



The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed Rice
#23013 Wed 22 Mar Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Bethesda

Dawn at the Prima Kings Hotel, found me interrupted from my Bible reading by noises from the streets of Jerusalem, marvelous noises, even glorious. To wake up in a city which the LORD our God chose out of all of Israel's tribes to put his name there (Deut.12:5), well it was still a bit overwhelming for me. And yet here we were. Last night, in the lobby of the hotel, Bev and I read Joshua 8-9 and Psalms 81 from our chronological reading schedule¹ and so this morning, in lieu of our morning reading we moseyed down to breakfast at 6:00 a.m. Food wise, it did not differ from the Kosher breakfast we were now accustomed to, but gathering for breakfast in the Prima Kings Hotel dining facility, with twenty-



Wed, Mar 22, 2023 0730
King-Long Tour Bus



Wed, 22 Mar, 2023 0742
On Mount of Olives
Overlooking Jerusalem

five Pilgrim saints who just spent their first night in Jerusalem, well that was electric. Twenty-two of these pilgrims had never been in Jerusalem before, the three old cogs gave it a synergism that could be felt. It seemed to crescendo as we greeted Eli and Costia at the door of the bus eager to depart for the Mount of Olives.

We were all clutching the little “Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023” booklet that Pastor Lee had given us. Some of us had hung on every word it promised for today. It said:

Day 7 March 22nd 2023.

We Begin our first day in Jerusalem with a great breakfast. We then board the bus for a short time of devotion to set the tone for the day. Now we are off to the Mount of Olives.

1. Our first stop is the Mount of Olives. This is where Jesus ascended back to heaven and is where he will return again to rescue the nation of Israel. Acts 1:1-12, Zechariah 4:1-8.

2. Now we proceed down the mountain to the garden of Gethsemane, where our Lord was betrayed by Judas and began to experience the weight of our sin. Matthew 26:30-50.

3. We now cross the Kidron valley and ascend up to Mount Zion to the traditional site of

the upper room. Somewhere in this area is where Jesus initiated the first Lord's supper. Matthew 26:26-29. What do we take from here?

4. We now visit the Church of Gallicantu. This is where Peter denied the Lord three times. This is the likely place of Caiaphas's house and the place of the beginning of Jesus's trial. John 18:11-27..

5. We now proceed through Zion gate into the Jewish quarter of the old city.

6. We will walk by the cardo, through the old city, past the menorah, to be used in the third Temple, to the Western Wall. This is the holiest site in Judaism. The Jewish people pray here everyday for Messiah to come, and for the restoration of the Jewish temple. First Kings 9:1-3, 2Chronicles 7: 14 - 16. What do we take away from here?

7. We continue through the city to the pool of Bethesda and Saint Anne's Church and Pilate's Hall of judgment. Matthew 27:11-31. What do we take away from here?

8. We end our day in the garden tomb. What a sobering place of joy, worship, and reflection as we take time to observe the Lord's supper together. Matthew 27:32-60, 28 1-7. He is risen!

We now go back to our hotel with hearts full of joy and probably some sore feet. Let's all enjoy a great meal together as we consider all the things we have heard. It is so blessed to be saved by our risen and coming again Saviour.

1 Chronological Bible Read Schedule at www.gsbaptistchurch.com/kjv/bible_read_sched_fam20xx.pdf

The bus loaded at 0700 and Pastor David Elias gave a devotional on prayer before starting our tour day with prayer. Pastor Lee, picking up on that theme, mentioned for prayer the Owens, whose son at Pensacola college was killed, and Larry and Golda who would miss our Wednesday's touring because of sickness. We again United our hearts in prayer for these as Pastor Lee worded our supplication. With two missing from our number we sounded off in roll call, Costia pulled the bus out of the hotel parking lot, and Eli manned the bus microphone. "When God made beauty he gave one to the world, and nine to Jerusalem. When God made knowledge, he gave one to the world and nine to Jerusalem. When God allowed suffering he allowed one in the world, he put nine in Jerusalem."

Eli recited a portion of a Jerusalem Stone poem,.. "For worlds exist within these rocks,



Jerusalem of gold, what more can see the simple man, then words and stories told."



Stones At Night In Jerusalem

Stones of Gold on City Streets,
At night walk in the midst,
Of stories of old and new alike,
Awaken starlit kissed.

For walk alone do many more,
Who see the simple stone,
Awaken now the inner eye,
And see you're not alone.

For worlds exist within these rocks,
Jerusalem of Gold,
What more can see the simple man,
Than words and stories told.

For brain and mind can not perceive,
What's written at the core,
Look inward for the truest truth,
And time shall be no more.

- Pamela Storch

Jesus said of Jerusalem, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not*" (Luk.13:34). Costia turned the tour bus north on Route 60 to skirt the city on our 7 km trip to the Mount of Olives. Eli called it the Jehoshaphat Valley Crossing, making an unspoken reference about God's heritage Israel out of Joel:

*I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into **the valley of Jehoshaphat**, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. ... 12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to **the valley of Jehoshaphat**: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about* (Joel.3:2, 12).



As we stepped off the bus on the Mount of Olives I recited, as best I could, Zechariah 14:4. It was overwhelming to be in this place. This mount was a secluded garden during the time of Christ. It was a Sabbath Day's journey (less than one half mile, Acts.1:12) from Jerusalem, so Jesus was here often, he taught his disciples here, he prayed here, he sweat, as it were great drops of blood here, he ascended to heaven from here 40 days after his resurrection, and here his feet shall stand at his return in the Day of the Lord. *"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south"* (Zech.14:4).



*Mt 21:1-2 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto **the mount of Olives**, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.*

*Mt 24:3 And as he sat upon **the mount of Olives**, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

*Mt 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into **the mount of Olives**.*

*Lu 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in **the mount that is called the mount of Olives**.*

*Lu 22:39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont², to **the mount of Olives**; and his disciples also followed him.*

*John 8:1-2 Jesus went unto **the mount of Olives**. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*

We are on the Mount of Olives, and I was blessed to preach a short devotional on prayer in a small alcove that overlooked the city of Jerusalem.

2 Webster 1828 Dictionay, s.v. "wont", accustomed; hapituated; using or doing customarily.

Luke 18:1 *“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint”* ... It's curious, I found three *ought-tos* I like in the Bible and this one's the most important; it says in Leviticus 13:14 that men *ought to* work six days a week and rest on the seventh, I like that one; there is one that the woman at the well spoke and said, *“You say we ought to worship at Jerusalem,”* and here we are at Jerusalem. I think we *ought to* worship, ... Praise the Lord.

This *“ought-to”* in Luke 18 is a prerogative for prayer and notice its opposite, if you don't pray you're going to faint. Fainters are worse than sleepers; fainters endanger themselves; they are unconscious; fainters are out of the workforce; fainters occupy other's attention. One can just walk by a sleeper, but if someone has fainted, one has got to take some actions to help them. Fainters, when faint, are one step removed from being brain dead! *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Praying faith is the ability to tap into God's resources to get what you need to meet the needs of others. It is not so much what I want, it is not what I need, but it is to meet the needs of others. Our prayers ought to be intercessory prayers. God has already promised he will meet our needs, but we ought to, again, look to intercede in prayer, and we should be prayers. Think of Christ's prayers, how they were intercessory prayers.

The disciples said, *“Teach us to pray.”* They did not say, *“Teach us how to pray”* and certainly we need to learn to pray. If you were to pray for every meal for a whole minute that's 3 minutes a day, and so in 20 days you could have a *“Sweet Hour of*



Prayer.” So, let me ask you, how long does it take you to have a *“Sweet Hour Prayer?”* I hope it's not weeks.

Luke 18 continues with parables about prayer. That is the opening sentence, to pray and not to faint, the first parallel is given in verses 1 through 8, it is about the unjust judge. The unjust judge said, *“Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me”* (Luk.18:4-5).

The next parable begins in verse 9 *“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.”* Of course we are familiar with that prayer, *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ...”* And so we learn some lessons there about prayer and meekness. Our next account begins in verse 15, the disciples rebuked the



multitude and Jesus rebuked them saying, *“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”* Of course we are to come to our Father in prayer as a child does, and that lesson unfolds there. Another account begins in verse 18 through 30 of this chapter when the Rich Young ruler says *“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”* and he speaks of keeping the law. He supposes he's done all of that, and Jesus says, *“Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”* The man leaves in sorrow, Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Peter says, *“Hello, we have left all and follow thee”*, and he said unto them, *“Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”*

Let me say it again, praying faith is the ability to tap into God's resources, to get what you need to meet the needs of others. He already promises to take care of our needs, and he also said, if we delight in the LORD, he will keep our desires right as well (Ps.37:4).

Now in chapter 18 verse 31 through 34, the Bible says he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, *“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.”*

So, how long does it take you to have a *“Sweet Hour of Prayer?”* We are in the Mount of Olives where Jesus spent much time in prayer. Here in the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed, even to the point where his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, ... And so, it is all together fitting that we learn some things about prayer while we're here today.

All that needed to be said on our first standing on the Mount of Olives could not be said. Our guide Eli described with passion the hill we stood on, and the things we viewed looking down and across the Kidron Valley, and then the skyline of the city of Jerusalem. Pastor Pickett detailed some of the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ from this very Hill.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things,



while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey (Acts.1:6-12).



We were reluctant to leave, but boarded the King-Long tour bus. Precise, and on schedule Costia opened the bus door one inch from the curb, and we stepped out on the street just outside of the Garden of

Gethsemane. In etymology the name “Gethsemane” likely came from the pressing of olives to get olive oil, and in this garden, Jesus was pressed in prayer until he was found, sweating as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luk.22:44). We walked among the olive trees, through the garnished garden area, and came into a beautiful garden alcove that seated us all comfortably.

Pastor Bill Thiessen opened his Bible and began to speak solemnly about what went on here over nineteen-hundred years ago. We knew the text well, but hearing him read it

here, in the garden where it all unfolded, moved us immeasurably. Pastor Bill's charge was decisive and sprang from Mark 14:41..”Don't just sleep on now! ...”



We prayed, and then stayed in Gethsemane until we had well imagined the crowd, led by Judas Iscariot, showing up to take Jesus. As we dawdled toward the bus I was careful to try and pick out the path that that crowd would have taken back down and across the Kidron valley, and up the other side headed toward Caiaphas's palace. After my last tour here (Nov 2022), I had mapped out “The Way of the Cross” which started here in Gethsemane. The Roman Catholics had imagined a “Via Dolorosa”, called their “Way of Suffering” (in Italian, literally, the “Painful Road”) (it led to the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Constantine's mother imagined she found a piece of magic wood that healed people).

Anyway, I wanted to map out a realistic “Way of the Cross.” A way which started at

Gethsemane, crossed the Kidron valley, the Temple's Southern step area, and then went to Caiaphas's Palace, the Praetorium, Herod's Palace, back to Pilot's Praetorium, out to the Damascus Gate, and over to Skull Hill, called Golgotha. That would be the true way of the cross, and it is mapped out with applied scripture references in a map below.



Most any student of Christ could type or paste the latitude and longitude waypoints into Google maps and create their own three mile walking trail in an eloquent topographical map. I did not publish mine because of Google copyright considerations. The full directions are included in a footnote below.³ The Way of the Cross is listed at the end of this journal entry.

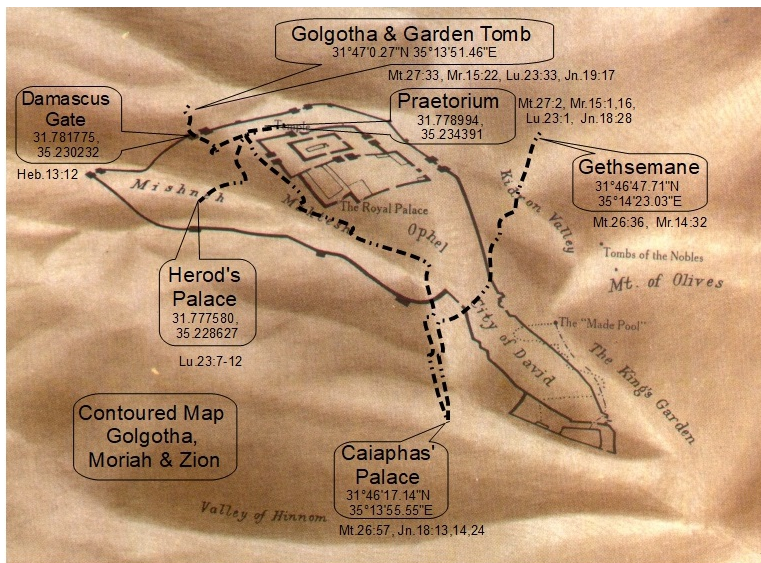
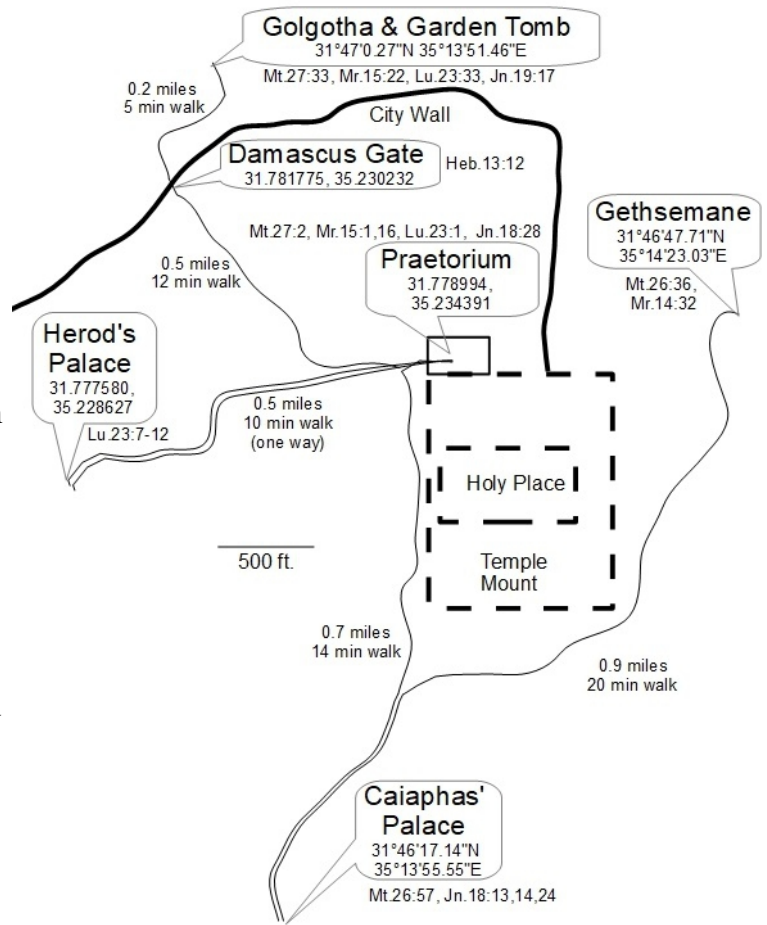
We gathered on the bus and Costia began negotiating the narrow streets of Jerusalem. He was heading us, I presumed, towards the Zion gate. Eli pointed out some landmarks, on your right is the Muslim mosque Jaumund? (an unintelligible scribble in my notes) with its tower of minaret (a type of tower built into mosques, used to project the Muslim call to prayer). As we cross the valley into Jerusalem, we will make our way to the Lions

³ 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.

Gate (31°46'57.85"N 35°14'13.13"E), called that because of the Lions carved there, and according to tradition it flanks Zechariah's tomb (of lions, Zechariah wrote, "There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled" Zech.11:3).

Our schedule was adjusting for crowds of tourists in Jerusalem, and the pool of Bethesda moved ahead of our Zion Gate visit. We disembarked the tour bus and went through the Lions gate, as per usual, our first stop was at some public restrooms and that ploy left us standing outside of Saint Anne's Church. There was an opening in the line of tourists, we assembled in the vestibule and moved towards the front to sing. Saint Anne's is an excellently preserved Crusader Roman Catholic 12th century Church built on the supposed birthplace of Mary by her supposed mother Anne. All that Roman Catholic tarnish aside, the building had remarkable acoustics and reverberating echoes which drew Pastor Lee to organize

a group of guys to sing a special song. As we waited in line it was decided to take full advantage and have the whole group sing a song as well. Soon the chapel walls were



reverberating our echoes of our first and last verses of "Nothing but the Blood." The echoes were awesome, the clarity of the words invigorating.

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain:
O precious is the flow that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
2 For my pardon this I see:

nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my cleansing this my plea: nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

3 Nothing can for sin atone: nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Naught of good that I have done: nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

4 This is all my hope and peace: nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my righteousness: nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

United Methodist Hymnal, 1989

After we sang and filed into the wings, the men's quartet got up and sang. “(notes unintelligible, memory a fog).”

We then all filed out and found the Pool of Bethesda right near the church(31°46'53.57"N 35°14'10.37"E). We gathered at the excavation of the pool, it was by the sheep market, and had five porches like the Bible said. Our Israeli guide Eli was excited to point out some of its history especially of its excavations. Sometimes mere tourists don't get as excited as they ought as they stare at a pile of rocks uncovered in a hole. This pool was first excavated in the late 19th century; it was built over with chapels and churches still visible today; and it took 100 years (late 20th century) for archaeologists to sort out all of its intricacies. Most “scholars”

dismissed that a five-sided pool actually existed. The allegorizing Roman Church taught that it was an unhistorical literary creation. Yet the excavated site revealed a rectangular pool with two basins separated by a wall, making it, a five-sided pool with five porches! Over and over the archaeologists shovel proves man wrong and the Bible accurate, as believers expect. The Roman Church was wrong, Muslims wronger, and the atheists fools (Ps.14:1, 53:1).



After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 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 (John 5:1-4).

Incidentally John 5:4 is completely rip-torn out of modernist ecumenical copyright bibles like the NIV⁴ and John MacArthur's favorite ESV⁵. It is completely torn out and thrown in the trash, along with 20 other verses⁶, all because they are not found in two Alexandrian manuscripts that were recovered from the trash of Alexandria Egypt. Holding a KJV-only position and discarding all modernist ecumenical copyright bibles is wholly justified.

We were gathered in a large walkway overlooking this excavated pool of Bethesda, it was a holy convocation⁷. Pastor Dewey Stewart opened our Bible to John chapter 5 and begin with "After this there was a feast of the Jews ...". Pastor Stewart was a last minute add to our pilgrimage here. Pastor Lee's wife, Donna Pickett,

had been waylaid from attendance by the pending birth of her first grandchild, grandmothers on this trip understood that very well, and it provided a providential opportunity for Pastor Stewart to stand here at the pool of Bethesda with our Bibles open. I have heard Pastor Dewey Stewart preach on several occasions, at Youth Ablaze and at Jubilee, I fondly remember each message, but here, standing on the very place where



Excavated Pool of Bethesda

4 NIV is a registered trademark of the New York Bible Society International, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, standing for "New International Version" and their ecumenical modernist copyright, all rights reserved, 1973 bible.

5 ESV is a registered trademark of the Crossway – Good News Publishers, Wheaton Illinois, standing for "English Standard Version" and their ecumenical, modernist, copyright, all rights reserved, 2001 bible.

6 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." Why have leading fundamentalists and their Bible colleges, like Bob Jones University, accepted this anarchy and taken up their pen knives to cut verses out of the their Bible? What forces are in place that would cause these leading fundamentalists to follow after the liberals and cultists to cut out and discard Scripture verses that honest believers copied and held as sacred and inspired by God for the previous 1900 years? They have followed after modernists and liberals with a flawed method of textual criticism. The tracking of this audacity back to it's diabolic source is strikingly clear. From this author's Systematic Theology Volume 2 Bibliology, page 366.

7 Webster 1828, s.v. "convocation" an assembly called together by summons in which the business of the body is transacted.

Jesus said, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk,” ... well, there is something overpowering about an open Bible in such a circumstance, and the believer knows who He is. Pastor Dewey touched on the verse that the modernists rip-tore out of their bible, but landed on the question “*What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?*” It is about him. It is always about him. It is all about him.



Tourist scooted through the midst of our holy convocation as Pastor Dewey spoke. When we bowed our heads, and he closed this sacred moment in prayer, a passing group stopped, remove their hats, and bowed their heads. The whole busy place paused with reverent silence; prayer was wont to be made.

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.

