

# The Gospel of *Mark*

## The Servant Leadership of Jesus

### Where was Christ Crucified?

Where is the actual location of Golgotha (the Place of the Skull)?

Background Information:

† Many of the ‘traditional’ “Holy Sites” were picked, not by dedicated, conservative scholars, but by the Mother of Constantine the Great, the Emperor of Rome from 306-337. Her name was Helena (a.k.a. Helena of Constantinople and Saint Helena), and one of the sites she picked was the ‘traditional’ crucifixion site, which was within the western side of ancient Jerusalem. In about 335, her son, Constantine, had a church built at that site (Church of the Holy Sepulchre).

In addition to many other things and places she supposedly discovered, Helena also claimed she found the actual cross Jesus died on and the nails that had been driven into his hands and feet.

† There has been an ‘alternate’ crucifixion site discovered, and it is referred to as Gordon’s Calvary. There is a tomb matching the Biblical descriptions of the tomb, and it is called the Garden Tomb (both sites are just north of the Damascus gate). A British military officer, Major-General Charles Gordon, visited Jerusalem in 1883. He is the most famous of the initial advocates of this location.

What is known from Scripture?

† His crucifixion site was referred to by the names “Golgotha” and “the Place of the Skull” by three of the Gospel writers <sup>Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, John 19:17</sup>. Luke simply referred to the location as “the place called the Skull” <sup>Luke 23:33</sup>.

† John stated “Jesus was crucified near the city” <sup>John 19:20</sup>, implying it was outside the city walls. However, the author of Hebrews explicitly said “Jesus suffered outside the city gate” <sup>Hebrews 13:12</sup>. This undoubtedly was a continuation of the Mosaic Law that required the “sin offering for the community” to be sacrificed outside the camp <sup>Leviticus 4:13-21</sup> and any “[unclean person] must live outside the camp” <sup>Leviticus 13:45-46</sup>. And, Jesus was the sacrifice for all people (the community) and He was unclean, because God made Him “to be sin for us” <sup>2 Corinthians 5:21</sup>.

† Golgotha had to be near a well-used path or road, because Scripture implies there were a number of people who “passed by” while Jesus was hanging on the cross <sup>Mark 15:29</sup>.

† The crucifixion site must have been relatively high, because “Some women were watching from a distance.” <sup>Mark 15:40</sup>

Other related issues in Scripture?

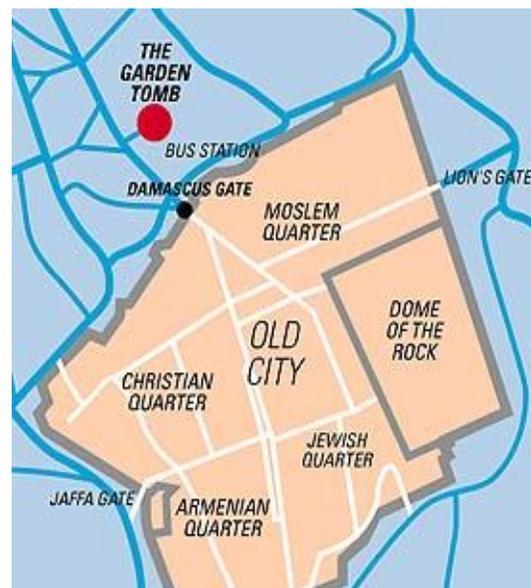
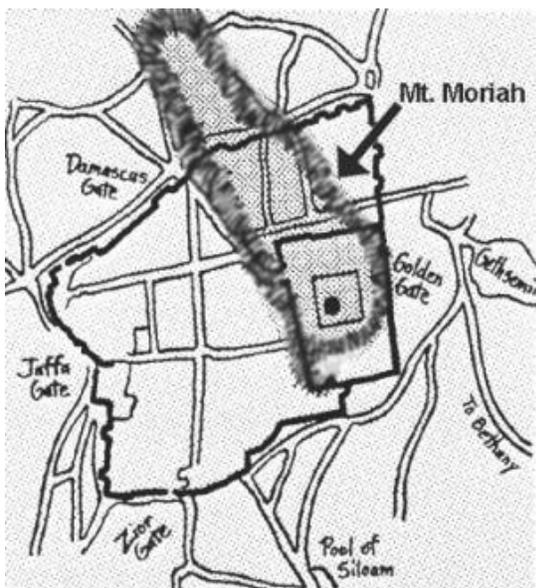
- † Most people seem to believe the places where God told Abraham to offer Isaac and where Solomon built “the Temple of the Lord” were the same: Mt. Moriah. The only two times the name Mt. Moriah appear in the Bible are in reference to these two occasions <sup>Genesis 22:2, 2 Chronicles 3:1</sup>.
- † As seen many times in the Bible, God uses patterns to reveal His prophecies a bit at a time. Most scholars seem to accept that God had planned the Abraham/Isaac sacrifice to be a foreshadowing of the sacrifices in the Temple. However, a much more likely pattern would seem to be: God’s instructions for Abraham to offer his only son Isaac was a foretelling of Father God’s own offer to sacrifice His only Son a couple of thousand years later.
- † Without wanting to misinterpret the Biblical information to fit a preconceived notion: Is there any reasonable evidence to support: (1) a denial of the assumption that the Abraham/Isaac issue and Solomon’s Temple were at the exact same location and (2) an embracing of the theory that the Abraham/Isaac affair and Jesus’ Crucifixion were at the same location? To investigate these questions, the following are the only two passages that mention Mt. Moriah:

**Abraham/Isaac:** Genesis 22:2 Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”

**Solomon’s Temple:** 2 Chronicles 3:1a Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David.

The descriptions of the locations have enough differences to warrant more investigation.

The following two maps reveal some interesting things to consider:



## Mark Y 15b Supplement

† The next thing to consider is why the Gospels refer to the crucifixion site as the Place of the Skull. Traditionally, most people have assumed it was simply because many crucifixions took place there. However, Gordon's Calvary (Golgotha) has presented another possible reason for the name. The following pictures show a side of the hill of Gordon's Calvary (part of Mt. Moriah) with a distinct image similar to an eyeless face (a skull?). The picture on the left was taken in 1894; the one on the right in 1961.



† What about the Garden Tomb? The following two pictures show the Garden Tomb, which is located within a couple of hundred yards of Gordon's Calvary. Note the picture on the right shows the tomb has a channel indicating the tomb was closed with a rolling stone.



Summary: (1) It has been shown that the sites of the Abraham/Isaac encounter and Solomon's Temple are not necessarily the same locations. (2) The traditional crucifixion site is nowhere near Mt. Moriah and actually seems to have been located within the city gates of ancient Jerusalem. (3) The alternate crucifixion site was outside the city gates, is located on a hill that has a resemblance to a skull and could possibly be located in the same place God led Abraham to in order to sacrifice his only son Isaac.

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