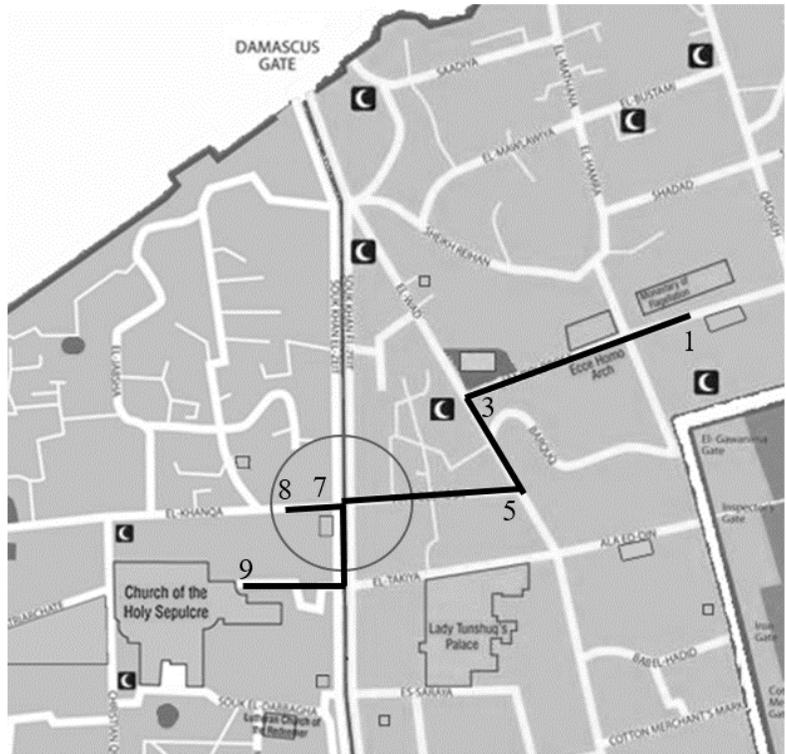


# Walking the Via Dolorosa – Session 3 – Stations 7-11

## SEVENTH STATION - Jesus falls for the second time

The place of Jesus' second fall is marked by a pillar, which rises at the crossroads between the Via Dolorosa and the picturesque and lively Market Street. Once again, the layout of the city streets and the pilgrim path make this a logical location for the station, as you need to make a slight turn at this congested intersection, a major pedestrian thoroughfare.

Pilgrims who choose to carry a cross themselves – and you always see this being done, by individuals or by groups, and particularly on Fridays – often find this a difficult spot to navigate. It is all too easy to once again imagine Jesus stumbling, despite the help received from Simon of Cyrene.



*Lamentations. 3:1-2,9,16 I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light. He has blocked my way with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes.*

## EIGHTH STATION - Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem who weep for him

On the outer wall of a Greek Orthodox monastery is carved a small cross blackened by time. It was at that point that Jesus met the weeping women. Due to the changing streetscape of Jerusalem, this station is often missed, since it requires a minor detour, and then some backtracking.

Jesus refers to the weeping women as “Daughters of Jerusalem,” distinguishing them from the Galilean women who accompanied him throughout his ministry (*Matthew 27:55 - Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs*). Whether these women were Jerusalem believers, or simply bystanders compassionately distraught at the terrible sight, Jesus demonstrates once again his character in expressing concern not for himself, but for them.

Jesus foresees the destruction soon to come – a Zealot rebellion in 66 AD will bring the Roman army upon Israel, and, in 70 AD, the utter destruction of the Temple. The city will suffer horrible trials through siege, internal strife, and Roman conquest. In Matthew,

during his time in Jerusalem, Jesus speaks about the destruction to come (Matthew 24) and makes specific reference to the suffering of women (Matthew 24:19): *"How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!"* This remains true for any caught in conflict and war.

*Luke 23:28-31 Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us'. For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"*

### **NINTH STATION - Jesus falls for the third time**

The third fall of Jesus is commemorated by a column of the Roman period at the entrance to the Coptic monastery. It also marks the peak of the final ascent – pilgrims must ascend a flight of stairs to what is essentially the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. While ascending, the stairs actually cross the line of the location of the city wall in the days of Jesus – effectively, the Ninth Station is outside the ancient city limits. Remains of the ancient wall can be visited in the Alexander Nevsky church, once the Jerusalem church of the Russian royals, Nicholas and Alexandra.

As with the other Stations marking Jesus falling, Station Nine is logically located. It marks not only the exit from the city gate, but the peak of the climb to Golgotha. From the area of this station, Jesus would have seen the execution ground for the first time. The rock spar of Golgotha (now located within the church) would have been prominently visible. It is possible that the upright beams of the crosses were a permanent fixture, and only the crossbeams were carried by the condemned. In either case, with this final collapse, pilgrims are given opportunity to contemplate what is now to come for Jesus.

*Lamentations 3:27-32 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when he has laid it on him; let him put his mouth in the dust - there may yet be hope; let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults. For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.*

### **The last five Stations of the Cross are situated inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre**

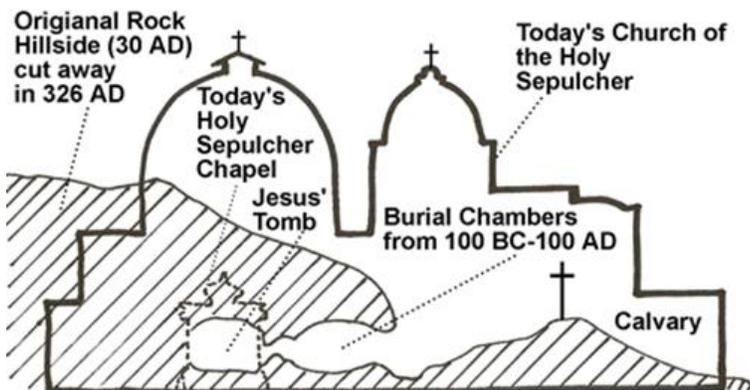
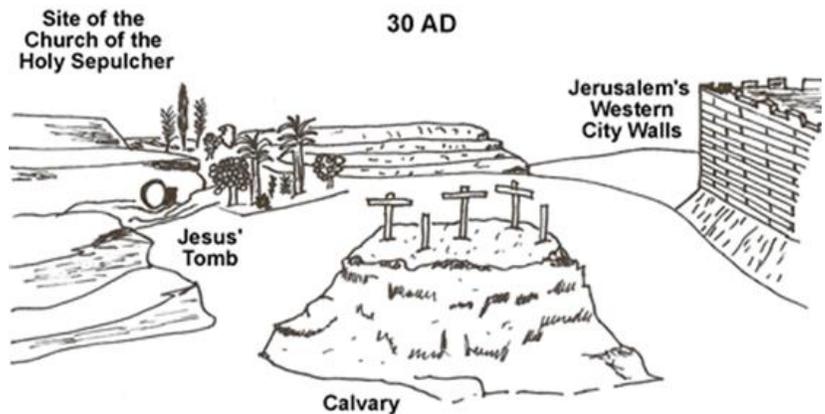
First constructed in the early 300s, and rebuilt a number of times following fire, war, and earthquake, the Holy Sepulchre is located over the site of both the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Originally located outside the walls of the city, but incorporated into the city limits when Herod Agrippa expanded the northern wall in the mid 40s AD, Golgotha was an abandoned quarry, converted into a garden area containing a number of newly carved tombs. In addition to the tomb in which Jesus was interred, there are several first century tombs contained within the church. Additionally, areas of the original quarry are also readily seen.

Golgotha itself is a spur of limestone standing up some 20 metres from the surrounding terrain. Cracked and porous, it was never quarried. The Romans used the area as a crucifixion site presumably because it was convenient to but not within city limits, and was easily seen from a main gate into the city, providing an object lesson for passers-by.

In the years following the crucifixion and Resurrection, Christians visited the tomb as a site of pilgrimage. In 135, Roman Emperor Hadrian built a pagan shrine complex over the site (as he did in Bethlehem) and the tomb was concealed beneath a gravel plaza until excavated under the orders of the Emperor Constantine. Since its uncovering, it has been a centre of Christian worship for 1700 continuous years.

### History Of The Church Of The Holy Sepulchre

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, the Roman emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD built a temple dedicated to the goddess Aphrodite in order to bury the cave in which Jesus had been buried, and assert the dominance of Roman state religion. The first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great, ordered in 325 that the temple be replaced by a church. When his representatives arrived in Jerusalem to attempt to locate the tomb, they were sent to the temple built by Hadrian 200 years earlier. The Roman temple was dismantled, the area cleared, and excavations beneath revealed a rock-cut tomb, marked in such a way as to identify it as that in which Jesus had been laid. The tomb was carved away and isolated from surrounding tombs, and a church was built around it to enclose the tomb. A major expansion was undertaken by the Emperor Justinian in the 500s.



The church was then largely destroyed by in 1009 by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, known as the 'mad Caliph' or 'Nero of Islam' in a bid to destroy Christian sites. Sections of the original church surrounding the Edicule remained, as did parts of the Edicule itself, although heavily damaged.

The church was then rebuilt once again in the mid-11th century, when an agreement was reached between the Fatimids and the Byzantine Empire in 1027–8. A 12th-century expansion and restoration by the Crusaders gave the Holy Sepulchre its current appearance, while in 1808 a fire damaged the Edicule, which was rebuilt in the style which remains, now freshly restored. It was last reconstructed in the early 19th century after

a fire destroyed it but repairs are long overdue (now completed!) as the structure was damaged in an earthquake in 1927.

Excavations inside of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during the 20th century revealed remains of Hadrian's temple and walls from Constantine's original church. Archaeologists also found an ancient limestone quarry and at least half a dozen other rock-cut tombs, some of which can be seen today, in the Syriac chapel behind the Edicule, known as the Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Golgotha (or Calvary) is where Jesus was crucified. On this hilltop are the tenth to the thirteenth Stations of the Cross. The tenth station is commemorated at the top of the stairs leading to Calvary where Jesus was stripped of his garments. The eleventh station is at the silver altar where Jesus was nailed to the cross. The twelfth station is on the Greek Orthodox altar, where Jesus died upon the cross. The limestone rock underneath shows where the Cross of Jesus stood as well as the crosses of the two thieves crucified with him. The thirteenth station is on the Roman Catholic side where Jesus was taken down from the cross. This is commemorated at the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows.

### **TENTH STATION - Jesus is stripped of his garments**

*Matthew 27:33-36 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there.*

### **ELEVENTH STATION - Jesus is nailed to the Cross**

*Matthew 27:37-42 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews". Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right hand and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross".*

