

"Submission" Mount of Olives & The Garden of Gethsemane

The Garden of Gethsemane is a very touching and remarkable place to visit, mainly, because I never expected it to have survived over the ages. But, there it is, on the western slope of the Mount of Olives just across the Kidron Valley from the East Gate (or Golden Gate) of Jerusalem.

The East Gate is a popular item for both the Jews and many Christians –the Jews expecting the messiah to come through that location, and some of the Christian world expecting the 2nd coming to take place here. The actual gate was sealed off by Muslims during the Middle Ages to prevent either of these events from taking place! (but neither the Jews nor the Christians seem too worried about this!)

What do you think about this situation? &
Would either of these events take place?

I can imagine this grove of twisted olive trees 2,000 years ago (before it became popular with tourist traffic!) **as a quiet & peaceful setting**. The fenced-in 'garden' area today is probably smaller than the olive grove area mentioned in **John 18:1** (*When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and **crossed the Kidron Valley**. On the other side **there was an olive grove**, and he and his disciples went into it.*), but several olive trees in this location have been carbon dated to be at least 2,000 years old. Gethsemane means "**olive press**". Knowing that this location was at least very close to where Jesus came many times to pray and to have solitude with the Father **leaves one with a very solemn & reverent feeling**.

This quiet grove of olive trees had been a refuge for others, going back at least as far as David, as the scriptures record his coming here also to petition God (**2 Sam 15:30** *But 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.*)

Notice what we are told in Hebrews about Jesus' submission:

(Heb 5:7-10 NIV) *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he **offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears** to the one **who could save him from death**, and **he was heard because of his reverent submission**. {8} Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered {9} and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him {10} and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

This is where our title came from, regarding “Submission”. Very few would have actually followed through with this mission, **knowing from the beginning** what the outcome would be.

How do we normally describe, or think about, “being heard” (vs 7)?

Jesus could have changed his mind at any time, and, as we sing, “called 10,000 angels”. The actual scriptures say, “Twelve legions of angels”

(Matt 26:53 ⁵³ *Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?*)

or “Thousands of angels” (NLT). A legion was at least 6,000 in the Roman military. But, how many angels would have really been needed?

Note the power of just one angel in Is 37:36 ³⁶ *Then the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!*

And also David and Jerusalem: 2 Sam 24:15-16 ¹⁵ *So the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and **seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.** ¹⁶ When the **angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem**, the Lord relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, “Enough! Withdraw your hand.” The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.*

Note also Mark 14:35-36 regarding his prayers. ³⁵ *Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”*

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God, the Father, **heard his prayers**, but **what was His answer?** (Lk 22:43)

⁴³ *An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.”*

And, of course, he had to continue, which he freely did!

Also note Jesus’ later response to Pilate in John 19:11: ¹¹ *Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”*

Would this answer have been similar to what God said to Paul regarding his requests to remove his ‘thorn in the flesh’?

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 ⁷ *or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.*

Is it wrong for a Christian to become distressed & troubled in the face of a tremendous hardship? Would it say that this shows a lack of faith?

It definitely was not a lack of faith for Jesus on the eve of His betrayal & crucifixion! An angel from heaven even came to comfort & strengthen Him ☺ (Lk 22:43 **An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.**) Do you think any of his disciples even saw the angel on this occasion? (Heb 1:14 ¹⁴ **Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**)

What do you think were his thoughts as he saw the procession of lamps coming across the Kidron Valley toward Him (**John 18:3-4** {3} So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. {4} Jesus, **knowing all that was going to happen to him**, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?")?

Skipping ahead about 50 days, Jesus met his disciples one last time before ascending to be with the Father from the top of this very hill, the Mount of Olives, as is recorded in Acts 1. From the description, this is the only location that the ascension could have taken place. (Acts 1:12 **Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.**) **Now there is a small stone building or structure (with no roof) at the top of the hill inside a fenced (also stone) in courtyard.**

The Garden (of Gethsemane) is on the Western side of this hill, and the village of Bethany (home of Mary, Martha & Lazarus) is over on the Eastern side.

The angel's question, "Why do you stand here looking into the sky?" may be saying to us, 'Don't fix your attention solely on Jesus' reappearance. Keep your eyes also on the mission he has left you on earth to accomplish.'

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(Mark 14:26-42 NIV) When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the **Mount of Olives**. {27} "You will **all fall away**," Jesus told them, "for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' **Pretty depressing thought when the leader says that everyone (all) in the group is going to fall away!**

{28} But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." {29} **Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."** {30} "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today--yes, tonight--before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." {31} But Peter **insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."** **And all the others said the same.**

Jesus had even quoted the prophecy (v. 27) regarding this. How "submissive" to Jesus' instructions was Peter on this occasion? He tried, but he was impulsive, and often acted before thinking things through! (Note also John 18:10-11 when Peter cut off the servant's ear - bottom of p 4)

{32} They went to **a place called Gethsemane**, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." {33} He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be **deeply distressed and troubled**. {34} **"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,"** he

said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." {35} Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. {36} "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." {37} Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? {38} Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." {39} Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. {40} When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. {41} Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. {42} Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

(Luke 22:39-53 NIV) Jesus went out as usual to the **Mount of Olives**, and his disciples followed him. {40} On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." {41} He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, {42} "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." {43} An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. {44} And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

We are fortunate that few of us have faced such adversity, but there are some in the world even today who have and will face some very trying times. And not just for faith reasons – during wars, many have dealt with extreme hardships and physical pain.

{45} When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. {46} "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

{47} While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, {48} but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" {49} When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" {50} And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. {51} But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. {52} Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? {53} Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour--when darkness reigns." **Satan's "victories" are only temporary minor upsets!**

(John 18:1-11 NIV) When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. **Also referred to as the "Kings Valley". Absalom's monument is there (2 Sam 18:18), but not the one he built! Existing structure has Greek arches, instead of the style a Hebrew would have built back at that time.**

¹⁸ ***During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, "I have no sonto carry on the memory of my name." He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.***

On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. {2} Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. {3} So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. {4} Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" {5} "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) {6} When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. {7} Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." {8} "I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." {9} This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one

of those you gave me." {10} Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The **servant's name was Malchus.**) {11} Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

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(2 Sam 15:29-32 NIV) So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there. {30} But **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. {31} Now David had been told, "Ahithophel (**Ah he to fell!**) is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness." {32} When David arrived **at the summit, where people used to worship God**, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.

(Psa 3:1-4 NIV) A psalm of David. **When he fled from his son Absalom.** O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! {2} Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." Selah {3} But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. {4} To the LORD I cry aloud, and **he answers me from his holy hill.** Selah

(Acts 1:8 NIV) **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

How does this contrast with their situations just 50 days earlier?!

When they all had fled!

(Acts 1:9-12 NIV) **After he said this**, he was taken up before their very eyes, and **a cloud hid him from their sight.** {10} They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. {11} "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? 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." {12} Then they returned to Jerusalem **from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.**

V. 9 "a cloud" ref: 1 Thess 4:17

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Acts 1:11 does not say "in the same place", but rather "in the same way"

What do we say at a funeral? Our general thinking is that we will meet Jesus in the clouds as soon as we pass from this life.

(John 14:15-24 NIV) "If you love me, you will obey what I command. {16} And I will ask the Father, and he **will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--** {17} the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. {18} **I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.** {19} Before long, **the world will not see me anymore**, but **you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.** {20} On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. {21} Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." {22} Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" {23} Jesus replied, **"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.** {24} He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

(Matthew 28:18 - 20 NIV) 18Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

(Acts 2:38-39 NIV) Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. {39} The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."