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# The Rod of an Almond Tree in God's Master Plan (Online Edition)

by Peter and Christie Michas with Robert Vander Maten

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## Chapter 2

### The Mount of Olives - True Site of the Crucifixion

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned OUTSIDE THE CAMP. Therefore Jesus [Yeshua] also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered OUTSIDE THE GATE. Hence, let us go out to Him OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13:11-13, emphasis added).

They took Jesus [Yeshua] therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross [crossbar], to the place called THE PLACE OF A SKULL, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha (John 19:17, emphasis added).

The author of the Book of Hebrews identifies the specific location of the crucifixion, referred to as “outside the gate” and “outside the camp”, where the bodies of certain sacrificial animals

were burned. These sacrificial animals included the Red Heifer, the holiest of all sacrifices, and the bull and goat sacrificed on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the holiest day of the year. The Day of Atonement was the only time the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies of the Temple to offer the blood of the animals sacrificed for the sin atonement of the whole nation of Israel. There is only one location that fits the Biblical description of the place Messiah Yeshua was crucified: the summit of the Mount of Olives.

## **THE BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES**

The Mount of Olives is central to God's Master Plan of redemption.

...when Jesus [Yeshua] came to Jerusalem for the last days of his life we find mention of arrival at the Mount of Olives (το ορος των ελαιων Mt 21:1; Mk 11:1, where ελαιων is the genitive plural of ελαια, "olive tree" or "olive," hence literally "the mountain of the olives," i.e., the Mount of Olives ...). The Mount of Olives is a part of a ridge of hills that overlooks Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley from the east. .... The ridge is some two and one-half miles long and has three main summits. The highest summit ... at the north [Mount Scopus] ... is 2,690 feet above sea level. ... The second summit, 2,660 feet above sea level, is directly across the Kidron Valley east from the city and the Temple area, and is the Mount of Olives proper. The location corresponds, for example, with Zec 14:4, which states that the Mount of Olives lies "before" or "opposite" or "facing" Jerusalem on the east. The Arabic name is et-Tur, which means "the Mount," and the [present-day] village on the top is called Kefar et-Tur. On the summit also are a Russian church and buildings with a high tower that is a prominent landmark from all directions. ... The third main summit of the entire chain is farther south and somewhat lower than Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives. ... This is probably the Mount of Corruption or Mount of Offence, where Solomon worshipped false gods (II Kings 23:13).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, pp. 154-155.

The first Biblical reference to the Mount of Olives is in 2 Samuel 15:30, describing David's flight from Jerusalem in the easterly direction up and over the summit of the Mount of Olives. The vision of the prophet Ezekiel reveals that the Gate of Heaven is located above the Mount of Olives (Ezekiel 11:23). The prophet Zechariah shows the Lord (YHVH) Yeshua descending from Heaven to the Mount of Olives at His Second Coming (Zechariah 14:4).

The Mount of Olives is frequently mentioned in the New Testament. Yeshua spent much time with His disciples on the Mount of Olives (Luke 21:37; 22:39; John 8:1). It was on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Temple Mount, that Yeshua wept over the city of Jerusalem and prophesied concerning the destruction of the Temple, the end of the Age, and His Second Coming (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:3-4). It was over the Mount of Olives that Yeshua rode on the donkey foal during His entry into Jerusalem, crossing over the Kidron Valley to the Temple Mount (Matthew 21:1; Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29, 37). Yeshua spent His last night on the Mount of Olives prior to His arrest (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39). And Yeshua was crucified, buried, and resurrected on the Mount of Olives (Hebrews 13:11-13). His ascension into Heaven was also from the Mount of Olives (Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-12).

### **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES - SITE OF THE RED HEIFER SACRIFICE**

The Red Heifer sacrifice was performed on the summit of the Mount of Olives in a direct line of sight to the entrance of the Temple on its eastern side. The animal was placed on its left side, head toward the south, and face turned westward toward the entrance to the Temple. According to the Mishnah,<sup>2</sup> the High Priest who sacrificed and burned the Red Heifer was able to look directly into the entrance of the Temple when the blood was sprinkled (*Middot* 2.4):

All the walls that were there [on the Temple Mount] were high, with the exception of the eastern wall, so that the [High] Priest who burned the [red] heifer stood on top of the Mount of Olives and was able to see directly into the entrance

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<sup>2</sup> Compiled about A.D. 200 by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, the Mishnah is a collection of oral laws forming the basic part of the Talmud.

of the Sanctuary [Temple] when the blood was tossed.<sup>3</sup>

God gave the commandment regarding the Red Heifer sacrifice:

“This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect, and on which a yoke has never been placed. And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought OUTSIDE THE CAMP and be slaughtered in his presence. Next Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting [Tabernacle] seven times. Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned’ ”(Numbers 19:2-5, emphasis added).

Based upon God’s instructions, the Red Heifer (Hebrew *parah adumah*):

... refers to a red-brown, unblemished, and unworked cow that was sacrificed and burned (Num. 19:1-8); its ashes were then kept “for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin” (v. 9). The cleansing in view had to do with corpse contamination (vv.11-22). This ritual included several unusual features, such as the requirement that the slaughtering take place OUTSIDE THE CAMP (instead of on the altar [of the Temple])... (emphasis added).<sup>4</sup>

The Red Heifer had to be entirely red (reddish-brown); at least three years old, although an older animal was acceptable; perfectly free of any physical blemish or defect; and never previously yoked or used for physical labor (Numbers 19:2).

This heifer must be brought to the “Mount of Anointment”, A PRECISE LOCATION ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, OPPOSITE THE EASTERN

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<sup>3</sup> Blackman, Philip (Editor), *Mishnayoth*, Vol. V, *Middoth* 2.4, pp. 511-512.

<sup>4</sup> *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 3, pp. 112-113.

GATE OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT. There the heifer must be slaughtered and burned. Afterwards, its ashes are mixed together with natural spring water. It is this solution, called by the Bible “the waters of sanctification,” which is used to sprinkle on those who are impure (emphasis added).<sup>5</sup>

In the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), several types of impurity are described and specific ways of restoring purity prescribed. The Biblical laws of purity and impurity had to do with ritual impurity rather than physical cleanliness. The highest degree of impurity was caused by contact with a dead body and the only means of purification was by sprinkling the Red Heifer’s ashes mixed with water on the person. In order for a person to partake of the Passover meal, they had to be purified from any and all forms of ritual impurity.

During the Second Temple period, the Red Heifer was led out of the Temple area through the Eastern Gate, over the Kidron Valley and up to the summit of the Mount of Olives via a ritually clean, stone arch-over-arch causeway/ramp. The Eastern Gate:

... has strong associations with the sacrifice of the Red Heifer, outlined in Numbers 19:1-10. In *Parah*, another of the mishnaic tractates, the complete Temple ritual concerning this sacrifice is related. In chapter three, we learn that the Red Heifer was brought over an arched causeway leading from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives. The heifer was then burnt and its ashes collected. These ashes when mixed with water, were used as a purification for sin.

There was no need to change this system during the Herodian period [the time of Messiah Yeshua], so it can safely be assumed that it would have been through this gate that the Red Heifer was led out to the Mount of Olives during that time

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<sup>5</sup> *The Mystery of the Red Heifer: Divine Promise of Purity*, Chapter “The Divine ordinance of purification through the ashes of the RED HEIFER, as outlined in the book of Numbers, chapter 19” ([www.templeinstitute.org/red\\_heifer/red\\_heifer\\_contents.htm](http://www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/red_heifer_contents.htm)). At the time of the 2012 revision, the link for this quote was no longer active because the book, *The Mystery of the Red Heifer: Divine Promise of Purity*, by Rabbi Chaim Richman, © 1997, 2005, was out of print. At the time of the 2014 revision, a new edition of the book is currently available online at: [http://www.templeinstitute.org/red\\_heifer/red\\_heifer\\_contents.htm](http://www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/red_heifer_contents.htm) Due to revision, the exact quote is not available, however, the same information can be found under Part II: “The Red Heifer in Temple Times”, Chapter “The Ceremony”, Section “The Bridge” - [http://www.templeinstitute.org/red\\_heifer/ceremony.htm](http://www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/ceremony.htm)

period as well. On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), it was through here also that the scapegoat (azazel) was led away into the wilderness (Leviticus 16, Mishnah, *Yoma*).

According to the Mishnah, there was only one gate in the Eastern Wall. We must remember that the small gate near the southeast corner gave access only to the Herodian underground areas that are now occupied by Solomon's Stables. The Mishnah concerns itself mainly with the Temple Mount which existed before Herod's extension; thus the small Herodian gate near the southeast corner would have been irrelevant and would certainly not be considered as a Temple Mount gate. The Jewish tradition that the Golden Gate was the original eastern gate of the Temple Mount is probably correct.<sup>6</sup>

Many reconstructions show a bridge leading from the Eastern Wall to the Mount of Olives. This is based on the description of the ceremony of the sacrifice of the Red Heifer as recorded in the Mishnah. According to *Parah* 3.6 "They made a causeway from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives, an arched way built over an arched way, with an arch directly above each pier (of the arch below), for fear of any grave in the depth below." This causeway was used for the Red Heifer and the scapegoat and was built by the high priests at their own expense (*Shekalim* 4:2).<sup>7</sup>

Like the Red Heifer, Messiah Yeshua was led through the Eastern Gate, over the Kidron Valley and up to the summit of the Mount of Olives via the arched causeway to the place where He was crucified, near the site of the Red Heifer sacrifice.

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<sup>6</sup> Leen Ritmeyer, *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem*, p. 108.

<sup>7</sup> Ritmeyer, p. 112.

## **THE MYSTERY OF THE RED HEIFER REVEALED IN MESSIAH YESHUA**

The spiritual significance of the Red Heifer is considered by ancient and modern Jewish sages and scholars to be one of the greatest mysteries. The mystery is fully revealed in the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua.

### **The Perfect Offering**

As the Red Heifer was perfectly free of any physical blemish or defect, Yeshua was perfectly free of sin. He was therefore able to be the perfect sacrifice for humanity's sins. He came in a physical human body and experienced the same temptations that human beings experience but never sinned. Even after fasting for forty days in the wilderness, Yeshua resisted the temptations of Satan and did not sin (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1-13).

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:17-18).

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a [red] heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ [Messiah], who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:13-15).

## **Never Wore a Yoke**

Yeshua never wore the yoke of the bondage of sin. Yeshua was never under any man's yoke or even the yoke of the Law because He was God incarnate, perfect and sinless in every way (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-3, 14).

The apostles Peter and Paul addressed the "yoke" of the Mosaic Law in speaking to the Judaizers, Jewish believers in Yeshua who taught Gentiles that they had to observe the entire Mosaic Law in order to be saved:

"Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus [Yeshua], in the same way they also are" (Acts 15:10-11).

It was for freedom that Christ [Messiah] set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject to a yoke of slavery (Galatians 5:1).

Yeshua set us free from the yoke of sin and the yoke of the Law. Yeshua fulfilled all of the sacrificial requirements of the Mosaic Covenant for the atonement of sin. We are saved by grace alone, by faith (trust) alone, in Messiah Yeshua's sacrifice alone for our sins. It is impossible for us to be "good enough" through our own "good works" to earn salvation. Because of Yeshua's sacrifice, the Spirit of God is able to dwell in us, to enable us to live a life in obedience to God. This is the New Covenant, the better covenant that the Lord promised He would establish:

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the

LORD, “I WILL PUT MY LAW WITHIN THEM, AND ON THEIR HEART I WILL WRITE IT; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:31-33, emphasis added).

Yeshua says:

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Matthew 11:29-30).

### **Able to Cleanse the Greatest Spiritual Impurity**

The ashes of the Red Heifer were used to purify the impure. This was the only way for someone who came into contact with a dead body, which resulted in defilement of the highest degree, to be purified. In the same way, sin renders a person spiritually impure. Spiritual death is the result of the natural, sinful condition of humanity. The blood of sacrificial animals could only temporarily “cover” sin but could never pay the price in full for sin, as the blood of Messiah Yeshua was able to completely and eternally accomplish:

But when Christ [Messiah] appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation and not through the blood of goats and calves, but THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained ETERNAL REDEMPTION. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ASHES OF A [RED] HEIFER sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh how much more will the blood of Christ [Messiah], who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason HE IS THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the

promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:11-15, emphasis added).

Without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness of sin:

And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and **WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS**. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ [Messiah] did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages **HE HAS BEEN MANIFESTED TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF**. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ [Messiah] also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him (Hebrews 9:22-28, emphasis added).

By the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua once for all time – His sacrifice paying the price for sin in full (all past, present, and future sins of all humanity) – there is no other sacrifice necessary or efficacious as payment for sin:

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin (Hebrews 10:18).

God is not only the God of mercy but also the God of justice. God is holy and cannot be in the presence of a sinful person. But God made the one and only way of salvation through His Son, Messiah Yeshua, who made the payment for humanity's sins once and for all time. This is the love of God, so great that He would bear the sins of humanity and make the payment Himself.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only [Greek *monogenes*]<sup>8</sup> Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Each person has the choice to receive God’s free gift of grace and forgiveness of sins, which requires a sincere and repentant heart. To repent means to turn to God and His way for one’s life.

### **The Only Offering Sacrificed “Outside the Camp”**

As previously explained, the Red Heifer was sacrificed “outside the camp”, “outside the gate”, meaning outside the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount. Certain other sacrificial animals were also burned at the same site, but the Red Heifer was the only animal actually sacrificed at this location.

The place “outside the camp” was 2000 cubits (3000 feet) east of the city, according to God’s commandment for marking city limits:

“You shall also MEASURE OUTSIDE THE CITY ON THE EAST SIDE TWO THOUSAND CUBITS, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits, with the city in the center. This shall become theirs as pasture lands for the cities” (Numbers 35:5, emphasis added).

Two thousand cubits was also the distance allowed for traveling on the Sabbath:

Then they [the disciples] returned [after Yeshua’s ascension] to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet [the Mount of Olives], which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away (Acts 1:12, emphasis added).

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<sup>8</sup> The Greek word *monogenes* (Strong’s 3439) in John 3:16 is more accurately translated as “one and only” rather than “only begotten”, as reflected in more modern translations (*Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*, p. 487). Yeshua was not a created being whose existence began with the incarnation. His conception was unique and accomplished by the Spirit of God in a way unlike any other human conception.

Marking 2000 cubits from Jerusalem's Eastern Gate brings us to the summit of the Mount of Olives, to the place where the Red Heifer was sacrificed. From this location, the High Priest could look directly into the entrance of the Temple as the Red Heifer was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled toward the Temple as an offering to God.

When God gave His specific instructions for marking the 2000-cubit limits of cities, the Israelites were just entering the land promised to them, hundreds of years before David captured Jerusalem and Solomon built the First Temple. Only God could have specifically designed the Temple and the topographical features of Jerusalem so that the place of the Red Heifer sacrifice – the place of Yeshua's sacrifice – would be precisely located on the summit of the Mount of Olives.

Every prophetic detail of time, place, and symbolic meaning of God's Master Plan of Redemption was established at the moment God created the world (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8). Random processes and random events cannot account for the supernatural precision of the Creator's design that is clearly evident. God controls and is orchestrating every detail of His plan of salvation to point to the one true Messiah: Yeshua!

According to His own plan, our Creator (Colossians 1:15-17) entered His own Creation to offer Himself for our sins "outside the camp", "outside the gate", on the summit of the Mount of Olives, so that we could have eternal life with Him. From the summit, Yeshua faced the Temple, just as the Red Heifer faced the Temple while being sacrificed. From the summit of the Mount of Olives – at the precise place and the precise time God appointed at the beginning of Creation – YHVH/Yeshua saw all Jerusalem and all Jerusalem saw God's Passover Lamb and Red Heifer.

### **Led out the Eastern Gate from the Temple Mount to the Summit of the Mount of Olives**

As previously explained, the Red Heifer was led out through the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount, over the Kidron Valley and up to the summit of the Mount of Olives via the ritually

clean, stone-arched causeway/ramp. Yeshua was led along the same pathway to the place of sacrifice on the summit of the Mount of Olives.

### **Symbol of the Color of Blood and the Impartation of New Life**

An unusual aspect of the Red Heifer is it being female rather than male. The symbolism of this has also been a great mystery:

It has been conjectured that the use of a female, though sacrificial animals were usually males, symbolized the imparting of new life to those who had been defiled by contact with death. The color red, being the color of blood, may have been the token of life.<sup>9</sup>

By the shedding of His blood, Messiah Yeshua cleanses us from spiritual death resulting from sin and imparts eternal life, the free gift of salvation through His sacrifice for sin atonement.

The physical body of Messiah Yeshua was conceived by the power of the Spirit of God from the “seed of a woman” (Genesis 3:15; Luke 1:35). Perhaps another significance of the Red Heifer being female relates to the seed of a woman being used by God to bring forth the Messiah, by the power of His Holy Spirit.

### **Offered by the High Priest**

The High Priest offered up the Red Heifer to God. He performed the sacrifice at the summit of the Mount of Olives and sprinkled the blood of the heifer toward the entrance of the Temple.

Following the prophetic pattern, the High Priest Caiaphas made the decision that Yeshua must die, in a highly prophetic statement:

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<sup>9</sup> Philip Birnbaum, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Concepts*, p. 241.

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR YOU THAT ONE MAN SHOULD DIE for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.” Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, HE PROPHESED THAT JESUS [YESHUA] WAS GOING TO DIE FOR THE NATION, AND NOT FOR THE NATION ONLY, BUT THAT HE MIGHT ALSO GATHER TOGETHER INTO ONE THE CHILDREN OF GOD WHO ARE SCATTERED ABROAD (John 11:49-52, emphasis added).

Caiaphas, as head of the Great Sanhedrin, the supreme council and court of the ancient Jewish nation, played the leading role in condemning Yeshua to death (Matthew 26:57-66):

But Jesus [Yeshua] kept silent. And the high priest [Caiaphas] said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of God.” Jesus [Yeshua] said to him, “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, “He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?” They answered and said, “He is deserving of death!” (Matthew 26:63-66).

As the highest Jewish authority, Caiaphas dealt directly with the Roman authorities that ruled during the time of Yeshua. Under the leadership of Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin brought Yeshua before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, to be sentenced to death and executed:

And early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole Council [Sanhedrin], immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus [Yeshua], they led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate (Mark 15:1).

As High Priest, Caiaphas was authorized by God to offer the sin atonement sacrifice for the sins of the Jewish nation. In this prophetic role, Caiaphas offered Yeshua for the sins of the Jewish people and the sins of all humanity.

According to the Mishnah (*Parah* 3:6-7):

... the priest who was to burn the [red] heifer, and the [red] heifer and all her attendants went forth to the Mount of Olives. ...

And the elders of Israel used to precede them on foot to the Mount of Olives. And a place of [ritual] immersion was there; and they used [first] to render unclean the priest who was to burn the [red] heifer, because of the Sadducees that they might not say that it must be performed only by those who had become clean with sundown.<sup>10</sup>

From this, we can see that the High Priest who offered the Red Heifer was NOT ritually clean prior to the sacrifice. In fact, he was deliberately made unclean to show that the priest did not have to be ritually clean to offer a valid Red Heifer sacrifice. This picture exactly fits Caiaphas, a very corrupt High Priest, who was certainly totally unclean spiritually.

According to the Mishnah (*Parah* 4:3): “No [wrongful] intention invalidates aught concerning the [red] heifer”. One example given of a wrongful intention is flaying or cutting the Red Heifer. Applying this to Yeshua, He was scourged and crowned with thorns, cutting and stripping His flesh, but this did not in any way invalidate His sacrifice. Despite the wrongful intentions of Caiaphas and all those in favor of Yeshua’s death, they could not invalidate His perfect, sinless sacrifice for the atonement of humanity’s sins.

We also see from the Mishnah description that the elders of Israel preceded the High Priest and assistant priests with the Red Heifer to the site of sacrifice. The Gospel accounts show the elders, including members of the Sanhedrin, accompanying the High Priest and chief priests in taking

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<sup>10</sup> *Mishnayoth*, Vol. VI, pp. 417-418.

Yeshua for judgment by Pilate (Mark 15:1). All involved would surely have continued to the place of execution and watched as Yeshua was crucified and died. Just as the High Priest offered up the Red Heifer on the summit of the Mount of Olives, the High Priest Caiaphas surely presided over Yeshua's crucifixion and death on the summit of the Mount of Olives.

### **Rendered the Impure, Pure, and the Pure, Impure**

The ashes of the Red Heifer were required for purification from the greatest form of defilement, contact with the dead. The ashes of the Red Heifer were unique in rendering the impure, pure, and the pure, impure. Everyone who participated in the Red Heifer sacrifice became ritually unclean/impure, and those to whom the ashes (mixed with water) were applied became ritually clean/purified.

The priests who sacrificed and burned the Red Heifer were rendered unclean in the process:

‘The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening’ (Numbers 19:7-8).

The High Priest Caiaphas and all those responsible for and participating in Yeshua's death were certainly spiritually unclean as a result of their involvement. Ironically, the High Priest and his associates did not enter the Roman Praetorium for fear of becoming unclean because it would have disqualified them from partaking in the Passover (John 18:28). In actuality, they rejected God's Passover Lamb, Messiah Yeshua, the only way of salvation and the only way of being truly cleansed of sin by God.

Those who trust in Yeshua's sacrifice for sin atonement are completely cleansed of all spiritual uncleanness resulting from sin. The righteousness of Yeshua is attributed to believers in the eyes of God. In receiving the free gift of eternal life through Messiah Yeshua, believers are delivered from spiritual death to eternal spiritual life with God.

### **Only Offering Entirely Burned, Only Ashes Used for Purification**

The Red Heifer was entirely burned to ashes, including its blood. In other sacrifices, whole or part of the animal was burned after the blood was drained and offered. The burning of the whole body represents the entire sacrifice being offered up to God. According to the prophetic pattern of the Red Heifer, Yeshua offered Himself up totally and completely to God for the purification from sin for those who trust in Him for redemption, the only way God made for salvation.

### **A Clean Man To Place the Ashes of the Red Heifer in a Clean Place**

‘Now A MAN WHO IS CLEAN shall gather up the ASHES OF THE HEIFER and deposit them OUTSIDE THE CAMP IN A CLEAN PLACE, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin’ (Numbers 19:9, emphasis added).

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin and believer in Messiah Yeshua, was a “clean man” who took the body of Yeshua and placed it in “a clean place” – a new tomb near the crucifixion site where no body had previously been placed (Mark 15:43).

According to the Mishnah (*Parah* 3:11), the ashes of the Red Heifer were divided into three portions: one portion kept on the Mount of Olives, one portion kept at the Temple, and one portion divided among the Priestly Courses (the twenty-four divisions of the priesthood). Significantly, believers in Messiah Yeshua constitute the New Priesthood of the New Covenant and are cleansed by Yeshua’s fully sufficient sacrifice once and for all time for service to Him (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

### **Purification Necessary To Partake in Passover and the Passover Lamb of God**

Messiah Yeshua is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The apostle Paul identified the Messiah with the sin offering (Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21) and the Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Only those purified by the blood of the Lamb of God can partake in the Passover, meaning being delivered by God from the Death Angel. This is a spiritual picture referring to being saved from spiritual death by the sacrifice of Messiah Yeshua, who is God's Passover Lamb. According to *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Concepts*:

The paschal [Passover] lamb could be eaten on the first night of Passover only by those who had been purified from their defilement.<sup>11</sup>

To be purified by God's Red Heifer, Messiah Yeshua, means to be purified from all sin and to be delivered from spiritual death to eternal spiritual life with God. Both the Red Heifer sacrifice and the Passover Lamb sacrifice are prophetic pictures of Messiah Yeshua's unique and ultimate sacrifice for sin, and purification from sin and spiritual death. Yeshua is the ONLY way of salvation and Yeshua is the one and only unique and sole Mediator between man and God:

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] (1 Timothy 2:5).

It is interesting to note that:

... the Torah [five books of Moses] section on the red heifer is read on one of the Sabbaths that precede the festival of *Pesah* [Passover], referred to as the Sabbath of *Parashath Parah*. This commemorates the practices of purification that were observed by the Jewish people in ancient days, and at the same time it impresses on us the need of moral purification, which is the theme of the *Haftarah* from Ezekiel 36:16-38, recited on that distinguished Sabbath.<sup>12</sup>

In preparation for Passover, purification from sin was necessary. For those who had been in contact with the dead, purification by the sprinkling of the ashes of the Red Heifer was the only

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<sup>11</sup> Birnbaum, p. 241.

<sup>12</sup> Birnbaum, p. 241.

way purity could be restored. According to this prophetic picture, Yeshua, as God's Red Heifer, provides the purification necessary to partake of Messiah Yeshua as God's Passover Lamb.

### **Purification on Third and Seventh Days Required**

In order to be fully purified from contact with a dead body, a person had to be sprinkled with the ashes of the Red Heifer (mixed with water) on the third and seventh days:

'The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he shall be clean; but IF HE DOES NOT PURIFY HIMSELF ON THE THIRD DAY AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY, HE SHALL NOT BE CLEAN. Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle [Temple] of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him' (Numbers 19:11-13, emphasis added).

Based upon the understanding that the Biblical Holy Days (the Appointed Times of the Lord, Leviticus 23) provide the prophetic pattern and timetable of God's Master Plan of Redemption pointing to the true Messiah, we can see that Yeshua's death and resurrection follow this detailed prophetic timetable. There may also be a prophetic connection between the third and seventh days for purification with the ashes of the Red Heifer and the third and seventh days of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread prophetic cycle.

According to this prophetic timeline, Yeshua was crucified on the day that the Passover Lambs were sacrificed (14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan) and He resurrected on the third day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (17<sup>th</sup> of Nisan). The Feast of Unleavened Bread covered a period of seven days from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> of Nisan, the first and seventh days being days of holy convocation, annual Sabbath days when no work was to be done.

Understanding that Yeshua fulfilled the Red Heifer sacrifice in order to deliver us from spiritual death, Yeshua's resurrection on the third day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread may have added prophetic significance in regard to an unclean person being purified with the ashes of the Red Heifer on the third day. Likewise, there may be prophetic significance in regard to an unclean person being purified on the seventh day to complete the purification process, corresponding to the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the last day completing the prophetic cycle for this particular Appointed Time of the Lord.

Since all have sinned and are under the sentence of spiritual death, all need to be purified by Yeshua's sacrifice:

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] our Lord (Romans 6:23).

When Yeshua resurrected, He showed that He had overcome death. Those who trust in His sacrifice are delivered from death to life:

... knowing that Christ [Messiah], having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him (Romans 6:9).

... indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us (2 Corinthians 1:9-10).

But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ [Yeshua the Messiah] (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

The prophetic cycle of the Feast of Unleavened Bread culminates on the seventh day, corresponding to the seventh day of purification with the ashes of the Red Heifer. We know that Yeshua resurrected on the third day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Perhaps Yeshua made an appearance of particular importance on the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to prophetically fulfill the completion of this seven-day prophetic period.

### **Sign of Jerusalem's Impending Destruction - Red Heifer Gave Birth To a Lamb**

According to first-century Jewish historian Josephus, one of the signs of Jerusalem's impending destruction occurred when a red heifer being led by the High Priest for sacrifice gave birth to a lamb! This strange occurrence took place just before Passover and was accompanied by other supernatural signs that destruction as prophesied by Messiah Yeshua was imminent:

Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet [Halley's Comet A.D. 66], that continued for a whole year. Thus also, before the Jews' rebellion [against Rome], and before those commotions which preceded the war [A.D. 66-70], when the people were come in great crowds to THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus {Nisan,} [according to the Syro-Macedonian calendar; the month of Nisan according to the Biblical Hebraic calendar, almost a week before the sacrifice of the Passover lambs on the fourteenth], and at the ninth hour of the night [3 am], so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house [Temple], that it appeared to be bright day-time; which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskilful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. AT THE SAME FESTIVAL ALSO, A [RED] HEIFER, AS SHE WAS LED BY THE HIGH PRIEST TO BE SACRIFICED, BROUGHT FORTH A LAMB IN THE MIDST OF THE TEMPLE. Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner, {court of the temple,} which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its

own accord about the sixth hour of the night [12 am, midnight]. Now, those that kept watch in the temple [Temple Guard] came thereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar [common people] to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared, that this signal foreshewed the desolation that was coming upon them. Besides these, A FEW DAYS AFTER THAT FEAST, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month of Artemisius, {Jyar,} [Iyar] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner {court of the} temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, “Let us remove hence” (*Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, Chapter 5, Section 3; explanatory information in straight brackets and capital letters added for emphasis).<sup>13</sup>

Josephus is a very reliable historian who lived during the time of these events. Given the reality of supernatural phenomena, supernatural signs warning of Jerusalem’s impending destruction could certainly have occurred.

We can see from the context that the Red Heifer was being sacrificed in order to produce more ashes for purification in preparation for Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread. But because Yeshua’s sacrifice, as both the Red Heifer and Passover Lamb of God, was complete fulfillment of these sacrifices, there could be no other sacrifices offered to God that would be efficacious or

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<sup>13</sup> William Whiston (Translator), *Josephus Complete Works*, p. 582.

acceptable. This supernatural sign seems to indicate the link between the Red Heifer and the Passover Lamb, as fulfilled by Messiah Yeshua.

### **Future Redemption of Israel by Messiah Yeshua – Red Heifer Sacrificed Fulfilled**

The prophet Ezekiel alludes to the Red Heifer and its ability to purify at a future time, when God will defend and protect Israel from its enemies. At this time, Messiah Yeshua will be revealed in all His glory upon His return to Jerusalem to rule and reign for a thousand years:

“Then I [THE LORD] WILL SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER ON YOU, AND YOU WILL BE CLEAN; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT WITHIN YOU; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness...” (Ezekiel 36:25-29, emphasis added).

At His Second Coming, Yeshua will deliver Israel from destruction by its enemies and reveal Himself as the Messiah promised by God. In Yeshua, the Red Heifer sacrifice is completely fulfilled. Messiah Yeshua purifies us and is our salvation and redemption.

### **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES - THE PLACE “OUTSIDE THE CAMP”**

There are many Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) references to the specific location called “outside the camp.” As previously explained, the Red Heifer was sacrificed and burned “outside the camp”. In addition, the place “outside the camp” was where the carcasses of certain sin-offering animals were burned, including the bull for the sin offering of the anointed priest (Leviticus 4:3, 11-12); the bull for the sins of the Israelite nation (Leviticus 4:14-21); and the goat and the bull

for the sin offering of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:27).<sup>14</sup>

But the flesh of the bull and its hide and its refuse, you shall burn with fire OUTSIDE THE CAMP; it is a sin offering (Exodus 29:14, emphasis added).

‘Then he is to bring out the bull to a place OUTSIDE THE CAMP, and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly’ (Leviticus 4:21, emphasis added).

“The bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken OUTSIDE THE CAMP, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire” (Leviticus 16:27, emphasis added; refers to the bull and goat sin offerings on the Day of Atonement, the one time a year when the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle their blood).

The place “outside the camp” was also associated with another specific location called “a clean place”, where the ashes of the Red Heifer were kept:

‘Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ASHES OF THE HEIFER and deposit them OUTSIDE THE CAMP IN A CLEAN PLACE, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin’ (Numbers 19:9, emphasis added).

The ashes from the burnt offerings that accumulated under the Altar at the Temple were also brought to the Mount of Olives and deposited in “a clean place” located “outside the camp”:

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law for the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself shall remain on the

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0017\\_0\\_16546.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0017_0_16546.html)

hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it. And the priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh; and he shall TAKE UP THE ASHES to which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar, and place them beside the altar. Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments, and CARRY THE ASHES OUTSIDE THE CAMP TO A CLEAN PLACE' ” (Leviticus 6:8-11, emphasis added).

This shows that ashes from various kinds of offerings at the Temple, including ashes from portions of every sin sacrifice burned on the Temple altar, were deposited on the Mount of Olives, where Yeshua paid the price for all the sins of humanity, and by His sacrifice made full restoration of the relationship between human beings and God possible.<sup>15</sup>

The author of the Book of Hebrews identifies the specific location of the crucifixion as the place known as “outside the camp” and “outside the gate”:

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned OUTSIDE THE CAMP. Therefore Jesus [Yeshua] also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered OUTSIDE THE GATE. Hence, let us go out to Him OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13:11-13).

This clearly identifies the site of the crucifixion. The place where the Red Heifer was sacrificed and burned, and the place where certain sin sacrifices were burned, including those of the bull and goat on the Day of Atonement (when sin atonement was made for the entire nation of Israel), is the same place where Yeshua gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

During the time the Israelites lived in the wilderness, the place called “outside the camp” was

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<sup>15</sup> According to Rashi “These ashes came from the pile ... at the center of the Altar. Throughout the day and night, ashes would be cleared from the fire and placed on this pile. Whenever the pile grew to a point where it spilled over to the wood on which the offerings were consumed, the ashes would be removed from the Altar” (*Leviticus*, ArtScroll Tanach Series, p. 99).

located 2000 cubits directly east of the entrance to the Tabernacle. When the Temple in Jerusalem was built as the permanent sanctuary of the Lord, the place known as “outside the camp” followed the same pattern. Like the Tabernacle, the Temple’s only entrance was located on its eastern side. The author of the Book of Hebrews tells us that the crucifixion was “outside the camp”, “outside the gate”, referring to the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount. Marking the distance of 2000 cubits (3000 feet) from the Eastern Gate, one comes to the summit of the Mount of Olives, where the Red Heifer was sacrificed.

### **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES - THE PLACE OF EXECUTION “OUTSIDE THE CAMP”**

The place of execution for blasphemers was “outside the camp”:

“Bring the one who has cursed OUTSIDE THE CAMP, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. And you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If anyone curses his God, then he shall bear his sin. Moreover, THE ONE WHO BLASPHEMES THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death’ ” (Leviticus 24:14-16, emphasis added).

Stephen was falsely accused of blasphemy and brought before the Sanhedrin (“the Council”), headed by the high priest (Acts 6:11-15; 7:1). The Sanhedrin met on the Temple Mount, and it was from here that Stephen was driven out through the Eastern Gate to the place of execution “outside the city”, the same place referred to as “outside the gate”, on the Mount of Olives:

And when they had driven him OUT OF THE CITY, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul (Acts 7:58, emphasis added).

Likewise, the High Priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin condemned Yeshua for blasphemy:

Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, “He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy” (Matthew 26:65).

“You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death” (Mark 14:64).

Yeshua was led like the holiest sacrifice, the Red Heifer, from the Temple Mount through the Eastern Gate along the ritually clean, arch-over-arch causeway/ramp that connected the Temple Mount to the summit of the Mount of Olives. This was the only path from the Temple to the summit that afforded ritual purity necessary for an acceptable sacrifice. From the summit of the Mount of Olives, there was a clear view into the Temple. Just as the Red Heifer’s head was turned to face the Temple as it was sacrificed, so too Messiah Yeshua faced the Temple as He was crucified – the ultimate and holiest of all sacrifices for the atonement of humanity’s sins.

## **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES ALTAR FROM THE TIME OF ADAM**

According to *The Torah Anthology*, Adam constructed the first sacrificial altar<sup>16</sup> and it was successively rebuilt by Abel, Noah, and Abraham.<sup>17</sup> We agree, except in regard to Noah, and believe that Noah’s son Shem, rather than Noah, rebuilt the altar.<sup>18</sup> In the corresponding passages in Genesis (4:4; 8:20; 22:9), the Hebrew word, *banah*, has been translated “built” in most English versions. However, this word may also be translated as “rebuilt” or “restored”, which we believe more accurately describes what took place.<sup>19</sup>

Where was this altar located and why was it so essential to God that it be maintained as the place

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<sup>16</sup> Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, Translator, *The Torah Anthology*, Vol. 1, p. 281.

<sup>17</sup> *The Torah Anthology*, Vol. 1, pp. 287, 375; Vol. 2, p. 332.

<sup>18</sup> After disembarking from the Ark, Noah built an altar and thanked God (Genesis 8:15-20). Noah’s Ark rested on “the mountains of Ararat” (Genesis 8:4), nowhere near the site of Jerusalem. Melchizedek, title meaning “King of Righteousness”, “is unanimously identified by the [Jewish] Sages ... as [referring to] Shem” (*Genesis*, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Vol. 1a, p. 493). Salem is the first name in the Bible referring to Jerusalem, the place of God’s dwelling, where Shem met Abraham (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 76:2).

<sup>19</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, #1129.

of sin sacrifice? Only when we understand its significance with regard to God’s Master Plan of Redemption can we hope to answer these questions. This understanding will also lead to an even deeper appreciation for the beauty and precision of God’s redemptive plan for each one of us.

Most Jewish scholars believe that from Adam to Abraham this particular altar was located on Mount Moriah (Temple Mount). But it is essential to understand that there were TWO altar sites in Jerusalem of central importance to God’s Master Plan of Redemption: the altar on Mount Moriah AND the altar on the Mount of Olives.

The altar located on Mount Moriah is profoundly significant in God’s plan of redemption. Here, we believe God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Chapter 1 “Jerusalem – The Center of the Garden of Eden”). Here, the Temple was built, where the Shekinah (Divine Presence) manifested inside the Holy of Holies above the Ark of the Covenant. And here, the Messiah will seat Himself on His throne in His Temple during the Millennial Kingdom. Most assuredly, Mount Moriah is of primary importance in God’s prophetic work.

However, equally important is the Mount of Olives, the site for the sacrifice and burning of the Red Heifer, and the burning of the Day of Atonement bull and goat sin offerings. We believe that it was here that the first altar for sin sacrifice was established at the place where Adam and Eve first sinned (see Chapter 4 “The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). And here, Messiah Yeshua offered Himself as the ultimate sin sacrifice for the atonement of the sins of all humanity.

### **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES – WHERE ABRAHAM OFFERED ISAAC**

We believe that Abram returned to the altar on the Mount of Olives at the time God made His covenant with him (Genesis 15). This covenant (promise) was sealed by the blood sacrifice of animals and was symbolic of the greater covenant to come — the covenant sealed by the blood sacrifice of Yeshua that is available to all who put their trust in Him.

God promised Abram a multitude of descendants and renamed him Abraham (“father of multitudes”) to reflect this promise. To his aged parents, Isaac was born in fulfillment of that

promise. Years later, God called on Abraham to take his son Isaac to the land of Moriah, we believe to the same place God had made His covenant with Abraham:

And He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the LAND OF MORIAH; and offer him there as a burnt offering on ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS of which I will tell you” (Genesis 22:2, emphasis added).

Based on the reference to “the land of Moriah”, it is generally assumed that the mountain where Abraham offered Isaac was Mount Moriah. However, God said that He would direct Abraham to “one of the mountains” once Abraham reached the “land of Moriah”. We believe that mountain was the Mount of Olives, which is approximately 250 feet higher than Mount Moriah, making it an ideal place of sacrifice.

The Word of God shows that the Gate of Heaven is located above the Mount of Olives. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the Shekinah (Glory Cloud) leaving the Temple and moving to a position above the Mount of Olives before it disappeared into Heaven (Ezekiel 10; 11:23). Messiah Yeshua ascended into Heaven from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9-12). Therefore, the altar on the Mount of Olives was located directly under the Gate of Heaven.

After a three-day journey, Abraham “saw the place from a distance” (Genesis 22:4). He and Isaac left the two men who had accompanied them, and took the wood, fire, and knife for the sacrifice. As they were walking to the place of sacrifice:

... Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son ...” (Genesis 22:7-8).

Abraham showed total trust in God. God had fulfilled His promise of a son when Abraham was one hundred years old. God had also promised that Abraham’s descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. It is evident that Abraham trusted God to fulfill this promise as

well. Perhaps he believed that God would resurrect Isaac, or perhaps he trusted God to make another provision for the offering. Whatever the case, Abraham's trust in God was complete.

As previously explained, we believe that the altar on the Mount of Olives was established by God from the time of Adam and Eve and subsequently rebuilt by Abraham. According to *The Torah Anthology*, the reference in Genesis 22:9 to "*the* altar. ...appears to indicate that an altar already existed there and Abraham merely rebuilt it."<sup>20</sup>

Then they came to the place of which God had told him; Abraham [RE]BUILT THE ALTAR THERE, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood (Genesis 22:9, emphasis added).

The Lord told Abraham to take his "only son, whom you love" and offer him as a burnt offering:

And He [the Lord] said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Genesis 22:2).

In the same way, Father God offered up His only Son, whom He loved, for the sins of humanity:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

Since Isaac was no longer a child, as is generally depicted, but rather a young man in his thirties, it is clear that he voluntarily allowed his father to bind him for the sacrifice.<sup>21</sup> This picture foreshadows the willing sacrifice of Yeshua in accordance with His Father's will.

And like Abraham laid the wood for the sacrifice on his son Isaac, the crossbar for His crucifixion was laid on Yeshua's shoulders to carry to the place of sacrifice:

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<sup>20</sup> *The Torah Anthology*, Vol. 2, pp. 314-315.

<sup>21</sup> *The Torah Anthology*, Vol. 2, p. 321.

And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife (Genesis 22:6a).

They took Jesus [Yeshua] therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross[bar], to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha (John 19:17).

Just as Abraham took up the knife to sacrifice Isaac:

...THE ANGEL OF THE LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” And he said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since YOU HAVE NOT WITHHELD YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON, FROM ME” (Genesis 22:11-12, emphasis added).

An interesting question regarding the angel is asked in *The Torah Anthology*: Why did the angel say, “you have not withheld your son ... from me”?<sup>22</sup> We believe the answer to this question is that the angel was no ordinary angel but the Lord (YHVH/Yeshua pre-incarnate) Himself.

According to Phinehas Ben Zadok, there is an equally valid translation that can be made from the original Hebrew of Genesis 22:8, regarding Abraham’s reply to Isaac concerning the lamb for the sacrifice. The conventional translation is:

And Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son” (Genesis 22:8a).

The alternative translation is:

“God will provide Himself AS the Lamb for the burnt offering...”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *The Torah Anthology*, Vol. 2, p. 315.

<sup>23</sup> Phinehas Ben Zadok, *Which Day Is the Passover?* p. 35.

What a profound prophecy regarding the promised Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua, who offered Himself in our place as the atonement sacrifice for our sins!

The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus [Yeshua] coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for HE EXISTED BEFORE ME’ ” (John 1:29-30, emphasis added – “He existed before me” shows Yeshua’s pre-existence as God the Son, the Word of God, with God the Father – John 1:1-14).

The lamb is described as a burnt offering, meaning that the entire lamb was to be burned as an offering to God. A burnt offering also represents complete submission to God’s will. In prophetic fulfillment, Yeshua totally submitted Himself to the will of Father God, offering Himself entirely as the sacrifice required to pay the price for all humanity’s sins.

As YHVH-Yeshua (pre-incarnate) provided a ram in place of Isaac, YHVH-Yeshua (incarnate) provided Himself, the Lamb of God, as the sin atonement sacrifice for each and every human being. Note that a ram was provided in place of Isaac, not a lamb (Genesis 22:13). This confirms the true meaning of Abraham’s words as a prophecy about the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua.

As the ram’s horns were caught in a thicket (interwoven branches of a bush),<sup>24</sup> Yeshua’s head was caught in a crown woven out of thorn branches:

Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns (Genesis 22:13a).

And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on His head (John 19:2a).

Abraham called the name of the place “The LORD will provide” (*Yehovah-Yireh*), which can

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<sup>24</sup> The Hebrew word *sobek* (Strong’s #5441) refers to “branches interwoven, a thicket” (William Wilson, *New Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, p. 443; Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, p. 81).

also be translated “The Lord will appear or be seen”.

And Abraham called the name of the place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, “In the mount of the LORD it will be provided”(Genesis 22:14).

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh [*Yehovah Yireh*]: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen (Genesis 22:14, KJV).

There is therefore a powerful double prophetic meaning: As the Lord provided the ram in place of Isaac, the Lord provided Himself as The Lamb of God in our place. And as the Angel of the Lord, YHVH pre-incarnate Yeshua, appeared and was seen by Abraham on the Mount of Olives, the Lord/YHVH-Yeshua appeared on earth (through the incarnation) and was seen on “the mount of the LORD”, the Mount of Olives.<sup>25</sup>

### **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES – “WHERE GOD WAS WORSHIPPED”**

The Mount of Olives is first mentioned by name in 2 Samuel 15:30.

And David went up the ascent of THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, and wept as he went, and his head was covered and he walked barefoot. Then all the people who were with him each covered his head and went up weeping as they went. ... It happened as David was coming to THE SUMMIT, WHERE GOD WAS WORSHIPPED, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn, and dust on his head (2 Samuel 15:30, 32, emphasis added).

David went to the summit of the Mount of Olives, the place “where God was worshipped”. Not until David’s son, Solomon, was the Temple and its altar built on Mount Moriah. This clearly shows the summit of the Mount of Olives as a place of worship prior to the Temple. And such a place of worship would have included an altar for sacrifice.

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<sup>25</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 3, p. 427.

As previously explained, we believe that the altar on the Mount of Olives goes back to the time of Adam, when the first animal sacrifice for sin was made. We believe that David was shown a vision of the crucifixion (which he recorded in Psalm 22) at the very place where his descendant, Messiah Yeshua, would be crucified, on the summit of the Mount of Olives (see Chapter 6 “The Rod of God”).

## **GOLGOTHA - THE SUMMIT OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES**

In the New Testament, *Golgotha* is described as being “outside the gate” (Hebrews 13:12), “near the city” (John 19:20), near a well-traveled road (Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:21), and visible from a distance (Mark 15:40; Luke 23:49). The summit of the Mount of Olives fits every aspect of the Biblical description.

In 2 Samuel 15:32, the Hebrew word *rosh* means “summit”, referring to the summit of the Mount of Olives. We will show from the meanings of the Hebrew words that just as *rosh* refers to the summit of the Mount of Olives, *Golgotha* also refers to the summit of the Mount of Olives.

The Hebrew word *rosh* (Strong’s #7218) has various meanings, including: head, top, **summit**, upper part, chief, total, and sum.<sup>26</sup> The meaning clearly fitting the context of 2 Samuel 15:32 is “the top or summit of a geographical feature such as a mountain or hill (Exodus 17:9).”<sup>27</sup>

This Hebrew word is also the root word for other Hebrew words, the primary meaning of which is “**head**”.<sup>28</sup> This understanding provides the link to the meaning of *Golgotha*.

*Golgotha* is referred to as the place where Yeshua was crucified:

And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull... (Matthew 27:33).

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<sup>26</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 825.

<sup>27</sup> Harris, Vol. 2, p. 825.

<sup>28</sup> Harris, Vol. 2, p. 825.

And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull (Mark 15:22).

They took Jesus [Yeshua] therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross[bar], to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha (John 19:17).

Luke does not use the word *Golgotha* but refers to “the place called The Skull”:

And when they came to THE PLACE CALLED THE SKULL, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left (Luke 23:33, emphasis added).

The Greek word translated “skull” is *kranion* (Strong’s #2898), from which we get the English word “cranium”. The Latin word for “skull” is *calvaria*, from which we get the English word Calvary, referring to the site of the crucifixion.

The Hebrew word for “skull” is *gulgolet* (Strong’s #1538). This word can also be translated “head”, for example, referring to Saul’s head being fastened to the wall of Dagan’s Temple.<sup>29</sup>

And they put his armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head [*gulgolet*] in the house of Dagon (1 Chronicles 10:10).

It is interesting to note that the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* makes reference to the word *Golgotha* in its reference for the word *gulgolet*, showing that these words are related.<sup>30</sup>

Robertson’s *Word Pictures in the New Testament* commentary on Matthew 27:33 explains:

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<sup>29</sup> Harris, Vol. 1, p. 164.

<sup>30</sup> Harris, Vol. 1, p. 164.

Golgotha ... Chaldaic or Aramaic Gulgatha, Hebrew Gulgoleth [*gulgolet*], PLACE OF A SKULL-SHAPED MOUNT, not a place of skulls (emphasis added).<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, the word *Golgatha* is related to the word *gulgolet*, which can be translated “head”. This provides the link to the Hebrew word *rosh*, which can also be translated “head”. As previously explained, *rosh* refers to the summit of the Mount of Olives. In the same way, *Golgatha* also refers to the summit of the Mount of Olives.

This is totally consistent with what the author of Hebrews 13:11-13 tells us about the place where Yeshua was crucified: the “place outside the camp” and “outside the [Eastern] gate”, where the Day of Atonement sacrifices and Red Heifer were burned – the summit of the Mount of Olives!

## **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES – CRUCIFIXION IN A GARDEN**

The apostle John tells us that the crucifixion took place in a garden:

Now IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS CRUCIFIED THERE WAS A GARDEN; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus [Yeshua] there (John 19:41-42, emphasis added).

According to *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, the Greek word *kypos*, translated “garden” in John 19:41, can also be translated “orchard”.<sup>32</sup> As shown in Chapter 1 “Jerusalem - The Center of the Garden of Eden”, the center of the Garden of Eden, where God fellowshiped with Adam and Eve, became the place where God established His Temple in Jerusalem (Genesis 2:8). The garden God planted was filled with every kind of tree:

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<sup>31</sup> Vol. 1, p. 231.

<sup>32</sup> Vol. 2, p. 652.

And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9).

The Mount of Olives (Hebrew *Har HaZeitim*, “Mount of The Olives”) was “named for the olive groves that once covered its slopes”.<sup>33</sup> The Garden of Gethsemane was:

a garden or enclosure (κηπος, John 18:1) in the olive grove, and likely contained an olive press. Hence the meaning of the name Gethsemane is “oil press” ... and should be taken as referring to a certain place on the hillside. Further, both Matthew and Mark give the impression that Gethsemane was a place arrived at only after traversing part of the orchard hillside (Matt 26:30, 36; Mark 14:26, 32). According to Luke (21:37) and John (18:2), Jesus frequently retreated to this hillside and “garden” for rest, prayer, and fellowship with His disciples. He did so on the night of His betrayal. ... He took Peter, James, and John on into the “garden” of Gethsemane, and charged them to watch. Going a stone’s throw further, He prayed three times for deliverance (Mark 14:32-42).<sup>34</sup>

The Mount of Olives, with its olive-orchard gardens during Biblical times, certainly fits the Biblical description of the place where Yeshua was crucified and buried.

## **THE GATE OF HEAVEN ABOVE THE MOUNT OF OLIVES**

The Gate of Heaven is located above the Mount of Olives. When the Shekinah – the Glory Cloud of God’s Presence – withdrew from Solomon’s Temple prior to its destruction by the Babylonians, the prophet Ezekiel was shown in a vision that the Shekinah stood above the Mount of Olives (“the mountain which is east of the city”) prior to ascending into Heaven (Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23). Yeshua ascended into Heaven from the Mount of Olives because the Gate of Heaven is located above this mountain.

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<sup>33</sup> “Mount of Olives”, Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_of\\_Olives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives)).

<sup>34</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 706.

The crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 1:9-12) all took place on the Mount of Olives. The Word of God also tells us that Yeshua will return to Earth at the Second Coming to the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:11). (See “Gate of Heaven Above the Mount of Olives” in Chapter 3 “The Mount of Olives – True Site of the Resurrection”.)

## **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES – WHERE THE TWO WITNESSES WILL BE KILLED**

### **Revelation 11:8 Identifies the Exact Place (“Plateia”) of the Crucifixion Site**

The apostle John, who witnessed the crucifixion, tells us that the Two Witnesses will be killed in the SAME PLACE where Yeshua was crucified.

And when they [the Two Witnesses] have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the STREET [*PLATEIA*] of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, WHERE ALSO THEIR LORD WAS CRUCIFIED. And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb (Revelation 11:7-9, emphasis added).

We interpret this not to mean the general place, Jerusalem, but the SPECIFIC PLACE on the summit of the Mount of Olives, because this fits the detailed and specific prophetic pattern of God’s Master Plan of Redemption. And we will show that the Greek word (*plateia*) that John uses to describe the place fits the Biblical context of the place where Yeshua was crucified. When the Two Witnesses resurrect after three and a half days, they will resurrect from the summit of the Mount of Olives, where Yeshua resurrected. And when they ascend into Heaven, they will ascend into Heaven from the summit of the Mount of Olives, just as Yeshua did.

## The Meaning of “Plateia” in Revelation 11:8

In Revelation 11:8, *plateia* (*plateias*) is translated “street” in the KJV, NASB, and NIV; “open street (a public square)” in the Amplified Bible; “open street” in *The Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*;<sup>35</sup> and “square” (public square) in the *Concordant Literal New Testament with Keyword Concordance*.<sup>36</sup> Note that a public square refers to an open area where people gather, generally near a main road or street.

Let’s focus on the meaning of *plateia* as referring to an “open street” or “public square”:

And their dead bodies [will lie exposed] in the OPEN STREET [A PUBLIC SQUARE] of the great city ... (Revelation 11:8, Amplified Bible, emphasis added).

And their corpses will be at THE SQUARE of the great city ... (Revelation 11:8, *Concordant Literal New Testament with Keyword Concordance*).

*Plateia* (Strong’s #4113), meaning a wide plat (plot of land) or place, i.e. open square or street, is derived from *platus* (Strong’s #4116), meaning spread out flat (plot), i.e. broad or wide.<sup>37</sup> Robertson translates *plateia* in Revelation 11:8 as “broad way” from *platus*, meaning “broad.”<sup>38</sup> The crucifixion site as described in the Gospel accounts occurred in a public place where people were passing by and also gathering to witness Yeshua’s execution (Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:29).

And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads (Matthew 27:39).

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<sup>35</sup> Alfred Marshall, p. 747.

<sup>36</sup> p. 584.

<sup>37</sup> Zodhiates, p. 58.

<sup>38</sup> Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. VI, p. 380, commentary on Revelation 11:8.

This means that the place of crucifixion was located near a main thoroughfare. As previously explained, the author of the Book of Hebrews clearly identifies the place of the crucifixion as the summit of the Mount of Olives, in the area where the Red Heifer and Day of Atonement sin sacrifice offerings were burned. The site of the Red Heifer sacrifice was located on the summit, directly opposite the entrance to the Temple, so that the High Priest could look into the Temple during his sacrificial rituals.

A main causeway connected the Temple Mount to the summit of the Mount of Olives, where large numbers of people could gather. This fits the definition of *plateia*, as a broad or wide street or open plaza area. At the time of the crucifixion, the entire Mount of Olives would have been covered with thousands of Jewish pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for Passover. There would also have been those who were involved in the crucifixion, as well as those who specifically went to the summit to witness the execution.

### **Identification of the Crucifixion Site as It Exists Today**

When a straight line is drawn from the summit of the Mount of Olives to where the Temple once stood on the Temple Mount (as conclusively proven by Leen Ritmeyer),<sup>39</sup> the line runs through an olive tree orchard at the summit, located next to (and north of) an undeveloped dirt lot.

We believe that the Red Heifer site was located in the area of the olive tree orchard, and that the crucifixion site was located in the area of the dirt lot. Remarkably, this area has remained undeveloped although there are buildings in the area all around it.

The lot is located at the crossroads on the summit of the Mount of Olives, where the main north-south road (the Mount of Olives Road; Hebrew name: *Derech Har HaZeitim*; Arabic name: *Raba El Adawiya*) intersects with the main east-west road that runs from the Kidron Valley up the western slope to the summit, over the summit, and down the eastern slope.

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<sup>39</sup> Leen Ritmeyer has conclusively identified the exact place that the Ark of the Covenant stood, in a rectangular depression cut out of the rock in the precise dimensions of the Ark (*The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem*, pp. 265-277). Today, the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic shrine, stands in the place where the Temple once stood.

From an aerial-view map<sup>40</sup> of Jerusalem, we estimate the lot to be approximately 175 feet (east-west dimensions) by 80 feet (north-south dimensions). It is located approximately 230 feet southwest of the Dome of the Ascension and approximately 100 feet northwest of Yeshua's tomb, as we have identified it under the western end of the Church of the Pater Noster (see Chapter 3 "The Mount of Olives – True Site of the Resurrection").

Directly west and across the street from the lot is Choshen (Beit HaChoshen), a Jewish residence and synagogue, the only Jewish presence at the summit of the Mount of Olives opposite the Temple Mount, in the Arab neighborhood of A-Tur.<sup>41</sup> Beit HaChoshen (Hebrew) translates into English as "House of The Breastplate", referring to the Breastplate of the High Priest. How prophetically significant that the location of Beit HaChoshen is at the summit of the Mount of Olives, where the High Priest offered the Red Heifer and where Messiah Yeshua was crucified and resurrected.

### **Two Olive Trees Represent the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 – Two Olive Trees at the Crucifixion Site, Where the Two Witnesses Will Be Killed**

In the west end of the undeveloped dirt lot, two olive trees grow side by side. They line up along the east-west axis of the lot, in a direct line facing the Temple Mount. (Three olive trees are located around the outer perimeter of the vacant lot.)

The apostle John describes the vision of two olive trees that represent His Two Witnesses:

“And I will grant authority to MY TWO WITNESSES, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are THE TWO OLIVE TREES and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth” (Revelation 11:3-4, emphasis added).

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<sup>40</sup> Jerusalem: Map of the Old City & Surroundings, Shalom Advertising, printed in Israel (1991). Knowing that the courtyard of the Dome of the Ascension is about one hundred feet in diameter (Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, p. 170), the distances can be estimated.

<sup>41</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At-Tur\\_\(Mount\\_of\\_Olives\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At-Tur_(Mount_of_Olives))

Could these two olive trees actually represent the Two Witnesses in the very place they will be killed and resurrect, the same place where Yeshua was killed and resurrected nearby? Knowing how precisely God has established the Biblical prophetic pattern, the presence of these two olive trees facing the Temple Mount, exactly in line with where the Temple once stood, in the area of the Red Heifer altar and crucifixion sites, does not seem to us to be a mere coincidence. Indeed, this fits the description in Revelation 11:8 that tells us that the Two Witnesses will be killed in the SAME PLACE where Yeshua was crucified, as previously explained in detail.

### **Major Roadway (Plateia) Associated with the Site During the Time of Yeshua**

During the time of Yeshua, there was a main road that ran up the western slope of the Mount of Olives, across its summit, and down its eastern slope. Today there is a main road that very likely follows the same course as the ancient road at the time of Yeshua.

Yeshua took this road from the summit of the Mount of Olives, down the western slope to the Temple Mount during His entry into Jerusalem just before the crucifixion:

In His “triumphal” entry into Jerusalem Jesus came from the Mount of Olives (Mt. 21:1; Mk 11:1; Lk 19:29), and Lk ... mentions the “descent” of the mount in 19:37. ... If Bethphage ... was indeed on the heights of the Mount of Olives and perhaps about one-half mile east of the summit, then the most direct route to the city would have been right over the summit and straight down the slope to the west. This was a relatively steep descent and provided striking views of the city. .... The Inbomon [today the site of the Dome of the Ascension] and the Eleona [today the site of the Church of the Pater Noster, beneath which the tomb of Yeshua’s resurrection is located] were on this route at the top of the mount. ...

The paths which go down there now mitigate the steepness by their zigzag course, which may be judged likely for the ancient way too.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Finegan, p. 171.

This roadway connected to the arch-over-arch main causeway that crossed the Kidron Valley between the Temple Mount and Mount of Olives, providing a ritually clean path for the priests and Red Heifer as it was led out through the Eastern Gate of the Temple to the summit of the Mount of Olives. According to the Mishnah (*Parah* 3.6):

And they made a causeway from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives, arches over arches, with an arch over each substructure, lest there be a grave in the depths below, because by it the priest who was to burn the [red] heifer, and the [red] heifer and all her attendants went forth to the Mount of Olives.<sup>43</sup>

The arch-over-arch structure crossing the Kidron Valley connecting the Temple Mount and Mount of Olives has generally been depicted as a bridge. However, Leen Ritmeyer explains that this elevated roadway was not a bridge, but rather an elevated ramp:

The Hebrew word for causeway is *kevesh*, which is usually translated as ‘ramp’ and not bridge, which is *gesher*. I suggest therefore that the stepped approach to the Golden Gate [the present gate located where the Eastern Gate was located] ... was the beginning of this arched ramp that continued down into the Kedron Valley and up again to the Mount of Olives. There is therefore no reason to suggest that an actual bridge was built over the Kedron Valley. Such a bridge would have had to span an enormous distance, as the valley is located some 180 feet (55 m) below the level of the sill of the Golden Gate. The so-called bridge thus would have been 20 feet (6 m) higher than the famous Pont du Gard in France, which is 160 feet (49 m) high!<sup>44</sup>

At the summit of the Mount of Olives, where the crucifixion site is located – across the street from the Church of the Pater Noster – the terrain levels out. Today this area is located at the crossroads where the main north-south road intersects with the main east-west road. The Church of the Pater Noster is located approximately 230 feet south and slightly west of the absolute

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<sup>43</sup> *Mishnayoth*, Vol. VI, *Parah*, p. 417.

<sup>44</sup> Ritmeyer, p. 113.

summit, where the Dome of the Ascension is located.<sup>45</sup>

The apostle John knew exactly where the crucifixion took place and used the word *plateia* to describe its location. During the time of Yeshua, the area fit the meaning of *plateia*, referring to a broad street and/or public square area, where people passed by and gathered to witness the crucifixion, at the highest point in all Jerusalem. Today, the area where the crucifixion took place is a large undeveloped dirt lot at the crossroads of the summit of the Mount of Olives, where a large mob could easily gather together to attack and kill the Two Witnesses.

### **Many Rocks at the Site for Killing the Two Witnesses**

In and around the area of the lot are many stones that could be used in a lethal attack against the Two Witnesses. There have been many rock attacks against Jews on the Mount of Olives and the attacks are escalating in frequency, creating an extremely dangerous situation. A situation of such extreme danger that Israeli authorities would be unable to intervene could easily develop, as the summit of the Mount of Olives is located in the midst of an Arab neighborhood.

The large open area of the lot makes a ready place for many attackers to gather against the Two Witnesses. The lot also makes a natural place for the bodies to lie for days, as the bodies would not block the major intersection at the summit that runs along two sides of the large lot area. This makes the area open to people travelling on the roads and being able to gather in the large lot, where they will witness the dead bodies and their resurrection three and a half days later:

And their dead bodies will lie in the street [*plateia* - broad way] of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. And after the three and a half days the

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<sup>45</sup> Finegan, p. 166.

breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them (Revelation 11:8-11).

Israel's enemies celebrate terrorist attacks by passing out candy, celebrating, and dancing in the streets. People all over the world will also see what is happening. Given the technology available today, this won't be difficult as ordinary people have the technology available to project images to the entire world, even in places too dangerous for film crews to enter.

### **Current Dangerous Conditions and Rock Attacks on the Mount of Olives**

The Mount of Olives is located in East Jerusalem, which also includes the Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Jordan occupied East Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria ("West Bank"). During this time, Arab residents destroyed an estimated 38,000 Jewish tombs on the Mount of Olives, tombs from the First Temple period to modern times.<sup>46</sup>

As a result of the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel gained control of East Jerusalem and began restoration of the Jewish cemetery on the southern slope of the Mount of Olives. However, the Jewish cemetery continues to be vandalized on a regular basis, and mourners have been attacked.

At the summit of the Mount of Olives is the Arab neighborhood of A-Tur, with a population of 18,000 Arabs, mostly Muslim with a small Christian minority.<sup>47</sup> This includes the area that we have previously identified as the crucifixion site.

Attacks against Jews on the Mount of Olives are increasing, creating a very dangerous situation for non-Muslims. Rocks are commonly used in the attacks. Generally the police force has been slow to respond because Israeli authorities fear upsetting the Arab population.

According to an article in *The Jewish Press*:

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<sup>46</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_of\\_Olives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives)

<sup>47</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At-Tur\\_\(Mount\\_of\\_Olives\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At-Tur_(Mount_of_Olives))

Of late A-Tur has become violent. Rocks have been thrown at Jewish drivers heading to the Mt. Of Olives lookout, and seven cars belonging to the small Jewish community nearby have been burned.<sup>48</sup>

The “small Jewish community nearby” refers to Beit HaChoshen, the only Jewish presence on the summit of the Mount of Olives, a very small group of Jewish families living in the midst of the Arab neighborhood A-Tur.

Regarding the dangerous nature of this situation, it should be noted that the Arab whose property was purchased by this Jewish group was murdered. According to an article published by *The Jerusalem Post*:

The Palestinian Authority has issued yet another warning to Palestinians against selling their homes or properties to Jews, saying those who violate the order would be accused of “high treason” – a charge that carries the death penalty. ... Scores of Palestinians have been murdered over the past three decades for allegedly selling their property to Jews or for acting as intermediaries in real estate deeds involving Jews. Several fatwas [Islamic religious rulings] issued by the PA Islamic clerics have ruled that any Palestinian who sells his property to Jews would face the death sentence.<sup>49</sup>

The current dangerous situation on the Mount of Olives provides exactly the right conditions for the Two Witnesses to be killed exactly where Yeshua was crucified, and lie in the undeveloped dirt lot for three and a half days. The good news is that they will be resurrected and caught up into Heaven. We believe this event coincides with the Rapture (“Catching Up”), when believers will be caught up to Heaven for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 19:9).

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/resurrection-of-the-dead-new-police-presence-on-the-mountain-of-olives/2012/04/11/> - “Resurrection of the Dead: New Police Presence on the Mount of Olives”, by Yishai Fleisher, April 11, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=137915> - “PA: Death penalty for those who sell land to Jews”, by Khaled Abu Toameh, April 1, 2009.

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