

Archaeologists Make Eye-Opening Breakthrough in Jerusalem

A breakthrough discovery was found at Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's Old City. In brief, archaeologists have dug deeper into what some believe to be the tomb of the Messiah and they found a cross on it.

If it is the tomb of Yeshua, the cross would have been added much later. At the time of His death and resurrection, the cross was not a symbol of the faith, but rather the fish is probably the earliest symbol. Some of the first Greek-speaking believers turned the Greek word for fish, *ichthus*, into a creative acronym for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."

Was the Cross a Symbol?

However, at the time of His death, the cross was a symbol of execution. Wearing a cross necklace would be like wearing an electric chair around your neck. It became more popular in the late second and third centuries, finally adopted by the anti-Semitic Emperor Constantine as the official symbol of political Christianity.

So what does this conclude? More than likely that Constantine's mother, Helena, who in A.D. 326 went throughout the Holy Land with a delegation seeking to identify places considered holy, identified this as Yeshua's tomb. She is also credited with finding the original cross (which of course, she did not).

Locals who told the delegation that Roman Emperor Hadrian had built a pagan temple over the tomb to declare the supremacy of the Roman state religion over the New Testament faith led her to this place. This is the emperor who changed the name of

Judea to Palestine and sought to destroy the existence of Jewish life and culture in A.D. 135. Hadrian's pagan temple was destroyed (though some of its remains have been identified) and Constantine had a church built above the tomb.

It is important to note that Constantine popularized the idea of building shrines or church buildings, not as dynamic houses of praise and worship, but as memorials.

"The great era of church buildings began with Constantine's patronage of the church in the fourth century. He commissioned basilicas to signal his support of the new religion and to advertise his reign."

The slab on the tomb goes back, it is believed, not to the first or even fourth century, but to the Crusades (A.D. 1099). What this says is that at least a thousand years ago, the Crusaders thought this to be the tomb of the Messiah. "We can't say 100 percent, but it appears to be visible proof that the location of the tomb has not shifted through time, something that scientists and historians have wondered for decades," said Fredrik Hiebert, *National Geographic's* archaeologist-in-residence.

Definitely Could Be Yeshua's

Furthermore, this tomb is consistent with the way that wealthy Jews, such as Joseph of Arimathea, buried their dead. However, it doesn't prove that Yeshua was the Jewish person buried there. Of course, there are no bones in this tomb! Approximately a year after burial (when the body had completely decomposed) the bones would be collected and placed in a stone box called an ossuary.

While I am not a fan of the practice of building church structures over places of significance (often people come from all over the world just to touch a stone or light a candle, assuming there is spiritual power apart from relating directly with the Father through Jesus), I can't help but be moved at

what might be the burial spot of Yeshua.

“We may not be absolutely certain that the site of the Holy Sepulchre Church is the site of Jesus’ burial, but we certainly have no other site that can lay a claim nearly as weighty, and we really have no reason to reject the authenticity of the site.”

When the researchers removed the marble slab that for centuries had covered the tomb for its protection, that were stunned to find it completely in tact.

First Ever Photographs of Tomb

The marble slab revealing the tomb had not been seen by a human for centuries and had never before been photographed. Before resealing, the team of archaeologists will spend the next five months gathering data. It will be interesting to see if they find any markings or graffiti connecting it to Yeshua.

As exciting as this finding may be, nothing compares to the intimate relationship with Yeshua that is available to anyone, anywhere, who puts his or her faith in Him. {eoa}

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