**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*The Good News According to Mark,*

*An Apostle of Jesus Christ*

 *365 Day Disciple ~ Mark 13: 3-13*

*You the Minister*

*Through False Messiahs, Wars, Earthquakes, Famines, Persecutions, Families Division and Hatred ~ We Minister*

July 22nd, In the Year of Our Lord 2018

**Notes for Mount Olives https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\_of\_Olives**

The Mount of Olives or Mount Olivet ([Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language): הַר הַזֵּיתִים‬, *Har ha-Zeitim*; [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): جبل الزيتون, الطور‎, *Jabal al-Zaytun*, *Al-Tur*) is a mountain ridge east of and adjacent to [Jerusalem's Old City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_City_%28Jerusalem%29).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-autogenerated1-1) It is named for the [olive groves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive) that once covered its slopes. The southern part of the Mount was the [Silwan necropolis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silwan_necropolis%22%20%5Co%20%22Silwan%20necropolis), attributed to the ancient [Judean kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Judah).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-Ussishkin70-2) The Mount has been used as a [Jewish cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives_Jewish_Cemetery) for over 3,000 years and holds approximately 150,000 graves, making it central in the tradition of [Jewish cemeteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_cemetery).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-3) Several key events in the life of [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus), as related in the [Gospels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospels), took place on the Mount of Olives, and in the [Acts of the Apostles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles) it is described as the place from which Jesus ascended to heaven. Because of its association with both Jesus and [Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virgin_Mary), the Mount has been a site of [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) worship since ancient times and is today a major site of pilgrimage for [Catholics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church), [the Eastern Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Christianity), and [Protestants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism).

Much of the top of the hill is occupied by [At-Tur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At-Tur_%28Mount_of_Olives%29), a former village and now a neighbourhood of [East Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Jerusalem) with a majority-Muslim population.

History

From [Biblical times](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_times) until the present, [Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews) have been buried on the Mount of Olives. The [necropolis on the southern ridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silwan_necropolis), the location of the modern village of [Silwan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silwan%22%20%5Co%20%22Silwan), was the burial place of Jerusalem's most important citizens in the [period of the Biblical kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Temple_Period).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-Ussishkin70-2)

The religious ceremony marking the [start of a new month](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosh_Chodesh) was held on the Mount of Olives in the days of the [Second Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-Har-el_1977_120%E2%80%93123-5) [Roman soldiers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_army) from the [10th Legion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legio_X_Fretensis) camped on the Mount during the [Siege of Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_%2870%29) in the year 70 AD. After the destruction of the [Second Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple), Jews celebrated the festival of [Sukkot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukkot) on the Mount of Olives. They made pilgrimages to the Mount of Olives because it was 80 meters higher than the [Temple Mount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount) and offered a panoramic view of the Temple site. It became a traditional place for lamenting the Temple's destruction, especially on [Tisha B'Av](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tisha_B%27Av).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-Har-el_1977_120%E2%80%93123-5) In 1481, an Italian Jewish pilgrim, Rabbi Meshullam da Volterra, wrote: "And all the community of Jews, every year, goes up to [Mount Zion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Zion) on the day of Tisha B'Av to fast and mourn, and from there they move down along Yoshafat Valley and up to Mount of Olives. From there they see the whole Temple (the Temple Mount) and there they weep and lament the destruction of this House."[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-6) In the mid-1850s, the villagers of [Silwan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silwan%22%20%5Co%20%22Silwan) were paid £100 annually by the Jews in an effort to prevent the desecration of graves on the mount.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-Har-El2004-7)

[Prime Minister of Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Israel) [Menachem Begin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin) asked to be buried on the Mount of Olives near the grave of [Etzel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun) member [Meir Feinstein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meir_Feinstein), rather than [Mount Herzl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Herzl) national cemetery.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-8)

Status since 1948[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mount_of_Olives&action=edit&section=3)]

The [armistice agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949_Armistice_Agreements) signed by Israel and Jordan following the [1948 Arab–Israeli War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Arab%E2%80%93Israeli_War) called for the establishment of a Special Committee to negotiate developments including "free access to the holy sites and cultural institutions and use of the cemetery on the Mount of Olives". However, during the 19 years the [Jordanian annexation of the West Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_annexation_of_the_West_Bank) lasted, the committee was not formed. Non-Israeli Christian pilgrims were allowed to visit the Mount, but Jews of all countries and most non-Jewish Israeli citizens were barred from entering Jordan and therefore were unable to travel to the area.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-11)

By the end of 1949, and throughout the Jordanian rule of the site, some Arab residents uprooted tombstones and plowed the land in the cemeteries and an estimated 38,000 tombstones were damaged in total. During this period, four roads were paved through the cemeteries, in the process destroying graves including those of famous persons. Jordan's [King Hussein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussein_of_Jordan) permitted the construction of the [Intercontinental Hotel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Arches_Hotel) at the summit of the Mount of Olives together with a road that cut through the cemetery which destroyed hundreds of Jewish graves, some from the [First Temple Period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Temple_Period). Graves were also demolished for [parking lots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parking_lot) and a [filling station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filling_station)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-13) and were even used in [latrines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latrine) at a [Jordanian Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_Army) barracks.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-14)[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-15)[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-16)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-17) However, the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) did not condemn the Jordanian government for these actions.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-18)

Following the 1967 [Six-Day War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-Day_War) and the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, its government began restoration work and re-opened the cemetery for burials. Israel's 1980 [unilateral annexation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Law) of East Jerusalem was condemned as a violation of international law and ruled null and void by the UN Security Council in [UNSC Resolution 478](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_478).

Recent Events

As of 2010, the [Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives_Jewish_Cemetery) has been targeted regularly by Arab vandals. Mourners have been assaulted. Notable graves that have been defaced by vandals include those of the [Gerrer Rebbe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrer_Rebbe%22%20%5Co%20%22Gerrer%20Rebbe) and [Menahem Begin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menahem_Begin).[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-19)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-20)[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-21)[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-shameful-22)

On 6 November 2010, an international watch-committee was set up by [Diaspora Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora) with the aim of reversing the desecration of the Jewish cemetery. According to one of the founders, the initiative was triggered by witnessing tombstones that were wrecked with "the kind of maliciousness that defies the imagination."[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-shameful-22)

Old Testament references[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mount_of_Olives&action=edit&section=6)]

The Mount of Olives is first mentioned in connection with [David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David)'s flight from [Absalom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absalom) ([II Samuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel) 15:30): "And David went up by the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up." The ascent was probably east of the [City of David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_David), near the village of [Silwan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silwan%22%20%5Co%20%22Silwan).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-autogenerated1-1) The sacred character of the mount is alluded to in the [Ezekiel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezekiel) (11:23): "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city."[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-autogenerated1-1)

The biblical designation Mount of Corruption, or in Hebrew *Har HaMashchit* ([I Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) 11:7–8), derives from the [idol worship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idolatry_in_the_Bible) there, begun by [King Solomon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Solomon) building altars to the gods of his [Moabite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moab) and [Ammonite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ammon) wives on the southern peak, "on the mountain which is before (east of) Jerusalem" (1 Kings 11:7), just outside the limits of the holy city. This site was known for idol worship throughout the [First Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Temple) period, until king of Judah, [Josiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josiah), finally destroyed "the high places that were before Jerusalem, to the right of Har HaMashchit..."([II Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) 23:13)

An apocalyptic prophecy in the [Book of Zechariah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Zechariah) states that [YHWH](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YHWH) will stand on the Mount of Olives and the mountain will split in two, with one half shifting north and one half shifting south (Zechariah 14:4). According to the [Masoretic Text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text), people will flee through this newly formed valley to a place called [Azal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azal_%28Bible%29) (Zechariah 14:5). The [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) (LXX) has a different reading of Zechariah 14:5 stating that a valley will be blocked up as it was blocked up during the earthquake during King [Uzziah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzziah)'s reign. Jewish historian [Flavius Josephus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flavius_Josephus) mentions in [*Antiquities of the Jews*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiquities_of_the_Jews) that the valley in the area of the [King's Gardens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_Garden_%28Jerusalem%29) was blocked up by landslide rubble during Uzziah's earthquake.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-23) Israeli geologists Wachs and Levitte identified the remnant of a large landslide on the Mount of Olives directly adjacent to this area.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-24) Based on geographic and linguistic evidence, [Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Simon_Clermont-Ganneau), a 19th-century linguist and archeologist in Palestine, theorized that the valley directly adjacent to this landslide is Azal.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-25) This evidence accords with the LXX reading of Zechariah 14:5 which states that the valley will be blocked up as far as Azal. The valley he identified (which is now known as Wady Yasul in Arabic, and Nahal Etzel in Hebrew) lies *south* of both Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

Burial and resurrection[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mount_of_Olives&action=edit&section=7)]

*Main article:*[*Mount of Olives Jewish Cemetery*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives_Jewish_Cemetery)

Many Jews have wanted to be buried on the Mount of Olives since antiquity, based on the Jewish tradition (from the Biblical verse Zechariah 14:4) that when the Messiah comes, the resurrection of the dead will begin there.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives#cite_note-26)[[*unreliable source?*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AIdentifying_reliable_sources)] There are an estimated 150,000 graves on the Mount, including tombs traditionally associated with [Zechariah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zechariah_%28Hebrew_prophet%29) and [Absalom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absalom). On the upper slope, the traditional [Tomb of the Prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Prophets_Haggai%2C_Zechariah_and_Malachi) is situated. Notable [rabbis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabbi) buried on the mount include [Chaim ibn Attar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaim_ibn_Attar) and others from the 15th-century to present.

**Continue in Mark 13:3** And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,

 4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

 5 And Jesus began to say to them,

**FALSE MESSIAH**

 "See to it that no one misleads you.

 6 "Many will come in My name, saying,

'I am *He!*' and will mislead many.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_messiah_claimants>

List of Christian, Jewish, Muslim and others who claimed to be the Messiah.

Interesting, the list starts out with Jesus.

**WARS**

 7 "And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars,

 do not be frightened; *those things* must take place;

but *that is* not yet the end.

8 "For nation will arise against nation,

and kingdom against kingdom;

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_before_1000>

**EARTHQUAKES**

there will be earthquakes in various places;

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lists_of_earthquakes#Lists_by_period>

**FAMINES**

there will *also* be famines.

These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_famines

**PERSECUTION**

 9 "But be on your guard;

for they will deliver you to *the* courts,

and you will be flogged in *the* synagogues,

and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake,

as a testimony to them.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_martyrs>

**THE MISSION DESPITE ALL THESE OBSTACLES**

 **10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.**

**HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS THROUGH YOU**

 11 "And when they arrest you and deliver you up,

do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say,

but say whatever is given you in that hour;

for it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Holy Spirit.

**FAMILIES DIVIDED**

 12 "And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

**CHRISTIANS HATED**

 13 "And you will be hated by all on account of My name,

**PROOF OF SALVATION IS THE ONE WHO ENDURES**

but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Referencing those disciples who followed Jesus but did not stay with Him to the end, these withdrew demonstrating what they really believed. In this circumstance, they did not Believe Jesus was the Messiah. They misunderstood what and who the Messiah should be.

 **John 6:63-66 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.**

 **64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.**

**65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."**

 **66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.**

 In our time, we have seen false Messiahs, wars, earthquakes, famines, persecutions, families divided and Christians hated. However, God’s Holy Spirit speaks through His saints to a lost world. You shall know them by their fruit (Matthew 12:33).

Proof of our salvation is displayed when we are confronted by Satan and the enemies of God. At that time, we stand firm. We do not waiver; we do not abandon God’s mission. Throughout history, Christians have been given the choice to denounce God or Jesus Christ in order to live or to die. Can Christians lie to save their lives? During the conquest of Jericho, Rahab lied to protect the Hebrew spies (Joshua 2). Rahab is listed among those who are justified through their faith to God in Hebrews 11. People lied during the Holocaust to the Nazi’s about hiding Jews.

Throughout Christian history, there were times that Believers were given a choice to live by denouncing their faith. Many did not and were executed in the most gruesome ways. Others were imprisoned. When the time of persecutions were over, the prisoners who survived imprisonment were released and appeared back at their home church to find those that had denounced their faith were present and healthy. This was a very challenging time.

Hebrews 11 details the accounts of the “Great Cloud of Witnesses” whose lives are highlighted, because they fulfilled God’s basic plan in their life. They strayed off the path from time to time but did demonstrate that their heart allegiance was to God. As we read the list, we can see that these people had flaws and sin in their life. The list starts with Abel and Enoch who are the most pristine. Then the list goes to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab. . . and what more shall Scripture say? For time will fail us if we tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions. When I read this list and see the super saints (Abel, Enoch) and at the same time see. . . well, let’s just say. . . those that had some flaws, like Samson and Rahab, I feel better about my own life, and you should too.

**Hebrews 11:31-40**

31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

 32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

 35 Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

 36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

 38 (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

 39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

**PERSECUTED YOU**

Looking at your life, have you gone through people presenting themselves to you as messiahs only to discover they were not? We may also call them “charlatans.” Have you gone through wars, famines, persecutions, earthquakes, families being divided or being hated because of your faith? I suspect some of us have. I also suspect some of us have lived delicate lives somewhat insulated.

**ENDURING THROUGH PERSECUTION**

What is the remedy? The Holy Spirit speaks through you enabling you to endure to the end. Everything we do we do in the power and direction of God. Jesus is our example. Jesus said he could do nothing without the Father (John 5:19-20).

19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

 20 "For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. (John 5:19-20).

One of the major realities from God incarnating Himself into being a person in the name of Jesus was that we now have the witness to show us that it is possible to have God work through us as God worked through Jesus; We the People. We, the Believers, are housing God. We are created in God’s image to contain His Spirit. This is what makes us different from the fallen world. Due to this indwelling, we act, we speak and perform differently. Do not expect people, possessed by the fallen world, who do not have ears to hear or eyes to see, to comprehend your life. You can expect them to be confused and possibly reject you.

**Genesis tells us that God created us in His image.**

Genesis 1:26-28

**26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image**, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." **27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**  28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Do not think of God in man’s physical understanding. If God had a body like you and I, He would not last very long. God is eternal. Our bodies are limited in space, time and energy. These bodies in which we live have a track record of not enduring time and space.

**EXAMPLE PAUL:** Paul’s life was led by the Triune God/Son - Holy Spirit. Acts 9:17-18

17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight **and be filled with the Holy Spirit."**

 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

and when he was arrested he was led by the Spirit to appeal his charge to the Emporia due to him being a Roman citizen by birth.

**Paul Persecuted Multiple Times**

Acts 15 (Jerusalem Counsel) to the end of Acts in Chapter 28 contains the chronology of Paul’s life and what is believed to be the time of his first Roman imprisonment. Historians piece together Paul’s letters and see that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment that was written in Acts. The last part of Paul’s ministry and life is viewed to be chronicled at the end of 2 Timothy. This is the end of Paul’s second Roman imprisonment, and, it is widely held, his beheading (ca. 68 A.D.).

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen (2 Tim. 4:18)

**So,** Believers persevere through false messiahs, wars, earthquakes, famine, persecutions, families torn apart and being hated. The Gospel mission continues through you, to be carried forward by Believers who are directed by the Holy Spirit, who endure to the end. Enduring means that at the end of your life you may have personally stumbled a few times like those in Hebrews 11, but you stayed the course and stepped-up for God when it counted.

**Hebrews 3:6** but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end**.**

**Hebrews 3:14** For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;

Do not loose heart. God knows that most of us will not be like Abel, Enoch or Elijah. But God does look for us to have a heart that seeks after His Will to operate in our lives. So, how do we prepare ourselves?

**Worship the Lord**. By this, we pray, sing, study His Word and preach the Good News. Worship incorporates all aspects of our lives. When we support other Believers, we are worshiping God. When we stand-up for those that are not capable to stand-up for themselves, we worship the Lord. When we assist a stranger, visit the sick, visit those in prison, we worship the Lord. When we reach-out to the downtrodden and rescue the person who has been robbed and left in a ditch, we worship the Lord. Through all of these, the Gospel is carried through false messiahs, wars, earthquakes, famine, persecution and families torn apart and hated. Why? Because the best hope for people on this earth is the Gospel. Hope in God’s Word is not just a promise to one day possibly to be fulfilled but a guarantee.

**Hebrews 11:1-3 1** Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

**Romans 8:24** For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees?

**2 Corinthians 4:18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**2 Corinthians 5:7** for we walk by faith, not by sight

**AMEN** End of Sermon July 22, 2018