

## Israel Guide

Site: Garden of Gethsemane

Scripture References: Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32, referenced in John 18:1 and Luke 22:40

### Historical Significance:

1. Located on the western foot of the Mount of Olives, beyond the brook Kidron, only a short distance from Jerusalem. Near the villages of Bethany and Bethpage.
2. The garden is not the same as we have today. It was a place to grow vegetables and other foods. It was a place where the planting and harvesting of trees producing olives, pomegranates and figs took place. There are still some olive trees that exist from a thousand years ago.
3. A place of great importance to Jesus as a place where he retreated into deep prayer and a place of agony before His arrest and crucifixion. He sought much needed comfort with his Father in time of pain and sadness.
4. This was the place where He was betrayed and arrested. His disciples fell asleep when he had asked them to stay awake and keep watch. They deserted him, except for Peter but he also eventually fled.
5. It was here that Jesus shared fully and completely in the human condition. He felt sorrow and great distress over the hardship that he was getting ready to face. He showed the right way to behave in times of anguish: to pray to the Father for help but also to accept the will of God.

### Things to look for:

1. The area is surrounded by an iron fence covered with Byzantine motifs, a beautiful flower garden surrounds a central protected area that features the gnarled trunks of eight very old olive trees.
2. The Grotto of Gethsemane. Wall decorations in the grotto describe the prayer of Jesus and the betrayal kiss of Judas. There are bronze figures beneath the altar that portray the sleeping disciples.
3. The Olive trees are amazing. When the Olive tree is cut down, it grows back from the root, so the roots are the oldest part of the tree and could date back to before Jesus' time.

What does this site teach me about God?

1. We are shown that Jesus was fully man with doubts and fears.
2. He reacted to his disciples by scolding them when they fell asleep when he asked them to watch. He felt the isolation and betrayal.
3. The way he reacted to the soldiers when they came for him showing a nonviolent reaction shows his message of peace and love for all.
4. In our time of anguish and distress, Jesus showed us to go by ourselves and seek the Father in prayer. To be willing to trust in the will of God.