

For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"
(Romans 11:15-21; 23-24)

It is evident from these and many other verses that God is not through with His Jewish people. The Church has not replaced Israel (the Jewish people). The Jewish people are beloved for the sake of the fathers. Through them, the Gentiles have been greatly blessed.

There is only one tree. The "wild branches" (Gentile) have been privileged to partake of new life from the cultivated, established tree. And God is grafting in again the natural branches: the Jewish people.

A PERSONAL LETTER FROM JAMIE TO YOU!

Did you ever stop to consider how TREES in the Bible are symbolic of our life in God and His life in us? If we go back to the Garden of Eden, we see that God gave man the job of tilling the land and tending trees (Genesis 2:13). Man failed at this assignment through disobedience, and his reaction to the TREE of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17) brought about spiritual *death*. Redemption's plan then went into effect so that another TREE (the cross) would one day bring about *life* eternal.

Yeshua's death on the tree made it possible for man to bear good fruit. He couldn't do this on his own because of his sinful nature. We see the Messiah explaining to His disciples in John 15:1,2,4,5,8,16 that He had chosen them, planted them, and appointed them to bear much lasting fruit. When they did this, God would be honored and glorified (verse 8), and they would show themselves to be true followers of the Messiah. This, of course, applies to us today as does Matthew 7:16-20: "by their fruits ye shall know them."

Picture yourself for a moment as a beautiful olive tree. You're planted by the waters, ready to bring forth fruit in your season. Your leaves don't fade or wither, and everything you

do prospers and comes to maturity (Psalm 1:3). You're a tree of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3), the planting of the Lord. You're full of sap (Psalm 104:16) and have no lack of water. The Lord has given you so much life that if you cast yourself into the bitter waters of those around you (bearing your brother's burden or getting involved with your neighbor's hurt), those bitter waters will be sweetened, touched by God and healed (Exodus 15:23).

Perhaps you feel as if you couldn't help anyone by casting yourself into their bitter waters because you're in a wilderness of Marah yourself. Maybe you've just been pruned or even cut down to a rough stump. Don't give up! "... there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and the tender shoots of it will not cease" (Job 14:7). If God has planted you (if you are His child), nothing can pluck you out of His hand. You'll rise again!

The Bible tells us that the righteous will flourish like the palm tree (Psalm 92:12-15). These graceful trees can be uprooted, loaded in a truck, transported to a new location and put in a hole, and they will flourish even when moved as mature trees. Drastic change doesn't seem to bother them. They have an amazing root system which helps them weather the fiercest storm, and survive in unfavorable environments. Through all of this, palm trees are always green. You are like the beautiful palm tree if you belong to Yeshua. You can weather the storms of life because your roots go deep into the Love of God (Ephesians 2:17), and that Love never fails (I Corinthians 13:8).

Let God plant you today! His salvation is for all men — Jew and Gentile alike. Repent of your sins and bring forth fruit for the Kingdom of God (Matthew 3:8). New life begins at a TREE — where Yeshua gave His life for you and me. Believe in Him and be blessed. Once you have trusted in Yeshua for your salvation, you can lift your branches high and give the Lord a wave of-fering. You'll even feel like a tree when you do!

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TREES



IN THE BIBLE

by Neil and Jamie Lash

TREES IN THE TORAH

Trees (singular *ets* in Hebrew) are a fascinating topic of study. The Torah (first five books of the Bible) is called *Ets Chaim* – Tree of Life. The Bible is full of trees, from Genesis to Revelation. God created trees on the third day of creation (Genesis 1:11). Shortly thereafter, he gave mankind only one rule: not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). That rule was disobeyed and spiritual death was the result. Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden. The tree of life was blocked (Genesis 3:22).

But God had a plan, and until that plan went into effect, He used trees as a blessing to man. We read in the second book of the Torah, Exodus, that the Lord used a tree as an agent of healing. The children of Israel arrived at a place called Marah (after leaving Egypt) where the water was bitter. Moses asked God what he should do. The Lord showed him a tree. When Moses cast the tree into the waters, they were made sweet. God then proclaimed Himself to be the healer of His people Israel. His words are recorded in Exodus 15:26:

“If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.”

Many years later, God again used a tree to bring healing. This time the tree (a cross) brought healing from sin, spiritual death, and all manner of sicknesses as well, when Yeshua died as the final sacrifice for sin.

TREES AND PEOPLE

Trees are often symbolic of people in the Holy Scriptures. There are numerous metaphors, analogies and parables having to do with trees in both the *Tenach* and the *Brit HaDasha* (N.T. scriptures). One of our favorites is the Parable of the Trees from Judges chapter nine, verses 8-15:

“The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them. And they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us!’ But the olive tree said to them, ‘Should

I cease giving my oil, with which they honor God and men, and go to sway over trees?’ Then the trees said to the fig tree, ‘You come and reign over us!’ But the fig tree said to them, ‘Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to sway over trees?’ Then the trees said to the vine, ‘You come and reign over us!’ But the vine said to them, ‘Should I cease my new wine, which cheers both God and men, and go to sway over trees?’ Then all the trees said to the bramble, ‘You come and reign over us!’ And the bramble said to the trees, ‘If in truth you anoint me as king over you, then come and take shelter in my shade; But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon!’”

This parable deals with the people of Israel and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The men of Israel wanted an earthly king to rule over them. They were not content with God being their king. They took matters into their own hands, and ended up in spiritual bankruptcy and under the dominion of a wicked murderer (symbolized by the bramble or thornbush). We all need to learn a lesson from these trees. God is the One to whom we should bow down. He alone is worthy to be the King in our lives!

There are beautiful analogies in the Psalms about trees and people. Two of them follow:

*“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which
the wind drives away.” (Psalm 1:1-4)*

*“But I am like a green olive tree
in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God
forever and ever.” (Psalm 52:8)*

THE OLIVE TREE

The olive tree is spoken of in both the *Tenach* and the *Brit HaDasha*. It is a remarkable tree. In the land of the Bible, Israel, the olive tree is still the most important of all the trees because it is a source of food, light, and healing. Olive trees thrive under the most adverse conditions. They will live and produce fruit despite heat, dryness, cold, wetness, rocky or sandy soil. It has been said that you can never kill an olive tree. If we're like the olive tree, we can thrive despite the conditions of life we face.

The olive tree is a symbol of Israel in the Holy Scriptures. In the New Covenant, in Romans chapter 11 we read a beautiful metaphor about the relationship between the Jewish people and the Church. The Bible tells us that true Christians are those who have been grafted into a Jewish olive tree. Consider the following verses from Romans 11 where the Apostle Paul is speaking to Gentiles about the Jewish people:

*“For if their being cast away is the
reconciling of the world,
what will their acceptance be but
life from the dead?*

*For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy;
and if the root is holy, so are the branches.
And if some of the branches were broken off,
and you, being a wild olive tree,
were grafted in among them,
and with them became a partaker of the root
and fatness of the olive tree,
do not boast against the branches.*

*But if you do boast,
remember that you do not support the root,
but the root supports you.*

*You will say then, “Branches were broken off
that I might be grafted in.”*

*Well said. Because of unbelief
they were broken off, and you stand by faith.
Do not be haughty, but fear.*

*For if God did not spare the natural branches,
He may not spare you either.
And they also, if they do not continue
in unbelief, will be grafted in,
for God is able to graft them in again.*