

# Olive Trees Hold the Night and the Light

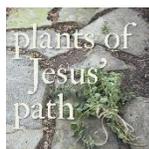


© Shelley S. Cramm from *Plants of Jesus' Path*, published at [www.gardeninDelight.com](http://www.gardeninDelight.com) on Mar 19, 2026

The Night. There is one dark night that stands out from any other worrisome, wandering, bewildering or battle moment in Scripture: Jesus' horrific pressing in the shadows of Gethsemane's olive trees. Olive trees are familiar botanical friends, dear gardeners, featured often in the Devotions Blog and in my recent book, *My Father is the Gardener*, making wonderful container plants for our gardens. Persevering in the [Plants of Jesus' Path](#), let us sit prayerfully, imagining the hillside grove named Mount of Olives, on the eastern edge of Jerusalem, in God's poetic wonder. The olive trees in this hallowed landscape hold the Night and the Light.

After singing psalms, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Mark 14:26 HCSB

Jesus left the upper room with his disciples, and, as was his habit, went to the Mount of Olives, his place of secret prayer. Luke 22:39 TPT



*The [Plants of Jesus' Path](#) is a 7-week study of plants as a way of cultivating a deeper appreciation for our Savior in the days leading to His crucifixion*

## Consider The Night

The Mount of Olives might be the most poignant place in all the earth, witness to the horrible crushing and betrayal that came to Jesus, leading to His crucifixion. First, he moved His beloved buddies from the Passover dinner table to outdoor, evening shelter under shimmery leaves. Next, He led them further into the scenery to Gethsemane, named "oil press," the working spot where harvested olive fruits were processed into oil.

Then Jesus led his disciples to an orchard called "The Oil Press." He told them, "Sit here while I go and pray nearby." Matthew 26:36 TPT

Immediately, evil oppression flanked Him.

However, an intense feeling of great sorrow plunged his soul into agony. And he said, "My heart is overwhelmed and crushed with grief. It feels as though I'm dying. Stay here and keep watch with me." Matthew 26:37-38 TPT

He dropped under the weightiness of invisible attack. He was the intended target, though the disciples could hardly be expected to grasp the magnitude of the moment, nor could they stay awake while evil encamped. Typical satan to isolate his kill.

## Olive Tree Backstory

No wonder this holy scenery was host to this spiritual showdown, as olives have been special fruit trees across Scripture, standing for God's peaceful provision, abundance, and restoration. From the little leaf in the dove's beak (Genesis 8:11) to showcasing the good land (Deuteronomy 8:8) to the lively shoots surrounding a righteous father's table, olive trees shine God's glorious light in the lives of His faithful ones.

The deathly anguish experienced by the Savior seems especially sorrowful when we remember that the first orchard, or garden, planted on earth signified the Lord God's work to bring communion and delight to His people (Genesis 2:8, 18, 3:8), the many fruit trees of Eden expressing God's overflowing goodness. The audacity to strike such brilliant blessing is satan's signature move. Yet his is the head crushed (Genesis 3:15)!

*“This gnarled and squatty evergreen species yielded its rich, full-bodied fruit out of Israel’s rocky terrain, providing a constant shady spot under its boughs and a lovely flicker of silvery, muted green leaves in the breeze to those seeking its refuge...The tree gave so much to the ancient Israelite household: A versatile, hearty, heart-healthy food; oil for cooking, lamplight and lubricant to dry skin; a sense of stability and prosperity. The trees were a tangible way to picture God’s blessing and abundance.”*

—from “Stand Firm in Peace,” in Mount of Olives devotions from [God’s Word for Gardeners Bible](#), page 1068



Learn more about growing [olive trees](#) in the [Plant Guide](#)

Particularly, olives provided a steadfast source of lamp oil, supplying much of the ancient world with evening light including a constant brightness in God's sanctuary:

The Lord said to Moses, “Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually.

Leviticus 24:1-2 NIV

This history, layered with the cache of restful nights spent under the silvery green canopies during Jesus' ministry, came together in a rich unfolding of beautiful reflections shining God's goodness, shelter, and flowing Spirit.

And yet, olive trees also hold the darkest Night.

How often are our lives touched by a measure of this same tension—a dark moment marring a precious history and heritage, a scary disaster coming to a special place of gathering and love? How many intense flusters with our sleepy selves are actually demonic attempts at disruption and destruction?

Olive trees seem to absorb this reality in their earthy engagement, their contorted, rough-formed, asymmetrical trunks topped by sparkly, soft green canopy, with graceful flutters of light-catching leaves in the breeze. Trauma topped by luminance, embodying The Night and the light in how they grow. Hints in the horticulture to God's fruitfulness prevailing!



Jesus met the edge of death, under pressing obscurity of evil force, which peppered Him in misery; He [endured terrible travail](#), yet He mustered enough standing to summons angelic help and press on to trial, conviction, and crucifixion to complete the Father's will (John 19:30). Jesus wins!

## Behold the Light

Ezekiel glimpsed the prophetic prevailing of God's glory at the Mount of Olives.

...above them was the radiant glory of the God of Israel. And the glory of Yahweh went up from Jerusalem and stood above the mountain to the east of the city [that it, the Mount of Olives]. Ezekiel 11:22-23 TPT

*What did it look like to Ezekiel? The mountain's olive groves had always testified to God's fullness of peace and abundance, yet Ezekiel witnessed something on the mountain yet unseen, a momentary flash or burst of something noteworthy. Did the trees suddenly twinkle, clusters of dark olives becoming like Christmas lights? Did the sky dazzle with golden clarity, appearing like olive oil? Or did Ezekiel sense a gravitating glow, a welling up of complete peace and fullness mixed with energy's tingle, as if to announce, When this happens, it's going to be big. Huge! Abundant! An undivided heart and a new spirit would change everything (verse 19).*

—from "God's Glory," in Mount of Olives devotions from [God's Word for Gardeners Bible](#), page 929

And God's glorious overcoming is celebrated in the Words of John:

And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.

John 1:5 NASB

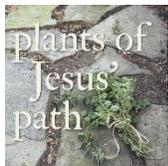
This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5 NIV

# Closing Prayer

*O Father, thank You for the blessings You put in our lives. May I enter into the darkness of The Night that You spent in Gethsemane, pressed like the olive fruits, to sit with You and marvel at the power of Your prayers. Lord, thank You for showing me the depth of Your agony, so I can hope to grasp what You have done for me. You battled evil on my behalf; You accepted my torment and crushing and took punishment in my place (Isaiah 53:5). Darkness cannot overcome me or have any hold over my life. Thank You that my heart can be whole for You; You have joined me with Your precious Spirit, as You said You would do (Ezekiel 11:19). You are true to Your Word. Now let me emerge from this Mount of Olives moment as Your witness (Acts 1:8) and be prepared to thwart any lurking evil that attempts attack. You have given me an olive-pattern to remember: Behold the light and be content! Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever (Matthew 6:13). In Jesus name, I pray, Amen*



As a result of his anguish my servant will behold the light and be content.  
Isaiah 53:11 NCB



The [Plants of Jesus' Path](#) is a 7-week study of plants as a way of cultivating a deeper appreciation for our Savior in the days leading to His crucifixion. These botanical touch points are met through tangible, scent-filled, tasty or intriguing branches, fruits, roots, trees or shrubs that give us something to grasp in a story hugely ungraspable. They are planted in key places to reveal the immensity of our Savior's grace, showing us converging prophecy and backstory to understand who He is and what He has done for us. Imagine the Stations of the Cross coming to Passover Dinner! Encounter palm branches, wheat & grapes in bread & wine, fig tree, spikenard, olive trees, thorns, and hyssop with the garden as your guide to a refreshed heart, ready to celebrate the Resurrection.



Olive has been lighting up the [Devotions Blog](#) for years— find more articles on olive trees in the garden in [The 7 Species: A Garden-to-Table Guide](#), [Evergreen Peace in Potted Olive Trees](#), [Evergreen Lampstand](#), and see olive trees in these Garden Visits: [Sherman Gardens, CA](#); [San Antonio's Sacred Garden](#), [Scripture Garden at Denver Botanic Gardens](#), [Plants of the Bible Conservatory](#), and [more](#).



[Grow your own olive tree](#), a brilliant addition to your home or garden. Learn more about enjoying this epic fruit tree from the [Plant Guide](#)



Let all of olive's wonder come together for you in a poem! Enjoy [O is for Olive](#) from the [A-to-Z Primer of Plants from God's Word](#)



Read more about the olive tree and its history in the Bible in [My Father is the Gardener](#), chapter 1. Additionally, journal questions for the chapter are available at [Choosing & Olive and Oak Trees – Garden In Delight](#)



Read more on olive trees in the devotions series on **Choosing** from the **Garden Work** section beginning on page a-20; also enjoy the **Mount of Olives** devotions from the **Garden Tour** section, beginning on page a-18, in [God's Word for Gardeners Bible](#)

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