

The Tomb and the Terminal

On route to the place known as Golgotha, during a recent trip to Israel, we could catch glimpses of the rocky mound just behind the busy thoroughfares. The streets were crowded and somewhat dirty. People meandered through the thoroughfares and the traffic was heavy. Upon exiting the bus we entered into a very quiet garden and took a narrow path to the place where the most important event of human history took place; Calvary. Upon entering the viewing platform I suddenly found myself very irritated by the diesel fumes and the sound of a parking lot full of idling buses. Everything seemed all wrong; the section of town, the dirty streets, the smelly bus terminal, the competition of the noise. As I looked upon the face of the rock, often termed as the skull, I then learned that much of the bottom had been covered up due to debris, accumulation and usage by society over the years. This was not how it was supposed to be. It was supposed to be a quiet sanctified site, untouched by modern culture!

As I got past my irritations with the interruptions and distractions, I began to be impressed with the reality that this same site, where our Lord Jesus was crucified, was the very Mount Moriah where Abraham offered his son. Years later when King Solomon built the Temple, the Holy of Holies, and God's very presence would abide on this very spot. The words spoken to Abraham came to mind, "God will provide himself a lamb" Gen. 22:8. This too was the place of Stephen's stoning. So with all of this significance, how did a bus terminal get so close to such a site?

The familiarity and indifference of the people who lived there almost seemed to say that this sacred, historical spot, no longer had any relevance. I realized that even in the day of Christ this was also a busy thoroughfare where three highways merged. The three crosses, according to typical Roman crucifixions, were no doubt placed along that busy thoroughfare to signify to all the world the consequences of violating their rule. There were no fancy cathedrals or memorials. This place where our Lord was crucified is just as much today, in the busy thoroughfares of life, as it was then. This crossroads of generations and cultures, and the temporal and eternal values, could easily be overlooked by the business of everyday life. Still others would come from all over the world to be in the very presence of it.

We left the place of the crucifixion and took a short walk to a quiet garden. There the tomb, believed to be supplied by Joseph of Arimathea for our Lord's body, was clearly still empty and open for inspection. During a quiet, yet joyful communion, my mind returned to the present day commuters, not unlike Roman & Jewish commuters of Christ's day. It was then that I realized that **THE BUSES WERE NOT THE IRRITATION, THEY WERE THE MESSAGE!** The message of the cross is for all men, in all walks of life, and has the power to help everyone in the crossroads of life. His life was for every day, every circumstance, and every person – not just a stone memorial or a beautiful cathedral. What greater statement than a bus terminal at the foot of the cross! The buses would bring any and all who wished to come and see and in the same way take them to the farthest regions of society. Just as Mary came years ago looking for her Lord, she ran away telling 'I have seen Jesus'. The message that still rings true today is **COME AND SEE, GO AND TELL**, for truly He has risen. -Lew Sterrett