

**PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND: ISRAEL**  
**CHAPTER 12 – Garden Tomb**

**At Garden Tomb**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden\\_Tomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_Tomb)



**Many Protestants believe that Jesus was buried in the Garden Tomb, which is set in a quiet enclosure just outside the Damascus Gate.**

**[across from the Damascus Gate area. Very noisy place, with lots of traffic, loud voices, honking, etc.]**

**[Scripture comparison of Golgotha-Garden Tomb area: John 19, Luke 23, Mark 15, Matthew 27]**

**Guide Roy: “We face the rock formation known within Protestant circles as “the place of the Skull” i.e. Calvary, Calvaria, [from Late Latin Calvāria, translation of Greek kranion skull, translation of Aramaic gulgulta Golgotha]**



**A nearby hillock, with a Moslem cemetery on top and a broken cistern in its rock face, bears resemblance to a skull, which could be Golgotha (“place of the skull”).**

**Roy: “Now the Bible says, Jesus was crucified at Golgotha. Golgotha means ‘place of a skull.’ About 120 years ago, the rock formation was discovered over there, and as you can see, it does look like a skull. So maybe, maybe this is Golgotha. But we also know Jesus was taken through a gate – the Bible tells us that. Across the road over there is the Damascus gate. And we know he was crucified outside the gate.**

**“So, just like the Bible says, we have a gate, and, of course, you have Golgotha. So the question is: Was Jesus crucified here? Well, the answer is: We believe so. But we don’t know for certain. Let me tell you what we do know for certain; certainly what I know for certain, anyway. I know for certain Jesus was crucified somewhere in Jerusalem. And I know for certain he was buried somewhere in Jerusalem. But I also know for certain – he rose again! (response, ‘amen’) Amen!?”**



**“That’s the important thing, isn’t it? Jesus is alive today. He’s our savior. I know I need a savior, believe me I do. Now the Bible says he was crucified on the Day of Preparation. [John 19:14 says (according to NASB): “Now it was the day of preparation (paraskeue) for the Passover.”] It says he died at three o’clock in the afternoon. And we know Shabbat (Sabbath) would have started at about six o’clock in the evening at that time of the year. So when Joseph of Arimathea came along, and wanted to take his body, he had about three hours in which he went from here, up through town to Herod’s palace, which is by the Jaffa gate; and he had to wait for Pilate to agree to see him.**

**“According to the Bible, Pilate’s first reaction was, he was surprised Jesus was dead that soon. And he waited for confirmation. Eventually, Joseph gets permission to take the body; he would have come back down here, taken the body off the cross, and prepared it for burial. Now, he would have had to have a place close by to bury Jesus.**

**[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_of\\_Arimathea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_of_Arimathea)**

**“Well, in 1867, a person on this property you just walked through was looking for a water system or a cave to keep water when he accidentally broke into a tomb. And that is what we are going to see this afternoon.**

**“How many of you have been here before? (no response) Well, I will tell you this. When you go down to the tomb, we can get about six or seven in at a time. So you will have to stand in line. While you’re there waiting to go in, just remember this – the tomb is empty! (response, ‘amen’) So we have a tomb, but of course the Bible very clearly tells us that the tomb was in a garden. (John 19:41) So we had to prove there was a garden here 2,000 years ago.**

**“Now, this is a very hot, dry country. Last year it didn’t rain in Jerusalem for seven months. And this year, we had a little rain a few days ago -- before that, it had not rained for six months. It’s going to change tomorrow, because tomorrow evening it’s going to pour down. It’s going to rain all night, and all the next day, and all the day after. They need the rain. So you can pray for rain. Are you going back home after today? (response, ‘yes’) Well, you can pray for rain. (laughter) It really is a dry country.**

**“You can see, if you’re going to have a garden here, you must have a good supply of water. The archaeologists found that, of course, when they found the water system in the garden. It’s one of the largest water systems that is found in Jerusalem, and it holds just over 200,000 gallons of water. For you Canadians, that’s just over one million liters of water. So why did you Canadians go metric, anyway? (laughter) Tell you what, if the Lord had wanted us to go metric, he would have had ten disciples, not twelve. (laughter)**

**Kevin (from Canada): “Hey, that’s a good one.”**

**Guide Roy: “Sorry about that, guys. Well, as you can see, whoever owned this property 2,000 years ago was a rich man. And the Bible tells us that Joseph was a rich man. So, maybe this is Joseph’s garden. And what the Bible doesn’t say is what type of garden it was. You see, in those days gardens were working gardens: olive grove, vineyard, orchard, something like that. Well, in 1927 we found out, because we found a wine press in the garden, which means this property was a vineyard, which, of course, was a garden. Exciting, isn’t it? (subdued response, ‘yeh’) Are you getting the idea now? As I always say, ‘if you don’t get excited, I’ll do it for you.’ (laughter)**

**“OK, so we have a tomb, in a garden, like the Bible says. And we possibly have Golgotha, just like the Bible says. It’s easy, isn’t it? That’s where Jesus was crucified, and that’s where he was buried. Well, it’s not that simple, because we don’t tell people anything about this site that we can’t prove or are sure about. So we have to say we’re not sure if that skull was on the rock face 2,000 years ago. We’ve had earthquakes and tremors and slides and all sorts of stuff, so we really cannot be sure.**

**“But tell me – does it matter? (one response, ‘no’) I don’t think it matters. I think the only thing that really matters is the resurrection. Jesus did die. He was crucified and he died, and he was laid to rest. Then he rose again. That’s the important thing. We don’t need to know where he was, or how it happened, or anything else. The most important thing is we know he is alive now. And he’s coming back. (response, ‘yeh’) Soon, I hope – I need a new body. (laughter)**

**“OK, we’ll now go down to the tomb area. And I will explain the tomb in more detail. All I can explain is that the tomb that we have actually fits the description we have in the Bible. I can’t prove that it is the right tomb. We really don’t know. But it does fit the description we have in the Bible.**

**[Walk southward from Golgotha area, through the garden, to the Garden Tomb]**



**In 1867, a first-century rock-hewn tomb containing two chambers was discovered near the hill. In 1882, the British General Gordon was a leading advocate for this area as a probable site of the Crucifixion and it was purchased by the Garden Tomb Association of London in 1893.**

[Scripture – Synoptic Gospels – story of Easter “Resurrection” Sunday: Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20]

Roy: “On the first Easter Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other women came down through the garden. They wanted to anoint Jesus’ body, but they were worried about one thing: How are they going to roll the stone away from the tomb? When you get down there to the tomb, you will quickly see we have no stone. But we do have a small one to show you what a rolling stone was like. You know about the rolling stone – Mick Jagger? (laughter) It wasn’t a much bigger stone than what we have down there. But I can tell you this – it would have weighed approximately two tons. So that’s why the women were concerned.

“But, of course, there was no need to be concerned, because – we have a good God, don’t we? (response, ‘amen’) Do we? (bigger response, ‘yes!’) That’s better. Of course, we have. We know from the Bible that by the time they got down there, the stone was rolled away. Mary goes down to the tomb, she looks in, and she sees an angel sitting where Jesus had been laid on the right. (Mark 16:5) Now that’s important, because most of the tombs had two chambers: a burial chamber at the back, and a burial chamber at the front. There’s nothing unusual about that. It’s quite normal. But, of course, if Mary had looked into a tomb like that, she would have looked straight ahead, not to the right.



**[At the place of the tomb, after descending a flight of stairs, there was a plaque to the right with an inscription from John 19:40-42 “Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.”]**

**“Now the tomb you go in – it has two chambers, but instead of being in tandem (one behind the other), they’re side by side. Now this is not unique, a chamber to the right and a chamber to the left. Now this one – to the right – has never been finished off. (Roys shows a diagram of the tomb) Obviously, no one has been laid there. The other one is finished, and a pillow is cut in the rock. Obviously, someone has been laying there. So what we can say for certain is: if this is the right tomb of Jesus, that’s where he was. Big questions is: Is this the right tomb? The big answer is: We don’t know. (laughter)**



**Rolling away a small replica of the “rolling stone”**

**“But I tell you what I do know. I know he’s not here. For he has risen! (hearty response, ‘amen’) That’s what counts. But this place fits the description in the Bible – that’s as much as I can tell you. And something else – when you go home, and you start reading your Bible, I know when you read about the resurrection, you will think of this place.”**



**Sign: Plan of the Tomb (1) Entrance to outer room, hewn in rock, (2) Low threshold to graves, (3) Short low rock walls between the rooms, (4) Finished loculus (burial place), (5) Pillow cut in rock, (6) Weeping chamber, (7) rough ledge, (8) Unfinished loculus, (9) Small window.**



## **Entrance to the Garden Tomb.**

### **Garden Tomb Communion**

**[in the garden area there is a separate section for pilgrims that is designated for meditation, bible reading, singing, and communion]**

**Pastor Tom, reading from Romans about who are we as people:  
New International Version (©1984)**

**Romans 3:9-18 9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written:**

**“There is no one righteous, not even one;**

**11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.**

**12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”**

**13 “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.”**

**14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”**

**15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know.”**

**18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

**“Now how do you explain the evil in the world? Here at this place we are made aware of one of the most evil acts the Romans performed – right here – at Golgotha. When we say we see the evil around us, we ask, ‘why is sin allowed?’ We’re sinners, and there’s evil in the world. But we do have a solution – right here – at the cross. And the resurrection.**

**“Leslie is going to sing us a song:**

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!**

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul!**

**What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss**

**To lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,**

**To lay aside his crown for my soul.**

**When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,**

**When I was sinking down, sinking down,**

**When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,**

**Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,**

**Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.**

**To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;**

**To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.  
To God and to the Lamb Who is the great 'I Am';  
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;  
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.**

**Group singing:**

**Were you there when they crucified my Lord  
Oh were you there when they crucified my Lord  
Oooh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord.  
Were you there when they nailed him to the cross  
Were you there when they nailed him to the cross  
Oooh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble  
Were you there when they nailed him to the cross.  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb  
Oooh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb.  
Were you there when he rose up from the dead  
Were you there when he rose up from the dead  
Oooh sometimes it makes me shout, glory, glory, glory  
Were you there when he rose up from the grave.**

**Pastor John Miller, devotional message:**

**“This is the part where Jesus wanted us to contemplate, to think about what happened 2,000 years ago. And he knew we would be doing this until he came back, because he told his disciples, ‘I want you to do what we’re about to do here in remembrance of me.’ This was at Passover – in the Upper Room – we were in that Upper Room. I don’t know if that’s the one, but we were in it, in an upper room, you know, in Jerusalem – right there. So maybe it was something like that.**

**“Think about this: all that we saw at the Temple Mount, the whole thing is about sacrifice. You know that the Jews would come at various times of the year and bring animals to sacrifice for their sins and guilt and shame, and the fact that God was saying, ‘You’ve all sinned, everyone.’ And God speaks into our lives, and we feel that guilt. We feel that guilt because we have all come short of the glory of God. We’ve all rebelled. We have a sin nature when we come into this world. And that’s why we need a redeemer. Everyone of us is in desperate need – the moment we take breath in this world – we’re in desperate need to find the one to give us spiritual life.**

**“The Bible says, ‘we’re dead in our trespasses and sins.’ We’re in a bad way. And so I like the British fellow (guide Roy) who was so excited about the resurrection, because of Christianity rests on whether Jesus truly rose from the dead. His tomb is empty, and he’s alive today. But he had to die first. And the reason he died was for you. That’s what you want to think about right now as we take this bread, because he said, ‘this is my body that is broken for you. It’s given up for you. I’m going back to Calvary’s cross because I love you. And because you need me.’**

**“And so we do have that sense of need, that we need the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And how you become a follower of Yeshua, how you come into eternal life, how you come to make peace with God – it is through receiving Jesus Christ as your savior. And you do that by turning over the keys of your heart, and surrendering your life, saying, ‘Jesus, I know you died for me, and I know you rose from the dead for me.’**

**“So as you take communion – I don’t know where everybody stands, or how your relation with God is like. But as you hold the wafer – I’m going to pass this around – just take a piece and hold. This unleavened bread that they’ve given us – it signifies the sacrificial lamb that was sacrificed in the Old Testament. It had to be unblemished. It couldn’t have one blemish – it had to be a perfect lamb, healthy and spotless. And that was Jesus. He was sinless, he never sinned. He was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. And this matzah bread has what could be construed as blood lines (dark lines) on it, and that would typify the fact that he spilled his blood for us.**

**“So, you need to realize this – that in receiving Christ, he dies for your sins so that you don’t have to. If Jesus doesn’t die for your sins, you will have to die for your sins. And the Bible says there’s a heaven and there’s a hell. And Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.’ So in taking this bread, Jesus is saying, ‘This is my body that is broken for you.’ It typifies his body, we’re taking his body into ourselves. It’s very personal. And if you have not made that step of faith – boy, this is the best place in the whole wide world to do it. To receive Christ by faith is a simple act of your will; you don’t have to – you see, Jesus did it all. And it’s not about what we do. It’s about what Jesus did.**

**“The night that Jesus was betrayed, he took this bread and he said, ‘this is my body, which is for you’ – all those disciples didn’t comprehend everything he was saying, they really didn’t comprehend his death – but he told them, ‘this is my body which is broken for you, take this, do this.’ [Pastor John takes the matzah bread and we also take the piece of matzah bread representing the body of Christ,**

and we eat it.] [Across the path from us in a separate section is another group, an Ethiopian group, who sing a plaintive, soulful song as we continue receiving the rest of the communion.]

**“Now, in the same way – and Tom, I’m going to have you pass this (small olive wood communion cups with grape juice) around – the Bible says, ‘the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.’ Like he said, ‘we’re all guilty; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’ But it is the gift of God which is eternal life through Jesus. And so, what the blood does is it cleanses us and makes us white as snow – in God’s sight. He looks down upon us – and because we’ve received Jesus, and he died for our sins – it makes us acceptable to God as his sons and his daughters. And you can know that you have eternal life through the confidence of being his son or his daughter, through faith in Jesus.**

**“The Bible says, ‘the life is in the blood,’ (Leviticus 17:11) so this is an example when he was on that cross – and maybe it’s just above us here, maybe it isn’t – that was where he was nailed, his feet and his hands, that’s where the crown was thrust on him. And even after he dies, a Roman thrusts a spear into his side. Blood and water come out. The pericardial fluid, the blood and water, shows that he was dead. The Roman soldier could tell that he was dead. That’s why he didn’t break his bones, because they used to break the legs. But when he came to Jesus, he saw that he was dead, and he left him alone. He died for us. He spilled his blood for us. And the least we can do is to give our life to him – this short life that we have. His blood cleanses us from all sin.**

**“Let’s partake.” [John partakes of the grape juice, and we also lift the small olive wood communion cups and drink the symbolical "blood of Jesus," partaking of the "Life of Christ" -- "Christ in you, the hope of Glory."]** Closing prayer.

**We are allowed to keep the special olive wood communion cups as a souvenir of our visit to the Garden Tomb.**



**These olive wood Communion cups are made in Bethlehem from Holy land olive wood and hold 1/8th ounce of liquid.**

**<http://www.holylandtreasuresonline.com/Store/Products/Item/-269-49/2/97.html>**

**That evening we all gathered in the dining hall for what we viewed as "the last supper" together as pilgrims to the Holy Land.**

**The last dinner was a time to say farewell to each of the pilgrims. It was also a time to have a friendly chat with Clement Andries, who shared a wonderful insight with me.**

**"If you take the word LIGHT and make an acronym of the letters," said Clement, drawing the capital letters on a napkin, "you can explain the Word of God in simple terms. L stands for the Literal view of the Bible. I is for the fact that the Bible is Inspired by God as holy men wrote the words. G is for the Grammar of the Word, which includes the use of metaphors and word meanings. H stands for Historical events. T is for Theology, with its interpretations and commentaries."**

**I was impressed with Clement's simple to remember acronym of LIGHT to demonstrate his way of explaining the Word of God to himself and to others. We both came to the conclusion that the way to study the scriptures was to meditate on them day and night, allowing the divine LIGHT to shine and illuminate the mind with its sacred meanings.**

**Early in the morning, we left the hotel and boarded a bus for the ride back to the airport. At the airport we sat around with our friends from Arkansas, who were our first acquaintances when we boarded the Pilgrim Tours bus upon our arrival in Tel Aviv. I told my newfound friend, Ron Moseley, that the miracle I was hoping for my brother did not happen. Ron felt compassion for my brother and placed his hand on Stan's shoulder and prayed for him. That was about all we could do, for it was in the hands of God what was in store for Stan.**

**When we were airborne, Stan and I settled back in our seats and had a conversation that was repeated several times before we arrived at our destination.**

**Stan: "It doesn't look like we're moving."**

**Paul: "We're in a plane."**

**Stan: "I keep thinking we're in a car."**

**Paul: "We're in a plane."**

**Stan: "When is Nida coming?"**

**Paul: "She's picking us up at the airport."**

**Stan: "Are we flying?"**

**Paul: "Yes."**

**Stan: "Where are we flying to?"**

**Paul: "Guess."**

**Stan: "Back to where we came from."**