

GOING DEEPER

ACTS Israel Tour 2018

DAY TEN: ARREST, TRIAL, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION

Today we walk through the events of the last few days of Jesus' life. We will begin our day on top of the Mount of Olives.

Key Thought for Day Ten

Just as the events we remember today were at the centre of Jesus's ministry, this day is in many respects the centre of our tour. All that has come before has prepared us for this day. Rehearsing the sacrifice of our Lord is a solemn thing but also joyful.

I suggest that you try to place yourself in the position of his disciples who experienced His arrest, death and burial without understanding that the resurrection was coming. They should have known. Jesus had told them about it, but the reality of the terrible events of this day overwhelmed their senses. Only later would his affirmations of resurrection become real to them.

Here is our journey map for this day. The solid red lines are routes we will walk. The dotted lines indicate we will go by bus. The dotted lines don't follow the roads and, in any case, our bus driver might choose very different ways to go.

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The Upper Room

You can see a site marked “Upper Room” on the map (just below the yellow circle marked number 4). However, the location of the upper room where Jesus and his disciples had their last supper together is unknown. Most likely that structure, wherever it was, has long since disappeared. The “upper room” on this map is in a large, rectangular, mostly empty room that was built in the 12th century. It has historical interest as a church but without historical significance as a place in the ministry of Jesus. Interestingly, this upper room is above a site known as the “Tomb of David,” but there is no evidence that David was ever buried there. The result is that the room Jesus did not use is located above the tomb David where David was not buried.

Therefore, today, instead of visiting a location that we know for sure Jesus did **not** use, we will begin our day on top of the Mount of Olives which we know he visited often.

Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives figures large in the gospels. It’s name means just what you would think: it was covered with olives trees, a green and quiet place outside the city. It was to the Mount of Olives that Jesus would often go for rest (John 8:1; Luke 22:39).

The Mount of Olives and ancient Jerusalem

From the Mount of Olives Jesus could look west to city and the Temple, His Father’s house, as he called it (John 2:16), and we can guess that he spent many hours sitting, thinking, and praying as he enjoyed that view. The picture below shows that view as it is today. Where you see the golden Dome of the Rock, Jesus would have seen the Temple.

Looking West to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives



The Mount of Olives

The triumphal entry to Jerusalem began on the Mount of Olives (Luke 19:37), On the night of his arrest, as the disciples walked with Jesus toward the Mount of Olives, he

warned them that before long they would all desert him (Mark 14:27). And it was to Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives that He went to pray for the last time before the cross (Matthew 26:30).

Dominus Flevit

From the top of the Mount of Olives we will walk down the pilgrim path toward Gethsemane. About half way down we come to the a church named Dominus Fleet, which is Latin for “Jesus wept.” This is place, tradition holds, where Jesus, “coming closer” to the city began to weep. Here is a view from Dominus Flevit.

View from Dominus Flevit, looking across the Kidron Valley

What Jesus said on that occasion are among the most sad and tragic words in the gospels.

But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way of peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your wall and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you (Luke 19:41-44).

His prophecy on this occasion mirrors the thought of John 1:11

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

You may ask, “Is this really the place where Jesus stopped to weep.” The best answer is that even if the exact place was somewhat different, this is the view of the city that He he saw, and it moved him to tears. A window inside the church frames the view that Jesus would have seen.

View from the Window of Dominus Flevit Church

The Garden of Gethsemane

At the foot of the Mount of Olives we will come to the Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane in Hebrews means “oil press” and the description of it as a “place” indicates that it was an enclosed piece of ground, perhaps a privately owned olive grove and press that Jesus and his disciples had special permission to enter.

It may, in fact, have looked somewhat like what we see today, a neatly arranged garden with pathways for walking.

The Garden of Gethsemane

In Gethsemane we will see some very anxiety olive trees. Olive trees don't have round trunks with rings as we see here in Canada. Instead they grow by layers. In the photos below you can see that these trees are indeed very old.

Notice the thick, gnarled base of this old olive tree

An enormously thick and ancient olive tree in Gethsemane

The question naturally arises, could these trees have been there when Jesus walked through the garden. It is impossible to know their age without drilling into them which the keepers of the garden would never allow, but some who have studied them suggest that they could indeed be 2,000 years old.



[Gethsemane](#)

At Nazareth Village we learned that olives were first crushed under a mill stone and then pressed three times to squeeze out their oil. As the crushing weight of the cross weighed on Jesus more and more heavily, it was in the “oil press” garden that he prayed three times.

‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:42-44).

We, too, will pray in the oil press garden, but in our case with profound gratitude that Jesus was crushed and pressed in that place so that we could live.

The Church of All Nations

Next to the Garden of Gethsemane is the Church of All Nations, sometimes called the Basilica of Agony.

The Church of All Nations. The Garden of Gethsemane we visit on the left side.

Inside the church in front of the altar is the “rock of agony,” the traditional place where Jesus prayed in the Garden.



[Basilica of Agony](#)

The Rock of Agony in the Church of All Nations

The Movements of Jesus on the Night of His Arrest

We cannot know with clarity all the movements of Jesus during his last 24 hours, but it is clear that he was moved back and forth among Caiphas, Pilate and Herod. Here is one map that shows the path he may have taken.

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We will not attempt to follow these movements because that would have us going back and forth through the crowded modern city of Jerusalem. Instead, we will sample the stops. Also, because we previously visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of Golgotha and Jesus’s tomb, we will on this day visit the Garden Tomb, an alternate site suggested as the location where Jesus was crucified and buried.

Caiaphas House and St. Peter in Gallicantu

From the Garden of Gethsemane, we travel across the city to a site believed to be the location of the palace of Caiphas the High Priest before whom Jesus was taken after His arrest. Little remains of the palace, and the exact site is uncertain, but it seems clear that the house was in this area of Mount Zion, and archeological remains are all about.

The highlight of this stop is the beautiful St. Peter in Gallicantu Church. The usual name come from the Latin words “Gallus” = cock and “Cantu” = crow, and therefore the place where the cock crowed. The reference, of course, is to the story of Peter’s three fold denial of Jesus on the night of his arrest.

Gallicantu Church. Notice the golden cock above the large dome.

The gospels tell us that Peter followed the arrest party to the house of Caiphas. He gained entrance to the courtyard and stood around the fire, waiting to see what would happen. Jesus had predicted this and had warned Peter that before the cock had crowed three times, Peter would deny Him three times. In his pride, Peter refused to believe it. One of the most dramatic moments in the gospels is the moment when, after that third denial, Jesus turns and looks directly into Peter’s eyes.

But Peter said, ‘Man, I don’t know what you are talking about.’ And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord’s words flashed through Peter’s mind: ‘Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.’ And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.

During that long night Jesus was held prisoner before being handed over to Pilate in the morning.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. (Matthew 27:1-2)

Where was Jesus kept? You can bet that the authorities would allow no chance of losing their star prisoner. Here at Gallicantu is the most likely place: the “sacred pit.” The pit is a deep, windowless cave with the only access through a deep hole in the top.

The only way in or out of the small windowless pit was to be lowered or raised by ropes into the cold darkness of the pit, as you can see in the picture below.

Jesus Lowered by Ropes into the Pit

As Jesus was being held in the pit, he no doubt prayed to His Father, perhaps in the words of Psalm 88.

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am a man who has no strength, like one set loose among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand. You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. (Psalm 88: 4-7)



[St Peter in Gallicantu](#)

Via Dolorosa

If you look again at the map above of Jesus's movements in those last hours you will see the Pool of Bethesda near the top of the map. The street along that site is called the "Via Dolorosa," the "Way of Grief." The Via Dolorosa begins near the place where tradition says Jesus was tried and convicted and continues toward the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Along the way are eight "stations" where Pilgrims stop to commemorate the events Jesus's last walk. Inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are six additional stations for a total of 14 stations of the cross.

Sign on the Via Dolorosa

We visited the Holy Sepulchre Church earlier on the evening of the Tower of David Night Spectacular. This enabled us to avoid the very large crowds that fill the church during the day. So now we visit only the first stations of the Via Dolorosa.



The Via Dolorosa

Pools of Bethesda and St. Anne's Church

At the beginning of the Via Dolorosa we will stop at St. Anne's Church and the Pools of Bethesda. The pools are the site of one of Jesus's best known miracles.

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. 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. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. (John 5: 1-9)

Today the pools are a significant and extensive archeological site.

Site of the Pools of Bethesda



Pools of Bethesda

On the same site as the pools is St. Anne's Church, a beautiful limestone church constructed around 1140. Pilgrims visiting St. Anne's church often stop to enjoy the amazing stone acoustics by singing. A short video one group singing at St. Anne's is found below. We may be able to add our voices. The opportunity can depend on the number of people and groups visiting the church when we are there.



St. Anne's Church

The Lithostratos

Not far from St. Anne's church along the Via Dolorosa is the Place of Condemnation. This site is near the location in Jesus's time of the Antonia Fortress and the most likely place of the hall of judgment where Jesus was finally condemned by Pilate.

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment". Jesus is condemned to death by Pontius Pilate, as per 'Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. (John 18:28; John 19:16)



Place of Condemnation

At this place a large are of ancient Roman paving stones were found.

Ancient Roman paving stones

It may well be that in this place Jesus first shouldered His cross and began His agonizing walk to Golgotha.

Painting of Jesus lifting His cross at the Place of Condemnation

The Garden Tomb

We will complete our touring this day by visiting the Garden Tomb, an alternate suggestion for the place where Jesus may have been crucified and buried.



The Garden Tomb

The Garden Tomb is sometimes called “Gordon’s Calvary” after British Major-General Charles Gordon. Gordon visited Jerusalem in 1883 and after investigation concluded that this site was the probable location of Calvary. A significant piece of evidence in his mind was that the hillside on that site bears a striking resemblance to a skull.

Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left. (Luke 23:33).

Here is a picture of the “skull hill” Gordon found.

Skull Hill at Gordon’s Calvary

You will find that some of the mystery of the site is lost today because the hill you see is the back wall of the parking lot for a bus station. That, however, is typical of much in modern Jerusalem where ancient sites and modern developments exist side by side.

The Garden Tomb has been maintained for over 100 years a place of Christian ministry. The ministry has developed the site with beautiful gardens and places for worship.

Within the site of the Garden Tomb is an ancient rock hewn tomb. Archeologists have

dated the tomb we see to the 8th century, but they acknowledge that a much older tomb could have been reused. Was this the tomb where Jesus was buried?

The ancient tomb at the Garden Tomb

We will take time at the Garden Tomb to celebrate the Lord's Supper in this very special place before heading back to our hotel at the end of this very full day.

Passages to Study for Today

The passage to study as you prepare for this day are the texts that tell us about the Lord's final hours. Here are the texts from Luke, but you can find parallels in the other gospels.

- The last supper (Luke 22:1-23).
- Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46)
- The arrest of Jesus (Luke 22:47-43)
- Peter's betrayal (Luke 22:54-62)
- Jesus mocked (Luke 22:66-71)
- Jesus tried and executed (Luke 23)
- The resurrection (Luke 24)

Day Nine

Day Eleven