

## Lazarus / Olive Press / Gethsemane

Overlooked! As thoroughly as the scriptures and the archaeology are examined, important matters are and always will be overlooked. We minutely examine texts and artifacts for clues, hints that reveal deeper meanings. There are new items of research that raise questions, possibilities.

The Garden of Gethsemane is an example of a well known place. In 1995 July / August "The Garden of Gethsemane: Not the Place of Jesus' Arrest" was published in Biblical Archaeology Review<sup>1</sup>. I found no scholarly follow up. The Scripture does mention a Garden of Gethsemane and those who go there see a grove of old trees. The word "Gethsemane" means "Oil Press", not trees. The oil press is nowhere to be seen. Except it is there. Next door is "The Church of the Sepulchre of Saint Mary" or "The Tomb of the Virgin Mary".

There is considerable information of the church and tomb, presenting why it may actually be the Virgin's Tomb. There is nearly nothing about "The Grotto of Gethsemane" which is attached. "The Grotto is of irregular shape it is 17m long 9m wide and at its maximum 3.40m high. It is the only monument that has preserved the original form which it bore in the time of Jesus Christ." <http://www.kcm.co.kr/HolyLand/ho035.html> Only the Grotto of the Nativity and the foundation of St. Peter's house in Capernaum come close.

Professor Taylor studied the place, which by legend was where Jesus was arrested. The legend does not fit the texts of scripture. The legend has Jesus and the rest inside the dark grotto. The text suggests they were outside in the grove.

While it is not where Jesus was arrested, the oil press, Gethsemane, reveals much more. It is the place where the sacred olive oil was prepared for the Temple. The trees on the Mount of Olives belonged to the Temple. The whole installation was controlled and worked by priests. Bethany on the top was the home of Lazarus. Bethphage was a villages of the priest workers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/21/4/1> The article is behind a paywall so I have made extensive quotations from it.

There is another implication. This was where Jesus and his followers often stayed, John 18:2. Think of that, it was Passover. All Jews were required to come to celebrate. Those nearby, a few days walk came every Passover, Pentecost and Succoth. Jesus, many others, were also there for Hanukkah John 7:2. Three or more times a year, they would have returned to the same place each time. The documentary record for Passover was between 2 1/2 and 3 million<sup>2</sup>. Every closest, rooftop and patch of ground was taken for miles. The weather was pleasant, no rain. Camping was not much different than staying homes without indoor plumbing and A/C. They may have had a second tandoor oven so they didn't need to carry one. It was a huge market fair. Everyone brought things to buy and sell. Marriages and other business were arranged. It was a party. The women, who spent hours spinning, weaving at home, were free. It was easier to come back to the same place each time. All those with Jesus had been coming for their whole lives.

This was a religious festival. Everyone was praying Shema morning and evening. The regular daily service were being held by their home synagog group. Some went to The Temple to experience the worship there. The great teachers, Gamaliel, Shammai, and others were lecturing large crowds. The greater the teacher, the greater the crowd who gave them gifts. They would listen to other synagog choirs, singing contests, dancing contests. It was a time of new psalm creation<sup>3</sup> some remained popular. Those who had grown colder in the faith were re-inspired. From the time of the Maccabees, there had been a great revival in religious fervor.

Professor Taylor wrote: "The cave, within a property now owned by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, certainly looks unimpressive. Enclosed in a flat-roofed, semicircular building, the cave is reached by a long corridor to the right of the courtyard leading to the traditional Tomb of the Virgin. Its placement makes it seem an afterthought, though in fact it was a Christian holy site long before anyone thought to place the Tomb of the Virgin Mary beside it. The interior of the rather spartan cave has traces of two levels of Byzantine (fourth–sixth-century) mosaics, intriguing medieval ceiling and wall decorations, and modern altars on a modern stone floor. These features, however, do not seem too

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<sup>2</sup> "the people came about him not fewer in number than three millions". Josephus The Wars of the Jews Book II, Ch. 14 " , "amounts to two millions seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons " Flavius Josephus. "The Wars of the Jews; or the history of the destruction of Jerusalem." Book VI Chapter 9:4

David Instone-Brewer Traditions of the Rabbis in the Era of the New Testament vol. 2A: Feasts and Sabbaths: Passover and Atonement. t.Pes.4.15 (Z.4.12): The crowded Passover of King Agrippa "One time Agrippa the King wanted to know how many workers. He said to them, the priests: Set aside for me the kidney from each and every Passover [offering]. And they set aside for him 600,000 pairs of kidneys "-Three hundred thousand Passover lambs suggests a minimum of 5 million adults

<sup>3</sup> [http://thesignofconcord.com/uploads/The\\_Psalm\\_and\\_Qumran.pdf](http://thesignofconcord.com/uploads/The_Psalm_and_Qumran.pdf)



al Monte Degli Ulivi, Gerusalemme

The Grotto was close to the Temple, just outside the Golden Gate. It was the equivalent to a Five Star Hotel. Why was Jesus able to use it? It was not first come, first served! Only someone high and powerful, like the Master of the Sacred Oil would have had that authority. Who? Why? Consider a few months before, Jesus raised Lazarus after he had been dead for four days. John 11: 45: "Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him." The word translated here as "Jews" is both true and misleading. Everyone was a "Jew". In this context the word designates the leadership of the people.<sup>4</sup> The description of the Banquet at Lazarus' home in John 12 implies that this was not the small home of an average man. The implication could be that Lazarus is the Master of the Sacred Oil.

The pictures always show Jesus with the twelve or a small group. The Scriptures mention that there were many more with him. Luke 8:2f "and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others". Acts 1:21f "choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." There were more than just two men with them from the beginning. Do you think others who were healed, saw miracles, heard him speak might have also joined in? The scriptures by convention do not mention wives and children. The twelve disciples and nearly everyone else had them. Lazarus, Mary and Martha were married with children.

The large house was the business office for the Sacred Oil. The Master' wife was in charge of the servants. Mary and Martha could have had a separate apartment. In Luke 10:38-42, Martha did not need to direct them. She could have listened with Mary and the others. It would have been a large group. There was an order of rank. Sitting at feet designates an official disciple, further back were the followers. Mary, identified as sitting at the feet, could be considered a statement she ranks as a disciple and Jesus accepted her as one. In modern times Mary Magdalene is sometimes called the thirteenth disciple but she is not so identified in the Scriptures.

Where are Mary and Martha's husbands? Why are they living with their brother? Large enterprises were run by a family from the family home. Important positions were kept

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<sup>4</sup> <https://blog.israelbiblicalstudies.com/jewish-studies/who-are-the-jews-in-the-gospel-of-john/>  
<https://www.cfi.org.uk/downloads/jew-in-newtestament.pdf>

in the family. There was lower grade oil from the pressing. It could not be used in the Temple and was surplus, sold. Perhaps their husbands were the sales representatives. There would have been a market for that in the synagogs of Mesopotamia, Parthia, Media, and beyond.

If that is the way it was, Jesus and his followers could have been there the week before the crucifixion and other times. Why does the location change for Jesus appearance Easter Evening? What reason could there be for going somewhere else? Why go from prominent gracious upper class accommodations to hiding in another place? "So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well" John 12:10. They may have been afraid to kill someone who had been raised from the dead, however his position was subject to the council. They could remove him from office and evict those he was sheltering at his home and at Gethsemane. That would have to have been before the Easter evening appearance.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were on the Council. There may not have been legal ways to remove them. They would have been isolated, despised and rejected. They may have chosen not to attend council anymore. Their homes may not have been under the council's legal authority, so they would have been secure in them. As wealthy powerful people (all members of the council were) they would have had large homes. That would be a likely location for the Sunday evening appearance and a place for the followers who remained in the city.

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other places to check

<https://touristsinIsrael.com/2016/08/16/grotto-of-gethsemane/> very good includes map of room

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb\\_of\\_the\\_Virgin\\_Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Virgin_Mary)