

The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi

Session 5: Mount of Olives

Recommended Reading: Chapters 18 & 21

Opening Discussion

- Please share something you learned about scripture, or yourself, over the past week.
- What images, feelings, or thoughts come to mind when you think of the Mount of Olives?

Watch Video

- What caught your attention most as you viewed the video?
- What are your thoughts on the explanation the Rabbi offers for the importance of the donkey in the story of Jesus' triumphant arrival?
- The Mount of Olives (Mt Olivet) is east of Jerusalem. How might its location add to its significance in the story of salvation for all three of the Abrahamic faiths?

Read Luke 19:28-38 and Rev 19:9-16 as a group

- Considering the expected role of the Messiah in Jewish faith, which image of Jesus (as Messiah) entering Jerusalem do you think the disciples envisioned? Do you think they were surprised by the reception Jesus received? Which image do we envision as yet to come?

Read Matt 26:36-46 as a group

- Gethsemane garden/orchard is believed to have been a stopping point, and a place for ritual cleansing, for pilgrims approaching Jerusalem. Why do you think Jesus went here to prepare for his crucifixion instead of just staying in the upper room?
- What are your thoughts about the possible connection between the Gethsemane oil press and Jesus' threefold prayer?

Closing Discussion

- The road Jesus walked, and the garden he and his disciples visited, are still there today. As in the time of Jesus, graves of hopeful Jews rest along their borders, (some 3000 years old) waiting for the resurrection to begin and God's return to the Temple Mount, along that same road, entering through the Golden (East) Gate. Many pilgrims come to the Mount of Olives to walk along this ancient road and pray for the day when God's glory will be revealed for all to see, and the peace of the heavenly kingdom comes to earth. How might Jesus' journey from the top of Mt Olivet, through these graves, both on Palm Sunday and again before his ascension. offer us hope and/or encouragement today?

Staying Connected

Day 1: Read 1 Chronicles 21:16 – 22:1

- Why do you think it is significant that this story and the story of Abraham and Isaac took place in the same location?

Day 2: Reflection

- Where has God reached out to you in a moment of despair that gave you the courage and determination needed to do what was being asked?

Day 3: Read Luke 19:41-44

- What does Jesus say would have brought peace to Jerusalem?

Day 4: Reflection

- Helping others to see and know what Jesus says will bring a lasting peace into our midst is a challenge many find unable to face. Today, reflect on how we might step out in faith to do just this.

Day 5: Read Luke 1:67-79 (The Song of Zechariah)

- In what ways does his joy in encountering Jesus, give us hope today?

Day 6: Prayer

- Spend some time in prayer today, reflecting on what you have learned from scripture and about yourself. Ask God to help you discern what role you may have in helping others to know what you have learned.

Day 7: A Day of rest.

Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives, sometimes referred to as “Olivet” in the KJV ([2 Samuel 15:30](#); [Acts 1:12](#)) or “the mount facing Jerusalem” ([1 Kings 11:7](#)), is a ridge running along the east side of Jerusalem, separated from the city walls by a ravine and the Brook Kidron. The Mount of Olives was the site of many events in the Bible and will be the site of a yet-future fulfillment of prophecy.

In the Old Testament, the Mount of Olives is mentioned once in relation to King David. When David’s son Absalom wrested control of Jerusalem, David and his loyal followers fled the city via an eastern route: “David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up” ([2 Samuel 15:30](#)). Later, King Solomon used the Mount of Olives for idol worship: “On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites” ([1 Kings 11:7](#)). In one of Ezekiel’s visions, the prophet sees the glory of the Lord depart from Jerusalem and come to rest “above the mountain east of it” ([Ezekiel 11:23](#)).

Jesus made many visits to the Mount of Olives ([Luke 21:37](#)). In fact, it was “usual” for Him to go there when in the vicinity of Jerusalem ([Luke 22:39](#)). Every time Jesus visited Lazarus and Mary and Martha, He was on the Mount of Olives, for their village of Bethany was situated on the eastern slope. The road from Bethany to Jerusalem lay over Olivet.

The Bible records Jesus’ visiting the Mount of Olives three times in the last week of His earthly life, and each time something of significance happened. The first visit is what we call the [triumphal entry](#). The donkey Jesus rode that day was found in the area of Bethany and Bethphage, on the east side of the Mount of Olives ([Luke 19:29–30](#)). Then, “when he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen” (verse 37). While still on the Mount of Olives, Jesus looked at the vista in front of Him, wept over the city, and pronounced a judgment against it (verses 41–44).

Jesus’ second visit was to deliver what has come to be known as the [Olivet Discourse](#), recorded in [Matthew 24:1 —25:46](#). Parallel passages are found in [Mark 13:1–37](#) and [Luke 21:5–36](#). The content of the Olivet Discourse is Jesus’ response to His disciples’ question “When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?” ([Matthew 24:3](#)). Jesus’ teaching in [Matthew 24–25](#) primarily concerns the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the future tribulation period, and the second coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation. The Discourse includes parables about those who wait for the Master’s coming—the wise and faithful servant ([Matthew 24:45–51](#)), the five wise virgins ([Matthew 25:1–13](#)), and the good servant who uses his resources wisely ([Matthew 25:14–30](#)).

Jesus’ third visit during the week of [His passion](#) was on the night He was betrayed. That evening began with the Last Supper in Jerusalem and ended in the [Garden of Gethsemane](#) on the Mount of Olives. During that last Passover meal, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet and then revealed Judas as the betrayer ([John 13:1–30](#)). At the conclusion of the meal, Jesus established the New Covenant and instituted the Lord’s Supper ([Matthew 26:26–29](#); [1 Corinthians 11:23–26](#)). Then He took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane (literally, “Garden of the Oil-press”) located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. There Jesus prayed in agony as He contemplated

the day to come. So overcome by the horror of what He was to experience in the crucifixion the following day, His sweat was “like drops of blood” ([Luke 22:44](#)) and God sent an angel from heaven to strengthen Him ([Luke 22:43](#)).

After Jesus prayed, Judas Iscariot arrived with a multitude of soldiers, high priests, Pharisees, and servants to arrest Jesus. Judas identified Jesus by the prearranged signal of a kiss, which he gave to Jesus. Trying to protect Jesus, Peter drew a sword and attacked a man named Malchus, the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus rebuked Peter and healed the man’s ear, displaying the miraculous power of God ([Luke 22:51](#)). Nevertheless, the mob arrested Jesus and took Him to face trial, while the disciples scattered in fear for their lives.

After the trials, crucifixion, and resurrection, Jesus once again stood on the Mount of Olives. During His final post-resurrection appearance, Jesus led His disciples “out to the vicinity of Bethany, [and] he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” ([Luke 24:50–52](#)). [Acts 1:12](#) specifies that “the vicinity of Bethany” was indeed the Mount of Olives.

Immediately following Jesus’ ascension, two angels told the disciples on the Mount of Olives that “this same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” ([Acts 1:11](#)). According to the prophet Zechariah, Jesus will return not only in the same *way*, but to the same *place*. In a prophecy related to the end times, Zechariah declares, “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” ([Zechariah 14:4](#)). The very location where David wept in defeat and where Jesus was betrayed and rejected will be the place where Jesus returns in triumph over all His enemies.

The Messiah’s purpose...

was to bring about the return of the Jews from exile, to restore their united practice of the Commandments of the Torah, to raise their consciousness to a high level of fear and love of Hashem (God), and to reinstate the Jewish kingdom in the Holy Land of Israel as Hashem originally established it under King David. Those are the Messiah’s essential purposes. Even bringing peace and affluence to the world will be only so that the world will be able to peacefully pursue our purpose of serving Hashem (God) through Torah study and prayer — Jews as Jews, and Gentiles as Gentiles. (www.beingjewish.com/toshuv/real_messiah.html)

Luke 19: 29-38

²⁹ When Jesus had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” ³² So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”

Rev 19:9-16

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.” ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh, he has a name inscribed, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Matt 26-36

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” ³⁹ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” ⁴⁰ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; ^[a] the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ⁴² Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” ⁴³ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”