

## **The Stone that the Builders Rejected**

*by The Rev. Canon Nicholas T. Porter*

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land changed my life. It was in Jerusalem; inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We had been praying, when we stopped beside Golgotha and its open limestone side. Our guide explained to us that the church is set inside a stone-quarry pit, and the hill is an artificial one created by the quarrying of all the limestone around it.

But why was this hill of stone left? A closer look at Golgotha provided the answer. The stone was spoiled, damaged by water seeping through large cracks. Unfit for building and masonry, the cutters left it behind. It was then that our guide read the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse of 118<sup>th</sup> Psalm: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the keystone. This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

It was then that something like scales fell from my soul, and I realized all of it was true. I mean really true. The spoiled stone of Golgotha was the fulfillment of Psalm’s ancient prophecy. Christ Jesus had lived and died and lives now because God loves us. It was all true; and the only question remaining was: how in the face of this truth, was I, Nicholas Porter, going to respond?

My response has led to who I am today, and each step of the way I remained engaged with the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and helping others become connected to the poor and dispossessed in our Lord’s Land. Today I have the privilege to direct Jerusalem Peacebuilders – a ministry that promotes interfaith leadership and peace education among Israelis and Palestinians.

Today, I help heal lives, and it is all because of pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the day when the stone that the builders rejected became the keystone of my life.

Enjoy this testimonial on video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=al05-ydcYU&t=15s>