

Olives and Olive Oil

Because of the dry, warm climates, olive trees grow well in the countries near the Mediterranean Sea, including the area called Canaan (the Promised Land) in the Bible. These trees, which can grow up to forty feet high, keep their gray-green leaves all year long. Olive trees, olives, and olive oil are mentioned many times in the Bible. For example, Moses told the Israelites that the Promised Land would be “a land of olive oil and honey” (Deuteronomy 8:8). King David crossed over the Mount of Olives as he and his people were running away from his evil son Absalom. When Jesus and His apostles needed to get away from the crowds, they often went to a garden with lots of olive trees outside of Jerusalem at the foot of the Mount of Olives. The garden was called Gethsemane, which means “olive press.” Jesus even ascended (went back to Heaven) from the top of the Mount of Olives.

For thousands of years, people have not only eaten olives, they have also used olives—and the oil from olives—in many other ways. The oil was burned in lanterns (lamps). Olive oil was poured over someone’s head as a sign that he was someone special, like when Samuel anointed Saul and David before they became kings. Sometimes spices, like myrrh, were added to make the oil smell good. Olive oil was used like a lotion to help skin problems and poured over wounds like medicine, as the Good Samaritan did for the man who was beaten and robbed on the road to Jericho. Olive oil was also used to dip bread in, as Jesus and the apostles did at their last supper together before His crucifixion.

Fill in the Blanks

- Olive oil was burned in _____.
- In Deuteronomy 8:8, Canaan is called “a land of _____ and _____.”
- Olive oil was _____ over someone’s _____ to show that he had been chosen for a special purpose.
- Olive oil was poured on wounds like _____.
- “Gethsemane” means _____.
- After His resurrection, Jesus _____ from the top of the Mount of Olives
- Sometimes _____ were added to make olive oil smell better.
- _____ crossed the Mount of Olives as he was trying to get away from his evil son _____.
- Olive trees grow well in the countries near the Mediterranean Sea because of their _____.

