

=BIBLE MOUNTAINS=

Lesson 1

The Mount of Olives

INTRODUCTION: The Mount of Olives is a large hill on the eastern side of Jerusalem. Between it and the city of Jerusalem is the Valley of Kidron. Standing at its peak and looking toward the city is a breathtaking sight. It is as if God had taken the old city of Jerusalem and tilted it to make it easier to see from the Mount of Olives. The wall around the city is visible, and just inside that wall is the old temple sight.

It was an important place to Jesus. It was important to the Old Testament. It will be important later as having prophetic significance.

The Garden of Gethsemane was on the Mount of Olives. It was there where Jesus prayed His famous prayer before yielding to the enemy and to Calvary. It was there He prayed to the Father to let the cup pass from Him; nevertheless, not His will, but the Father's will be done. It was there where He wept over the inevitable fate which was soon to come upon the city. It was there where He prophesied the destruction of the temple. It was there where He went following the Passover. It was there where His ascension took place. He was coming from the Mount of Olives on what we call Palm Sunday when the crowds welcomed Him with heavenly hosannas. It was there where David fled from Absalom. It was there where God's glory appeared to Ezekiel and where symbolically God stood interceding for His people.

Lazarus and Mary and Martha lived on the Mount of Olives. It was to their home where Jesus went for fellowship and for comfort and joy.

Every Christian needs his Mount of Olives—that special place where he goes at special times; not a place that is sacred, but a place where the Christian feels comfortable in meeting God.

- I. YOU NEED A PLACE OF REFUGE. The Mount of Olives was David's place of refuge, and it was Jesus' place of refuge. He went often to the Mount of Olives, Luke 21:37; 22:39. Every Christian needs a place that is special to him, where he can go when discouraged and even depressed.
- II. YOU NEED A PLACE TO WEEP. Most of us do not like to weep in the presence of others. We like to go alone to weep. That special little Mount of Olives in your life is a place where you can go and perhaps feel a little closer to God as you weep, even as was the case in the life of our Saviour. (Luke 22:41-44)
- III. YOU NEED A PLACE OF SURRENDER. It was here where Jesus once again surrendered to the will of the Father. When facing a decision of any magnitude, the Christian will be wise to have his Mount of Olives where he goes and wrestles with the will of God for his life—a place where he can surrender to that will, and in some cases, even find that will.
- IV. YOU NEED A PLACE OF VICTORY. It was on the Mount of Olives where our Saviour ascended to Heaven. After a great victory, a Christian often wants to be alone, and certainly he should be alone after a great victory, to share that victory with the Heavenly Father. This personal Mount of Olives is vital to the child of God.
- V. YOU NEED A PLACE OF VISION. See Ezekiel 11:23. Your own little mount where you visit as a place of refuge, as a place of tears, as a place of surrender, as a place of decision should also be a place of vision. You need a place where you go to think of the future, to plan it, to get a vision for it, to have your zeal increased, and to be encouraged that you can do it.
- VI. YOU NEED A PLACE OF COMPASSION. It was on the Mount of Olives where Jesus was moved with compassion over the city. It was there where He looked out over the city; and the Bible says, "...when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion..." (Matthew 9:36) At your own little Mount of Olives, you need to retreat often to think of the burdens of others, to dwell on their heartaches, to feel their pain and their suffering. Your Mount of Olives should be a place of compassion.

VII. YOU NEED A PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH YOUR DEAREST FRIENDS. On occasion, we should share our burden with others, share victories with others. Each of us needs that little inner circle of friends with whom he can be himself. It was on the Mount of Olives where Jesus often visited the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. It was there where Martha prepared His meals. It was there where Mary sat at His feet and worshipped Him. It was there where He visited not many hours before Calvary.

CONCLUSION: Perhaps you have a Mount of Olives. It may not be a mountain. It may be a closet. It may be a place in the woods. It may be a certain place in your own house, but every Christian needs that special place—that place where he can come and weep, that place where he can come for strength, that place of refuge, that place of compassion, that place of surrender, that place of decision, and that place of victory. If you have that place, visit it often. If you do not, choose one—your own Mount of Olives, your own place of refuge—a place where you can meet God and be more comfortable with Him.

OBSERVATION: Ask the class members if they have such a place. Have them share it with you. If they do not have such a place, ask them to think where would be a good place for them to have their own little personal Mount of Olives.