Question: Where does the word *Calvary* appear in the Bible, and how is it different from *Golgotha*?

Answer: In the Swahili Bible, the word *Calvary* does not appear. Instead, we find the word *Golgotha*, especially in John 19:17 (NIV):

> “Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).”

John 19:18 (NIV) continues:

> “There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.”

What Does *Golgotha* Mean?

Golgotha is an Aramaic word that means *“skull”*. The Gospel writers refer to this place as *“the place of the skull”*, possibly because the hill had the shape of a human skull or was associated with death and execution.

The term appears in three Gospels:

> *Matthew 27:33 (NIV):* “They came to a place called Golgotha (which means ‘the place of the skull’).”

> *Mark 15:22 (NIV):* “They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means ‘the place of the skull’).”

John 19:17 (NIV): (as quoted above)

So, What Is *Calvary*?

Calvary is simply the Latin translation of *Golgotha*. It comes from the Latin word *Calvaria*, which also means *“skull.”* The word *Calvary* appears only once in some English Bible translations, such as the King James Version (KJV) in Luke 23:33:

> “And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him…”
> *(*Luke 23:33, KJV*)*

In modern translations like the NIV, the word used is *“the place called the Skull”*:

> “When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there…”
> *(*Luke 23:33, NIV*)*

Theological Significance

The place where Jesus was crucified—whether referred to as *Golgotha* or *Calvary*—is central to the Christian faith. It is here that:

- *Jesus bore the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24).*

> - *God’s justice and mercy met in the crucifixion of His Son (Romans 3:25-26)*
> - *The New Covenant was sealed by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:15-22).*

The “Place of the Skull” may symbolize death, but for believers, it also represents victory over death through the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. What was once a site of execution became the place of eternal hope.

Summary

- *Golgotha* is the Aramaic name meaning “Place of the Skull.”
- *Calvary* is the Latin translation of the same word (*Calvaria*).
- They refer to the same location—the hill outside Jerusalem

where Jesus was crucified.

- The difference is simply linguistic, not theological.

Whether you say *Golgotha* or *Calvary*, both point to the same powerful truth: Jesus died for our sins and rose again to bring us life.

May the Lord bless you as you reflect on the meaning of the Cross.

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