



## The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed Rice #23017 Thur 23 Mar Golgotha and The Garden Tomb

We boarded the bus and headed to The Garden Tomb. Beside a hill, obviously shaped and fashioned like a human skull, just outside the Damascus gate of the city of Jerusalem, was found an empty, rock-hewn tomb in a garden area. We gathered in an outdoor meeting area, a young lady stood before us and pointed to the old rock quarry's knob that still resembled the face of a human skull, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Skull-Hill.

In her intro she related to our group which were half Canadian, that in 1867, when Canada was made a nation-a<sup>1</sup>, there was a rock-hewn tomb discovered right beside the hill that obviously bore the face of a skull. She held up an enlarged photograph of what Golgotha looked like a hundred years ago, and pointed out the hill beside us; it had obvious skull like 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.”

Skull-Hill is absolutely outside the 1<sup>st</sup> century city wall; as readily proven repeatedly by archaeological discoveries.

Rocks pulled from this quarry, were pulled by Herod the Great and are found in his temple mount. This was called Skull-Hill in oral tradition from the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the Roman Catholic Church selected a location for their Church of the Holy Sepulcher, there was no archaeological evidence for where the city walls of Jerusalem stood. Indeed, towards the end of the 3rd century the over bearing emperor, Constantine, took control of the Roman Church and gave his mother, Helena, unlimited access to the imperial treasury in order to locate the relics of Christianity. Traditionally she is credited with finding the relics of the 'True Cross'. The legend goes



<sup>1</sup> Indeed it was 1 July 1867 when territories of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were united into one dominion called Canada.



that Helena entered a temple of Venus, built by Emperor Harrian on a hill in urban Jerusalem, ordered it torn down, and thereupon found three crosses underneath. A woman from Jerusalem who was at the point of death, recovered suddenly when she touched, not the first cross, nor the second cross, but the third of the three crosses, and Helena declared this the “True Cross.”

Whereupon her son, Emperor Constantine, built the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, also called the Church of the Resurrection, upon this hill that they assumed to be the Hill of Calvary. They found a small cave during construction, cleaned it all out, and called it “The Empty Tomb.” All this myth, superstition, and legend 290 years (325 AD) after the crucifixion and resurrection however, had nothing to do with what the Bible says about Joseph's “*own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock*”, nor about “*Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull*” (Matt.27:33, Mark.15:22, Jn.19:17).

In 1842 Otto Thesnius, searching for the Greek 'Golgotha', rather than the Catholic's Latin 'Calvary', discovered that the revered hill north of the city wall and still bearing the appearance of a skull on its outcropping was much more likely the place of the crucifixion than the urban area where Helena spent her son's treasury.

Our Garden Tomb guide 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 again 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. They do not own the actual hill, it is owned by the Muslim Cemetery on the hilltop, consequently the hill is protected. There are Catholic trained naysayers about its authenticity, but the 450,000 visitors annually support the predominant belief that this is genuine. Our guide then reminded us, “It’s not so much about the place, as it is about the Person.”



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. There Abraham told his son, “*My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering ...*” (Gen.22:8).

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. The hill 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).

We next gathered at the worship area near the garden tomb. Pastor Bill Thiessen opened our Bibles to Matthew's account of the crucifixion, and Christ's glorious resurrection, and together we walked through the sacred events that unfolded on the very ground on which we now stood. Often, when I read these precious Scriptures, I rehearse what was told me years ago, “Be careful not to leave your fingerprints on such a sacred accounting.” We were careful, how could we not be, we sat here between Golgotha and an Empty Tomb.







Each of us had the opportunity to visit the empty tomb. It was extraordinary. A tomb chiseled out of rock, as a rich man's tomb might be. It had a preparation area and room for three bodies to lay entombed. It had a rolling trench that would hold a large stone door that would seal the tomb. Other tombs of the sort might hold several generations of family members, decomposed bones would be ordered into urns inside the tomb. This tomb excavated in 1867 was found with no bones, unused, as it were, which made it extraordinary. 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 being

here, praying here, and worshiping here was surely the highlight of a Holy Land tour to Jerusalem.

*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*



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*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).

Since my youth I have had a 1909 Scofield Reference Bible. It was the first Bible I read from Genesis to Maps as a 13 year old lad. That reference Bible contains five orders of event studies assembled by C. I. Scofield, which impacted and instilled a reverence in me for these holy accounts and the Holy Scriptures. Those studies are listed below; they are 'old-school'.

**Matt.26:20 Note: The order of events on the night of Passover:**

Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 26:20 sat down with the twelve

The order of events on the night of the Passover supper appears to have been:

(1) The taking by our Lord and the disciples of their places at the table;

(2) the contention who should be greatest;

(3) the feet washing;

(4) the identification of Judas as the traitor;

(5) the withdrawal of Judas;

(6) the institution of the supper;

(7) the words of Jesus while still in the room  
Mat 26:26-29; Luk 22:35-38; Joh 13:31-35; 14:1-31.



(8) the words of Jesus between the room and the garden Mat 26:31-35; Mar 14:26-31; Joh 15:16; Joh 15:17  
it seems probable that the high-priestly prayer Joh 17:1-26 was uttered after they reached the garden;

(9) the agony in the garden;

(10) the betrayal and arrest;

(11) Jesus before Caiaphas; Peter's denial.

**Matt.26:57 Note: The order of events on the crucifixion day:**

Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 26:57 led him away

A comparison of the narratives gives the following order of events in the crucifixion day:

(1) Early in the morning Jesus is brought before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. He is condemned and mocked Mat 26:57-68; Mar 14:55-65; Luk 22:63-71; Joh 18:19-24.

(2) The Sanhedrin lead Jesus to Pilate, Mat 27:1; Mat 27:2; Mat 27:11-14; Mar 15:1-5; Luk 23:1-5; Joh 18:28-38.

(3) Pilate sends Jesus to Herod Luk 23:6-12; Joh 19:4.







(4) Jesus is again brought before Pilate, who releases Barabbas and delivers Jesus to be crucified Mat 27:15-26; Mar 15:6-15; Luk 23:13-25; Joh 18:39; Joh 18:40; Joh 19:4-16.

(5) Jesus is crowned with thorns and mocked Mat 27:26-30; Mar 15:15-20; Joh 19:1-3.

(6) Suicide of Judas Mat 27:3-10.

(7) Led forth to be crucified, the cross is laid upon Simon: Jesus discourses to the women Mat 27:31; Mat 27:32; Mar 15:20-23; Luk 23:26-33; Joh 19:16, 17.

For the order of events at the crucifixion, see Mat 27:33.



**Matt.27:33 Note: The order of events at the crucifixion.**

Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 27:33  
“And when they were come unto a place called...”

The Order of Events at the Crucifixion:

(1) the arrival at Golgotha Mat 27:33; Mar 15:22; Luk 23:33; Joh 19:17.

(2) the offer of the stupefying drink refused Mat 27:34; Mar 15:23.

(3) Jesus is crucified between two thieves Mat 27:35-38; Mar 15:24-28; Luk 23:33-38; Joh 19:18-24.

(4) He utters the first cry from the cross, "Father, forgive," etc. Luk 23:34.

(5) The soldiers part His garments Mat 27:35; Mar 15:24; Luk 23:34; Joh 19:23.

(6) The Jews mock Jesus Mat 27:39-44; Mar 15:29-32; Luk 23:35-38.

(7) The thieves rail on Him, but one repents and believes Mat 27:44; Mar 15:32; Luk 23:39-43.

(8) The second cry from the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me," etc. Luk 23:43.

(9) The third cry, "Woman, behold thy son" Joh 19:26; Joh 19:27.

(10) The darkness Mat 27:45; Mar 15:33; Luk 23:44.

(11) The fourth cry, "My God," etc. Mat 27:46; Mat 27:47; Mar 15:34-36.



- (12) The fifth cry, "I thirst" Joh 19:28.
- (13) The sixth cry, "It is finished" Joh 19:30.
- (14) The seventh cry, "Father, into thy hands," etc. Luk 23:46.
- (15) Our Lord dismisses his spirit Mat 27:50; Mar 15:37; Luk 23:46; Joh 19:30.



**Matt.28:1 Note: The order of events resurrection day.**

Scofield Reference Bible Notes - Matthew 28:1 In the end of the Sabbath

The order of events, combining the four narratives, is as follows:

Three women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, start for the sepulchre, followed by other women bearing spices. The three find the stone rolled away, and Mary Magdalene goes to tell the disciples. Luk 23:55-24:9; Joh 20:1; Joh 20:2. Mary, the mother of James and Joses, draws nearer the tomb and sees the angel of the Lord Mat 28:2. She goes back to meet the other women following with the spices. Meanwhile Peter and John, warned by Mary Magdalene, arrive, look in, and go away Joh 20:3-10. Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees the two angels and then Jesus Joh 20:11-18 and goes as He bade her to tell the disciples. Mary (mother of James and Joses), meanwhile, has met the women with the

spices and, returning with them, they see the two angels. Luk 24:4; Luk 24:5; Mar 16:5. They also receive the angelic message, and, going to seek the disciples, are met by Jesus. Mat 28:8-10.





**Matt.28:9**  
**Note: The order of our Lord's appearances.**

Scofield  
 Reference Bible  
 Notes - Matthew  
 28:9 Jesus

The order of our  
 Lord's appearances  
 would seem to be:

On the day of his  
 resurrection:

(1) To Mary  
 Magdalene Joh  
 20:14-18.

(2) To the women  
 returning from the  
 tomb with angelic  
 message Mat 28:8-  
 10.

(3) To Peter,  
 probably in the  
 afternoon Luk 24:34;  
 1Co 15:5.

(4) To the  
 Emmaus disciples  
 toward evening Luk  
 24:13-31.

(5) To the  
 apostles, except  
 Thomas Luk 24:36-  
 43; Joh 20:19-24.

Eight days  
 afterward:

(1) to the  
 apostles, Thomas  
 being present Joh  
 20:24-29.

In Galilee:

(1a) To the seven

by the Lake of Tiberias Joh 21:1-23.

(2) On a mountain, to the apostles and five hundred brethren 1Co 15:6.

At Jerusalem and Bethany again:

(1) To James 1Co 15:7.

(2) To the eleven Mat 28:16-20; Mar 16:14-20; Luk 24:33-53; Act 1:3-12.

To Paul:

(1) Near Damascus Act 9:3-6; 1Co 15:8.

(2) In the temple Act 22:17-21; Act 23:11.

To Stephen: outside Jerusalem Act 7:55.

To John: on Patmos Rev 1:10-19.





We had another sacred stop to make today. It was not a Bible time sacred, it was *Yad Vashem*, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center.



Near Garden Tomb  
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