times I had read the scriptures that Pastor Chalie rehearsed today, I never previously spent any significant time with Jesus, here in Caiaphas' house. I have never walked from Gethsemane with him, came down the Kidron valley, crossed by the southern steps of the temple, traversed the city of David, and entered this palace area.

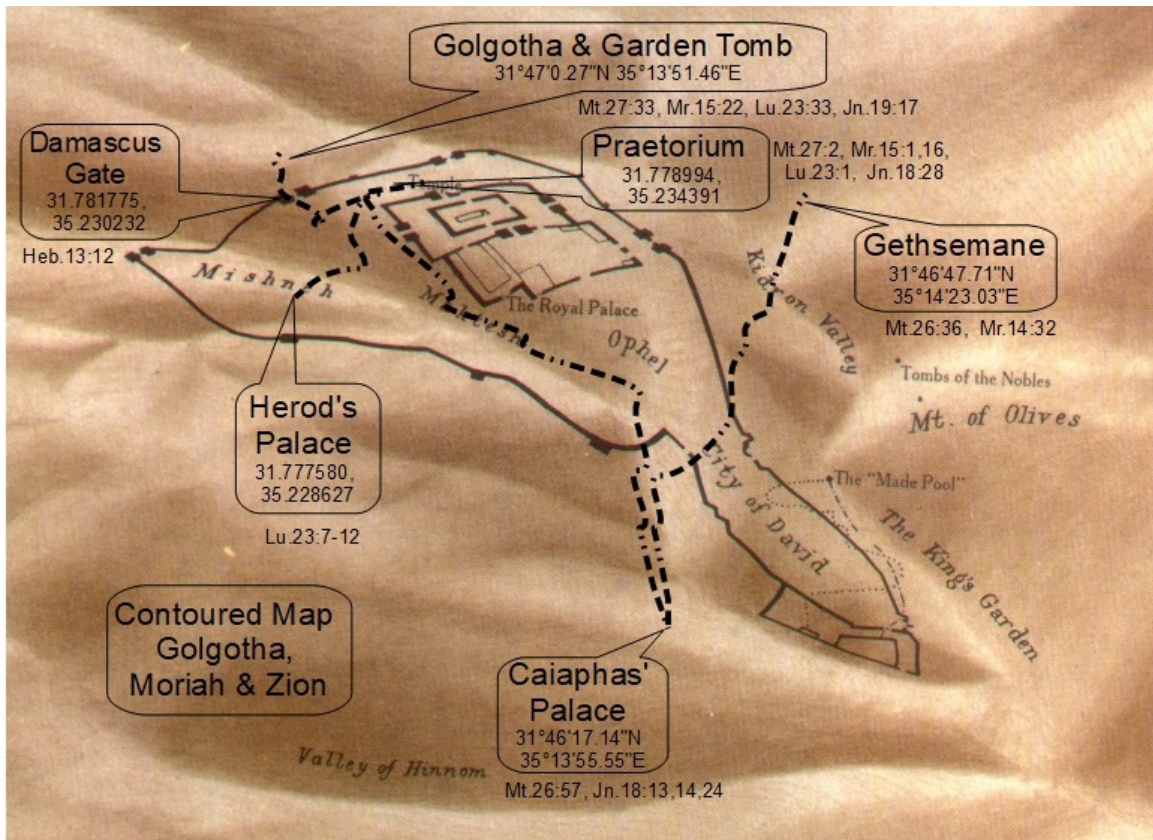
I stood outside and looked toward the temple mount. I imagined the route from Gethsemane to here, and then the route from here to Pilots judgment hall in the Praetorium, then to Herod's Palace, then back to Pilot.



When Jesus left the Praetorium-Judgment Hall, bearing his cross and escorted by Roman soldiers, he would have gone out into the streets of Jerusalem, turned north toward the Damascus Gate, and gone outside of that gate to the hill called Golgotha (Mt.27:33, Mr.15:22, Lu.23:33, Jn.19:17).

The the Roman Catholics, armed with the authority of a Roman emperor, suppose, that conversion to Christianity can be compulsory, and they suppose that forgiveness can be obtained by following a “way of suffering.” They eloquently phrase it in Latin “Via Dolorosa”, and imagine several stations of suffering. Bible evidence, however, takes the Savior from Pilot's washed, but unclean hands, out of his judgment hall to the hill called Calvary. The route taken, according to our iPhone photos with their iPhone locations, would be out the Damascus gate to

Golgotha, right near to the garden tomb. The map I sketched out shows a scale model of this whole 3 mile journey from Gethsemane to the tomb.



The location of each point is noted at the close this journal entry, and your own google map of the route can be made by following the directions given. I have found the path our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ took from Gethsemane to Golgotha little studied, but it is the most important three mile walk in world history. Praise be to his name.

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain,
 One day they nailed Him to die on the tree;
 Suffering anguish, despised and rejected; Bearing
 our sins, my Redeemer is He.
 Chorus
 Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me; Buried,
 He carried my sins far away;
 Rising, He justified freely forever: One day He's
 coming—O glorious day!

One day they left Him alone in the garden, One
 day He rested, from suffering free;
 Angels came down o'er His tomb to keep vigil;
 Hope of the hopeless, my Savior is He.

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,
 One day the stone rolled away from the door;

Then He arose, over death He had conquered;
 Now is ascended, my Lord evermore.

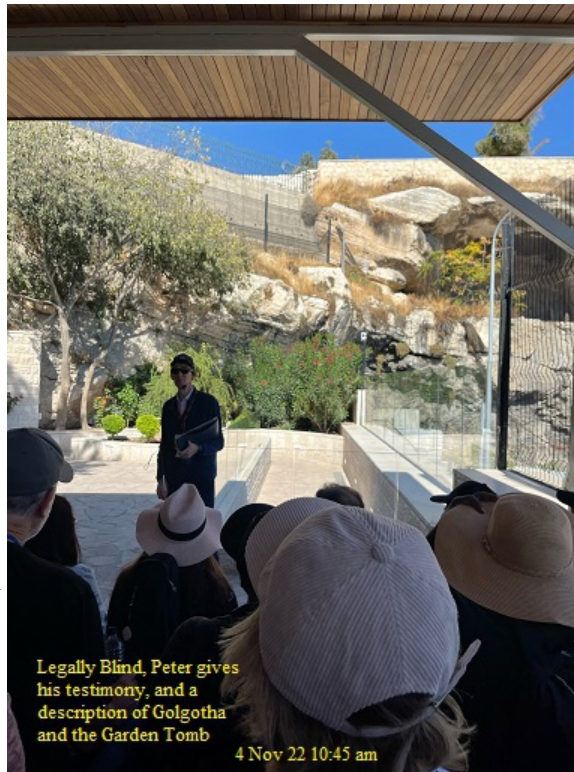


One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
 One day the skies with His glory will shine;
 Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing;
 Glorious Savior, this Jesus is mine!

Chorus
 Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
 Buried, He carried my sins far away;
 Rising, He justified freely forever: One day
 He's coming—O glorious day!

We boarded the bus and headed to the garden to tomb. Beside a hill, obviously shaped and fashioned like a human skull, just outside the Damascus gate of the city of Jerusalem, is found an empty, rock-hewn tomb in a garden area.

Listen, I do not know just what that little knob of rock, in the land of Moriah, looked like 1,872 years before the birth of Christ when Abraham took his only begotten son,



Isaac, to this mountain (Genesis 22). It is possible that this very mound of rock was shaped like a human skull on that day. It is further possible that God pointed to the skull shaped mound, and told Abraham to build an altar there and offer his only begotten son.

Listen, I don't know for sure, what this little knob of rock looked like 1,063 years before Christ got here, when the shepherd boy named David brought the skull of

one Goliath, and left it here in Jerusalem (1Sam.17:54). I think he left it on a skull shaped hill, on Mount Moriah. That skull signified victory over the Philistines, this skull shaped hill was to signify victory over death. Where Abraham offered his only begotten son, is the same hill where God offered his.

God's only begotten Son, however, shed his blood and died as the perfect lamb of God, and he became the propitiation for our sins (Rom.3:25).

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:25 Whom God



hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom.3:24-26)



It may have been the hand of man who took stone from this rock quarry just outside the Damascus gate of the city of Jerusalem, it may have been the hand of man, I say, that formed the shape of the skull where they found Goliath's head, and knew that Abraham offered his son, but I believe it was the hand of God, because he, more than any man, knew what would be offered there.

*“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. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. 33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, **a place of a skull**, 34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my*



garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there” (Matt.27:31–36, Cf Mark 15: 20–25, Luke 23:33, John 19:16–18).



A legally blind guide named Peter of Oxford England, stood before us and pointed to the old rock quarry's knob that still resembled the face of a human skull. With amazing dexterity blind Peter of Oxford held up an enlarged photograph of what Golgotha looked like a hundred years ago. He pointed out the hill beside us, and its features that remained after erosion and vandalism had taken a toll. “Romans crucified their criminals outside the city and in very public locations. Right here where the Damascus Road meets the Jericho Road was a most popular crucifixion place, and since it was beside a skull shape, it was, in all probability, where they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Peter of Oxford then gave his testimony, telling how he came to Christ, and called on him as his Savior. His dramatic closing



statement was “I once was blind but now I see.”

He went on to describe the 1894 Garden Tomb Association, founded to develop the site where the rock-hewn tomb was discovered in 1867. In 1883 General Charles Gordon found this outcropping of rock that came to be called “skull hill”; it fit the Bible description of Golgotha. The Garden Tomb Association has been the caretaker of the site since its founding. There are Catholic trained naysayers about its authenticity, but the 450,000 visitors annually support the predominant belief that this is genuine. Blind Peter of Oxford explains for all, “It’s not so much about the place, as it is about the Person.”

We gathered at the worship area near the garden tomb. Pastor Chalie read some scriptures and we sang together. Then, gathered in an alcove between Golgotha and the Empty Tomb, we had a communion service together.



A genuine convert to Christ is to follow the Lord in public believers baptism, and then regularly be present at the Lord's table to publicly observe communion. These are two ordinances of the local church. They are not sacraments, there is no magical or mystical aspect to these ordinances. Baptism by immersion is a convert's initial public admission, before God and everybody, that they are born-again, blood-bought, justified and redeemed to God through Christ, converts. And the Lord's table observance that Baptists call communion, is a public testimony declaring, I am still in perfect communion with my Lord and Savior, and in sweet communion with these believers, in this local church. Both baptism and communion are ordinances administered by the local Bible believing church. These are basic Bible doctrines. By them Baptists are named, and for them no little Baptist blood

has been spilled. Consequently, many of us are passionate about guarding their authenticity and practice within the local, autonomous, independent, Biblical, New Testament church. Understandably so. This little gathering of fifty believers on a guided tour to the holy land was not organized nor chartered as a Baptist church, but our having

sweet communion together, at the garden tomb, was, ... precious, and generally, I trust, understood by each participant in its larger context.



Each of us had the opportunity to visit the empty tomb. The location is right and accurate, “skull-hill” fit the title Golgotha, it was located outside the gate, it was at a public crossroads, the rock-hewn tomb was right and accurate, and the whole experience of communion here, praying here, and worshiping here was surely the highlight of a holy land tour to Jerusalem, Israel.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from



heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. (Matt.28:1-8)



The Empty Tomb.
Photo 4 Nov 2022
31°47'2.31"N 35°13'48.85"E

The Way of the Cross, a 3 mile worthwhile walk: Start at Garden Gethsemane 31°46'47.71"N 35°14'23.03"E (Mt.26:36, Mr.14:32), walk 20 min 0.9 miles to Caiaphas' Palace 31°46'17.14"N 35°13'55.55"E (Mt.26:57, Jn.18:13,14,24), walk 14 min 0.7 miles to Praetorium site 31.778994, 35.234391 (Mt.27:2, Mr.15:1,16, Lu.23:1, Jn.18:28), walk 10 min 0.5 miles to Herod's Palace 31.777580, 35.228627 (Luke 23:7-12), walk 10 min 0.5 miles back to Praetorium 31.778994, 35.234391, walk 12 min 0.5 miles to Damascus Gate 31.781775, 35.230232 (Heb.13:12), walk 5 min 0.2 miles to Golgotha & Garden Tomb 31°47'0.27"N 35°13'51.46"E (Mt.27:33, Mr.15:22, Lu.23:33, Jn.19:17). May God bless your walk.

Google can make you a Way of the Cross walking map with these directions: In your browser search, paste "Google Maps 31°46'17.14"N 35°13'55.55"E"; Click on the map then Click Directions and the little walking icon at the top, it will ask you a starting point, paste in 31°46'47.71"N 35°14'23.03"E; It will now show a walking path from Al-Mansourieh Street (Gethsemane) to Saint Peter in Gallicantu (20 min 0.9 miles); Click the Add destination button and paste in 31.778994, 35.234391; It now shows the walking path from Caiaphas's Palace to Pilot's Praetorium, Again Add destination and paste in 31.777580, 35.228627; Again Add destination and paste in 31.778994, 35.234391; It shows the walk out to Herod's Palace and back to the Pilot's Praetorium; Again Add destination and paste in 31.781775, 35.230232; and finally Add destination and paste in 31°47'0.27"N 35°13'51.46"E which shows the path from Pilot's Praetorium to the Garden Tomb (except for the little backtrack to get to a crosswalk and across the present day four lane highway). May God bless your map making.