

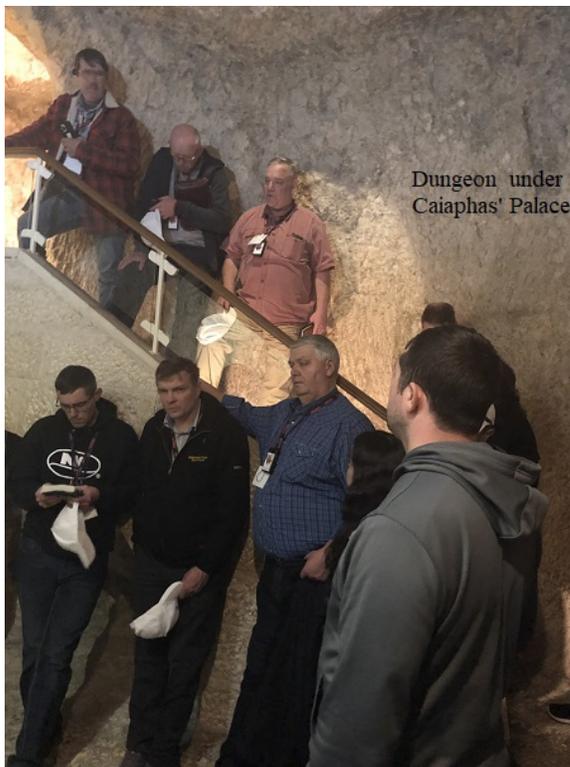


The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed Rice
#23015 Wed 22 March Gallicantu, Caiaphas' Palace & Dungeon

Visiting Caiaphas'

Palace had a profound effect on my thinking.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. 5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. ... 57 ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled (Matt.26:1-5,57).



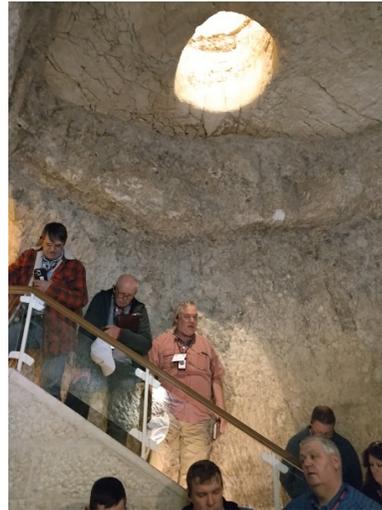
This morning we were at Gethsemane where Jesus prayed and the mob came to take him. They led him, as we already rehearsed, across the Kidron Valley, across the Temple's Southern Steps, and up this Western Hill of Jerusalem to Caiaphas' Palace. The leaders and front runners of the pack were still pondering how Jesus' authority in the garden had driven them back and caused them to fall to the ground (Jhn.18:6). Caiaphas' servant Malcus was now hanging back a little; he kept touching his ear and asking friends if it looked okay (Matt.26:51, Mrk.14:47, Luk.22:50, Jhn.18:10, 26).

We now stood in the courtyard where it is supposed that Caiaphas' Palace once stood. Jesus would have been here awaiting his pre-dawn trial before the high priest Caiaphas. “Galli-cantu” is Latin for “cock crow”, and the church built on this site in Gallicantu has

four different levels to explore; an upper level overlooking Jerusalem, a middle level, an underground guard room, and then a prison/dungeon area. In the middle level 5th century Byzantine-era mosaics were discovered in excavation. The three large mosaics show Jesus and his disciples at the last supper, Jesus bound and questioned in the house of Caiaphas, and one depicting Peter in ancient papal dress.

Of course the mosaic dress on Peter came about because Roman Catholics pretend, with no evidence, that Peter was a Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. That “church”, founded by Emperor Constantine the Great, as it were, who forced his form of “Christianity” to be the main religion of Rome while he was emperor from 306-337 (or maybe, via a National Geographic's guess 280-337). We do know, of course, and however, that Peter was martyred in the first century, shortly after he penned his second epistle, likely 66 AD.

In any event it was the lower levels on this site that riveted our attention. There was a guard room, and below that a dungeon area or prison cell both hewn out of bedrock. The guard room contained wall fixtures to attach prisoners chains, and holes in the stone pillars would have held prisoner's hands and feet. We descended into the lower levels. While assembling in a dungeon area, obviously hewn from the bedrock, we broke out in song,



Alas! And did my Sav-iour bleed?
And did my Sov-'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head, For such a worm as I?
At the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light,
And the bur-den of the my heart rolled a-way,
It was there by faith I re-ceived my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!

The echoes of our harmony subsided; Eli, our guide began to detail where we were, and why we were here. It was somber. Pastor Lee Pickett sang a solo that further captured the moment. We prayed together, and made our way up the narrow stairway out of the dungeon area. Like many sites in Jerusalem, this might not have been the actual prison cell that held our Lord Jesus Christ as Caiaphas the high priest held him for trial nineteen-hundred years ago, but it might well have been. (Travel Journal notebook end, Sword Journal notebook begin)

We ascended from the dungeon area to the courtyard above. There was a statue of a rooster, a woman questioning Peter, and her friend, and a Roman soldier standing behind a stone pillar. Inscribed at the feet of Peter's statue is the Latin phrase, "*non novi illum*", "I do not know him."

Peter's denial of Christ is recorded in all four Gospels (Matt.26:69-75; Mrk.14:66-72; Luk.22:56-62; Jhn.18:15-18, 25-27). The four Gospels are in the Bible in the chronological order of their writing, and depict four perspectives of our Saviour, as King in Matthew, as Servant in Mark, as Man in Dr Luke's Gospel, and as Eagle or deity, i.e. God in the flesh, in the Gospel of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (Jhn.13:23, 20:2, 21:7, 20). These four perspectives reflect the faces of Ezekiel's vision of God's glory with the face of a Man, Lion, Ox or



Cherub, and Eagle (Ezek.1:10, 10:14).



Modernist ecumenical scholars, infidels, suppose God had no part in our Bible's inspiration, that three unnamed "Evangelists" simply copied Mark's list-like documentation, and they call Matthew, Mark, and Luke, "synoptic gospels"! They call them "synoptic" because, they suppose, their "stories about Jesus" often have similar sequence and wordings. Disavow these scoundrels, and back away from any preacher that is entangled in their pernicious ways. I have heard even Baptist preachers use the "synoptic-gospel" tomfoolery! Make it a point to back away from any preacher who does not understand the pernicious ways of these modernist ecumenical "scholars" or their compromised and copyright bibles, "by reason of whom the way of Truth is evil spoken of" (2Pet.2:2). "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths must be stopped who subvert whole houses, teaching things that they ought not for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus.1:10-11).

We huddled in an alcove of the open courtyard and Deacon Dave Johnson, "holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught," opened our King James Bible's to Matthew 26.



Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. 73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I

know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly (Matt.26:69-75).

Brother Dave teaches our Sunday School Bible studies at GSBC and always ponders between the lines in a unique way. Here standing in Jerusalem, in the courtyard where Peter denied thrice, Dave gave the perspective of three onlookers who heard Peter deny, heard Peter make an oath, and heard Peter curse. Standing just off from a statue of pitiful Peter, Dave's perspective cut into our musing, but more importantly they rang true to the words of God on the topic. Three of the Gospel accounts include Peter's weeping for his blunder, they are powerful accounts. For me the Apostle John gives the most power, and the deepest insight. John reveals,

“And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter” (Jhn.18:15-16).



I read this as a teenager and thought it profound. I mentioned it to others, most thought I was mistaken, or said they never saw that in the Bible. Now that I am old and stricken in years, and I have stood in a palace like this, on a hill of Zion, let me say, the disciple John was known unto the high priest, Caiaphas, and he went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest! Further, that beloved disciple used his influence to get Peter into the compound of Caiaphas' palace. God gave John a first person viewing of

the trial of his only begotten Son. You will have to read between the lines to know how long he stayed, how far he followed, and what all John saw and did between the palace and the cross, but John 19:26 attests he was at the cross.

John did not write his Gospel in the first person, he did write by inspiration. I have

always presumed John was a first person witness to all of Jesus' trial, at Caiaphas' palace, at the Praetorium, at Herod's palace, back to Pilots Judgment Hall (at Lithostrato or the pavement) and then through the Damascus Gate and out to Golgotha, the place now called skull hill. I'll presume John was eyewitness to the whole scene, and wrote extraordinary detail because of that.

It was Dr Luke, the Apostle Paul's relentless shadow, however, that wrote the extraordinary insight, *“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly (Luk.22:61-62).*

As we came down from the courtyard I rolled up a Hebrew copy of Isaiah 53 and slipped it into Peter's open hand. Beverly elbowed me, as if this was an impropriety, but his was, a wide open hand in this courtyard. I love my wife, we make a good team, and she has better discretion than I about improprieties. I wanted to climb over the chain and put one in the open hand of the maiden behind Peter, but Bev was now holding my arm a little tighter.

As we came out the side of the church Eli assembled us overlooking a set of carefully excavated steps; Eli explained. This stepped street, descending from Mount Zion to the Kidron valley, would have been in use at the time of Christ. Regardless of whether Caiaphas' palace was here or further up Mount Zion, Jesus would have used this street, and these very steps, to descend with his disciples from washing their feet at the Last Supper, in the upper room. He would here go down into the Kidron valley headed toward Gethsemane. Jesus walked on these steps. Further this church, built next to the steps, illustrate the tumultuous history of each holy site in the Holy Land.

... A major church built here in 457 was damaged in 529 during the Samaritan Revolt and destroyed in 614 by the Persians. It was rebuilt around 628 and destroyed in 1009 by the mad Caliph Hakim. Rebuilt around 1100 by the Crusaders, it was destroyed in 1219 by the Turks. Then a chapel was built, but it was destroyed around 1300. The present church was completed in 1932.¹



¹ From <https://www.seetheholyland.net/tag/house-of-caiaphas/> “Steps that Jesus trod” para 4, accessed 11/13/2023

We had time to reflect on all we had seen here at Caiaphas' palace, where our Lord Jesus Christ stood in a mock trial before the high priest. Time, but not ample time. Consider all that these steps had seen and heard. They carried our Lord down to Gethsemane. They carried him back up Mount Zion to be tried in the high priest's palace.

At the beautiful Prima Kings Hotel we cleaned up for supper. I pulled my journal notebook and tried to clean my notes a little bit as well. They were fast clogged with unintelligible scribbles that needed context scratched into the margin if they would ever be translated into readable English. Supper was very pleasant. We were all overcome by what we had seen on our first day in Jerusalem. The luxury of the hotel dining facility, and the exquisite kosher meal, gave a nightcap to our day. Not a nightcap of alcohol, praise the Lord, "*Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging*", but a nightcap of reflective conversation, and respectful friendships.



Tomorrow, Day 8 of our pilgrimage, we would visit the Davidson Archaeological Park, and the Temple's Southern Steps.