

# Diamonds in the Dust 21 – Jesus’ “Last” Days

## Were Just the Beginning: The Empty Tomb

### Scriptures

*John 19:38-42 – After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a **garden** in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a **new tomb** in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the **tomb was nearby**, they laid Jesus there.*

*Mt 27: 57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had **hewn in the rock**. He then **rolled a great stone** to the door of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.*

Note: No Nicodemus; but Mary Magdalene and Mary (of Bethany) were there as witnesses..

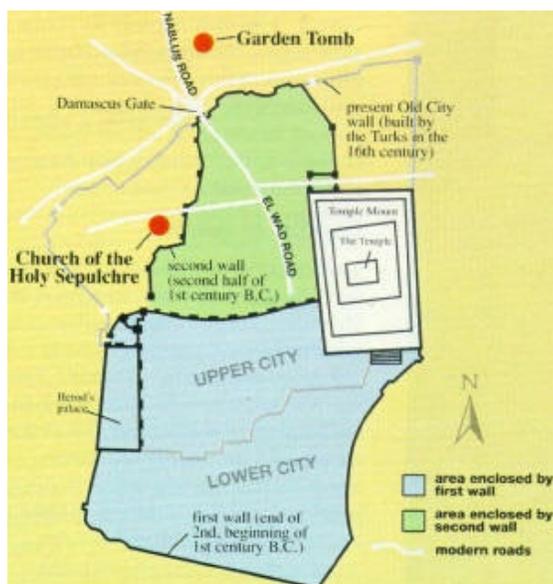
*John 20 – Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the **stone had been removed** from the tomb.*

*So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’*

*Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **He bent down to look in** and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. John 20:1ff*

What are we looking for in a candidate for Jesus' tomb?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
5. Outside city walls



### The Garden Tomb

- Discovered 1867
- Also known as "Gordon's Calvary"
- British General Charles Gordon,
  - promoted site in the 19th century.

- purchased 1894 by U.K. protestant Charitable Trust
- maintained by volunteers
- Consists of
  - tomb,
  - quarry,
  - ancient wine press (wine press would be near vineyards (i.e. a garden).
  - Skull-shaped hill
    - Now near a bus depot.

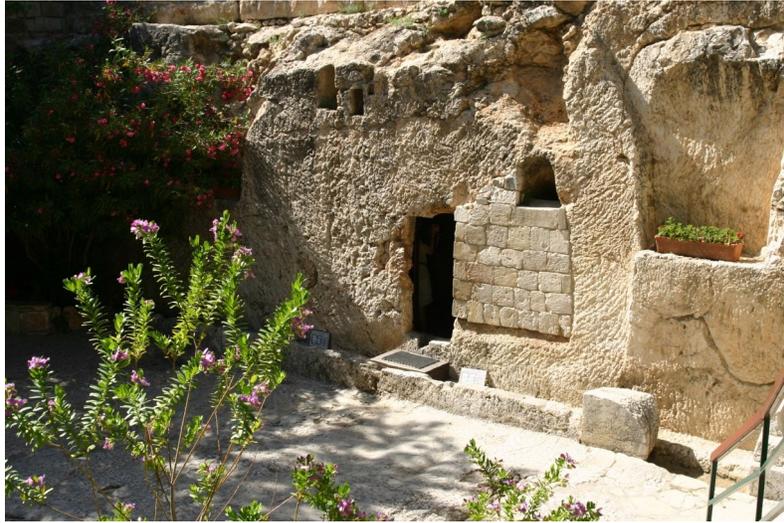
### **Golgotha (Garden Tomb)**



### **Why Did People Think it Might be the Place?**

- Close to a main ancient city gate, but outside
- Associated with executions by local tradition

- Physical resemblance to a skull.



*The Garden Tomb*

### **Rock Cut Family Tombs**

- Only wealthy could afford large rock-cut family tombs;
- These family tombs were used for many generations
- new tombs could be sold, but used tombs could not
- Joseph's gift was extravagant
- Joseph and Mary would have been too poor to have a family tomb (Bethlehem? Nazareth?). They would have been buried in the ground in a traditional cemetery.
- As a pauper criminal, Jesus' remains would have likely ended up in Potter's Field, near Judas.
- Joseph of Arimathea gave Jesus the tomb he had just bought for his family, "adopting" Jesus into his family.



*Garden Tomb Interior Today*

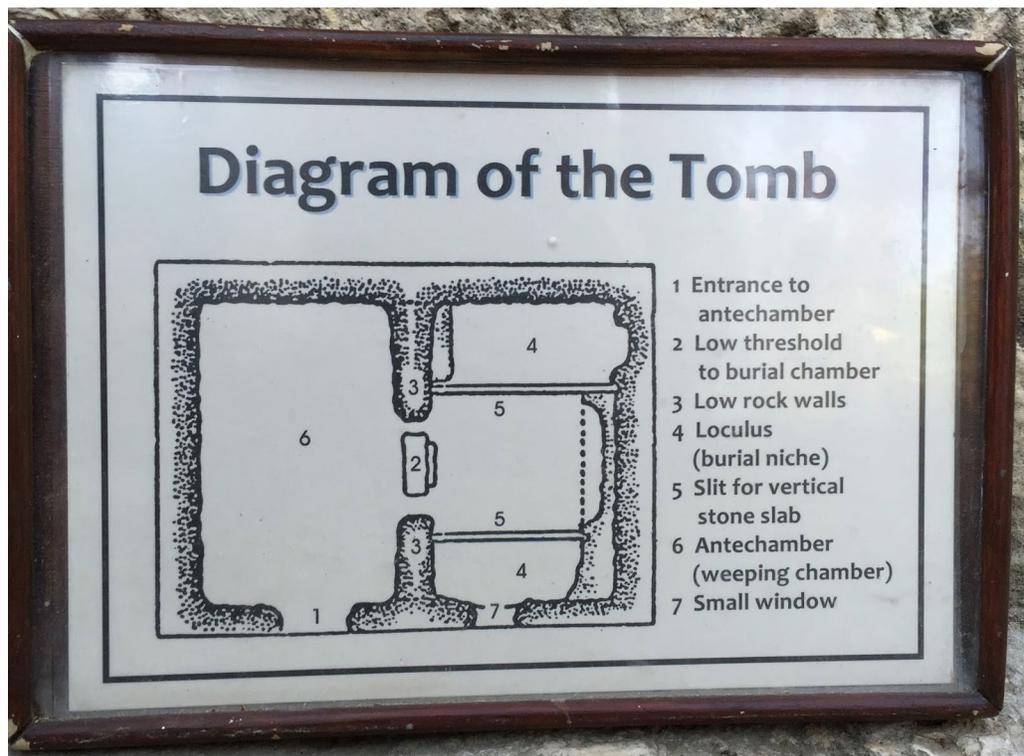


The Garden Tomb, Interior. 85

*Garden Tomb Interior around the time of its discovery*



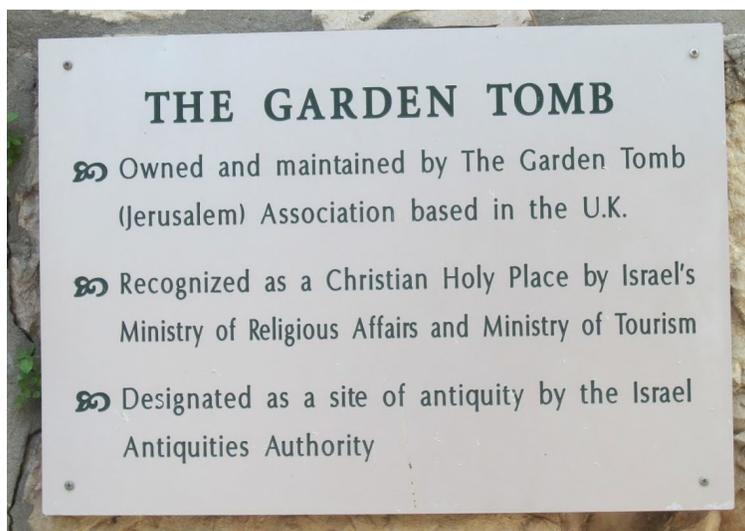
Garden Tomb Rolling Stone (not necessarily orig.)



Why this is probably not the tomb of Jesus:

- no Second-Temple-era tombs have been found anywhere in the vicinity.
- This tomb dates to 7th or 8th centuries B.C..
  - First-Temple era
  - not a “new tomb”

- already over 600 years old by the time of Jesus (i.e. well-used)
- No historical tradition linking all the way back to Jesus' time.
  - Not a site that ancient Christians venerated.



Better Example of a genuine First-Century Tomb:



*Discovered during road construction near Jezreel Valley, not very far from Megiddo (Galilee area).*



*Shows the need for bending over to look in.  
Genuine rolling stone adjacent to tomb*

Who was Joseph of Arimathea

- From Arimathea in Judea
- Luke 23:50 – part of the Council, or Sanhedrin —
  - Joseph was opposed to Council's decision
  - secret follower of Jesus (see also Mark 15:43).
- Joseph was a wealthy man (Matthew 27:57)
- a “good and upright man” (Luke 23:50).

**You will not find Jesus in any of these tombs....**



*Sign on Door of Garden Tomb*