

This Garden fits many of the details described in the gospel accounts. At the very least it is a beautiful visual aid that helps bring to life the wonderful events surrounding the Messiah's resurrection.

While we do not know for certain where these events occurred, we have faith in him *"who was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 1:4)

"Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died... so that all will be made alive in Christ... The last enemy to be destroyed is death... so that God may be ALL IN ALL." (1 Corinthians 15:20, 22, 26, 28)

THE
**GARDEN
TOMB**
Jerusalem

We do not charge for admission to the Garden. It is maintained by the voluntary contributions of visitors like you.

The garden is owned and administered by the Garden Tomb (Jerusalem) Association, a charitable trust based in the United Kingdom (charity 1144197) and in Israel (R.A. 580651651).

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Welcome to THE GARDEN TOMB



This garden has been carefully maintained as a place of Christian worship, witness, and reflection on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. Many believe this to be the garden in which Jesus of Nazareth was buried and where he rose from the dead.

The Garden Tomb has been owned by a non-denominational Christian trust since 1894. We make no dogmatic claims about the historical authenticity of this site but desire to preserve it as a place of worship and as a visual reminder of the Messiah's sacrifice and victory.

You are welcome to explore the garden and its spiritual significance. Our staff will be happy to assist you with any questions you might have.

Please begin your tour by turning to the right and following the path towards Skull Hill.

The traditional site where the crucifixion and resurrection are remembered is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which was established in the early 4th century by Emperor Constantine. However, for at least several centuries some have questioned whether that ancient church is the actual site of the gospel events. This alternative location, today known as Skull Hill, was first suggested to be the site of Christ's crucifixion in 1842 by a German scholar named Otto Thenius.

As you stand on the platform at the far end of the garden, you will find yourself overlooking a bus station. To the left you will see a rough cliff and to the right the northern walls of the Old City. This area was part of an ancient stone quarry in biblical times. According to a local oral tradition the disused quarry was later used by the Jewish authorities in antiquity as a place of execution by stoning. The same site may have subsequently been used by the Romans as a crucifixion site.



The skull-shaped cliff around 1900

Crucifixions were usually carried out by busy roads as a forceful deterrent to other potential criminals and insurrectionists. This site was close to the main northern gate and adjacent to the main road leading to Damascus. The Bible tells us that they took Jesus out of the city bearing his own cross to "a place of a skull". (Skull in Aramaic is *Golgotha* and in Latin it is *Calvaria*.) It is interesting, therefore, to see the resemblance to a skull in the rock face to your left. The photograph mounted on our platform shows how the hill looked during the late 19th century.

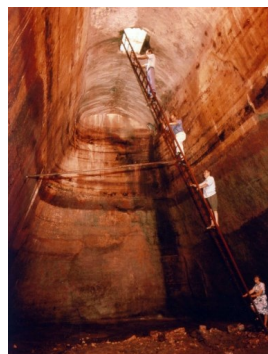
Note that the crucifixion would not have been on top of the hill (despite popular portrayals of the event) but rather on the roadside. He was crucified alongside two brigands in front of a jeering crowd, while people passing by could read the charge posted above the cross: "**JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS.**" (John 19:19)

The Bible also tells us that "*at the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no-one had ever been laid.*" (John 19:41). That tomb (and presumably also the garden) belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, who was given special permission to bury the body of Jesus in his nearby tomb before the start of the Jewish Sabbath. The discovery of both an ancient tomb and the remains of an ancient agricultural garden very close to Skull Hill conforms well with that description.

We cannot be sure where the crucifixion took place, but the precise location is of less importance than the spiritual significance of what happened.

"Christ emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name." (Philippians 2:7-9)

Please now walk back into the Garden using the right hand path, and turn left into the small olive grove. You will be standing above one of Jerusalem's larger rain water cisterns holding about 250,000 US gallons (nearly a thousand cubic meters). However, in its current form it dates to Crusader times and it is not clear whether a cistern was present here in the days of Christ. You can peek into the cistern through a shaft to get an impression of its depth.



The rainwater cistern



The ancient winepress

Continue through the path in the grove and when you walk down the steps you will notice to your left an ancient winepress indicating the presence of a vineyard here in antiquity, possibly the garden of that rich man, Joseph of Arimathea.

To your right you will find the tomb itself which was unearthed in 1867 and first proposed by General Charles Gordon to be the tomb of Jesus in 1883. Unfortunately, its entrance had been damaged and later repaired with stone blocks.

Please refrain from posing for photographs in the tomb and in its vicinity.

The exact dating of the tomb is disputed, however it is at least as old as the days of Christ and it otherwise fits the descriptions in the gospels. In later years the tomb area was used by Christians in both the Byzantine and Crusader periods. There is a Byzantine cross painted inside the tomb and a Crusader cross carved outside on the front wall.

The channel outside the front wall of the tomb, though extensively modified in later centuries, may have originally been used as a track for a large rolling stone.

"On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen!'" (Luke 24:1-5)