

Mount of Olives

Jesus' First Coming and His Soon Return

The Mount of Olives is actually a range stretching from Mount Scopus in the north to the Mount of Scandal to the south. In between is Olivet, called Mount of Olives today. Looking over the Kidron Valley to the west of Olivet is the golden Dome of the Rock, standing upon Temple Mount where the Temple once stood (and will stand again during the Tribulation).

The mountain range protects Jerusalem from the harsh wilderness lying just on the other side of the range. From Mount Scopus, Roman General Titus scoped out Jerusalem before conquering it in 70 AD. Upon Mount of Scandal, King Solomon allowed his foreign wives to build altars to their gods. Indeed, the range known as Mount of Olives was very prominent in ancient days.

Crowds swarm the Mount of Olives today, stopping to gaze upon the Garden of Gethsemane, Dominus Flevit and Church of All Nations. It is one of Israel's busiest sites, and for good reason. Lots of Bible history took place there, and significant Bible prophecy will be fulfilled there in the future!

Just as in Jesus' day, olive trees remain prolific on the mountain range today. Olives produce oil, and proximity to the Temple was important in providing oil that was used in Temple worship. Kings and leaders were often anointed with olive oil on the Mount of Olives and in the ancient City of David, just down the southern slope of Temple Mount. The valuable oil was also used to treat skin and hair conditions and for seasoning food. Eating olives became a thing only in the past few centuries.

Between the Mount of Olives and Temple Mount lies the beautiful Kidron Valley, also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It is mentioned often in Scripture, but none as sobering as in Joel 3:1-2:

***3** "For behold, in those days and at that time,
When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,
2 I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with them there
On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
They have also divided up My land. (Joel 3:1-2)*



Indeed, in the end, right here in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the Lord will enter into judgment with all nations of the world over how they treated God's uniquely called people and their land. The standard of judgment was made clear by God Himself when He said to Abram:

***3** I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)*

Is your nation experiencing blessings or curses? Ultimately, the answer is inextricably linked to how your homeland treats Israel. America, Israel's long-time friend, has begun to turn her back and we are seeing

the balance of blessing and curses tilt more toward the latter. Furthermore, each person would be wise to tip the scale in favor of blessing Israel as well! Aren't you glad you are here in the land, physically blessing Israel economically and with the love of Jesus! (This is only one of many ways to bless Israel.)

When we stand on the Mount of Olives and gaze toward Temple Mount, our eyes are drawn to a large double gate that is sealed. If you are a student of the Word, you know that Jesus will enter the Eastern Gate (aka Golden Gate) from the Mount of Olives at His physical return (after the Tribulation). However, the gate you see is not the gate He will enter! Lamentations 2:9 explains that gates are sunken down, and such they are! The actual gate during Jesus' time is below ground. Yet Psalm 24 declares a time when those gates will be lifted up and the King of glory will come in:

*⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
⁸ Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
¹⁰ Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory. (Psalm 24:7-10)*

From the days of David, God announced where the King of Glory will come in. Today, Muslim graves dot the slope just outside the Golden Gate in an attempt to defile the land so Jesus the Messiah cannot enter. Little do they know, when God says the King of Glory will enter, He will also prepare the way. He will raise up the gates of old and will clear out those Muslim graves by splitting the Mount of Olives and those gates in two, moving them to the north and the south to gloriously allow the King to enter!

Is there something standing in the way of God fulfilling His promises in your life? You can bet that God is not hindered by barricades and seemingly unmovable obstacles! He will make a way when the time is right and you are ready! Aren't you glad that when God is in charge, nothing stands in His way!

But let's look back to Jesus' first entry through that Golden Gate. It was the spring feast season and Jews from all over Israel, including Jesus and His family from the Galilee, made their way to Jerusalem for Passover. Many Galileans found shelter on the Mount of Olives during the feasts. Galileans were Jesus' people, so they knew Him well. He typically spent time with Mary, Martha and Lazarus at Bethpage, on the Mount of Olives.

In contrast, Jerusalem was to be His final destiny. It was a hypocritical city, filled with religious leaders who espoused the law and held followers' feet to the legalistic fires. Yet, Jesus knew all the prophets had written about His first coming would be fulfilled in that very place.

Daniel 9 accurately predicted that Jesus would enter Jerusalem exactly 173,880 days following the decree of Persian King Artaxerxes to restore and rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Our Lord also fulfilled the prophet Zechariah's prophecy that Jesus would come riding on a donkey. So, as Jesus fulfilled what was written of Him, He crossed the Kidron Valley on the back of that donkey and entered the Eastern Gate!

But Jerusalem was not ready for her Messiah. Centuries prior, Jewish philosopher and Torah scholar, Maimonides, had proposed 13 articles of Jewish faith, including the coming of the Messiah, yet despite that, they missed the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). The result? Right there on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Kidron Valley, and in view of the Temple, Jesus lamented:

³⁷ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹ for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' " (Matthew 23:37-39)

Imagine His grief. Yet, one does not have to be Jewish in the day of Jesus to miss His visitation. Jesus came to save Israel from their sin, and He came to the world for the same purpose. In large part, Jerusalem was prideful, arrogant and uninterested in His visitation. Sadly, we too stand opposed to emptying ourselves and coming with a broken and contrite spirit before a holy God at times. His longing for our repentance is just as strong as it was for the Jewish people of His day.

Salvation is definitely the first step, and for those who have not professed with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believed in their heart that Jesus was raised from the dead, Jesus laments and beckons you to come to Him. For those of us who know Jesus personally through salvation, living according to His will requires that we not miss our visitation each day. He wants to guide us and direct us, yet He will not force His way in.

As you stand upon the Mount of Olives, consider the past and the future action to take place there! He came that fateful Palm Sunday as a lowly servant, riding on a donkey to save and forgive us. Yet one day, He will return to the very same Mount of Olives! When the mount splits in two and the Eastern Gate bursts open to welcome the King, He will be victorious and riding on a white horse. Amazingly, we His saints (those who acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior), will come with Him!

Maranatha, Lord come quickly!