

The Olive Tree

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Throughout God's word, trees are symbols that represent spirit beings (see study: *The Tree of Life and River of Living Water*). As there are many different types of trees, which serve different purposes, so there are many different spirit beings who either work to serve Almighty God, or oppose Him. In many scriptures, those who work to serve God are compared to an olive tree while those who oppose Him are described as a "wild" olive tree (Rom. 11:17, 24). In this study, scriptures dealing with olive trees, branches, and oil will be examined for further clarification because this symbolic language also extends to the human realm.

First, we will look at an example of those who repent of their sins and are transformed "figuratively" into an olive tree.

I (Christ) will **heal their backsliding** (Isa. 53:5), I will love them freely, for my anger has turned away from him (sinful nation of Israel). ⁵I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall grow like the lily, and lengthen his roots like Lebanon. ⁶**His branches shall spread; his beauty shall be like an olive tree, and his fragrance like Lebanon** (Hos. 14:4-6; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Some might ask why an olive tree is referred to as "beautiful", or why "fragrance" is mentioned at all. Again, these are terms that describe spiritual realities. For instance, when someone is trying to serve God, He regards their actions as "beautiful".

How beautiful upon the mountains **are the feet of him who brings good news**, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good

things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isa. 52:7; cf. Rom. 10:15; emphasis added).

In contrast, when the ancient nation of Israel persisted in transgressing God's laws, He regarded their actions as "foul" rather than a pleasing "fragrance".

I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; your young men I killed with a sword, along with your captive horses; **I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; yet you have not returned to Me** (repented), says the Lord (Amos 4:10; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Another reason for righteous conduct being compared to an olive tree is that oil "pressed" from the fruit was used to anoint God's servants. Again, this is symbolic and pictures spiritual realities that will be examined shortly.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity! ²**It is like precious oil upon the head**, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron (the High Priest), running down on the edge of his garments (Ps. 133:1-2; emphasis added).

It is important to continue reading the next verse because this oil is associated with everlasting life.

It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing – **life forevermore** (Ps. 133:3; emphasis added).

Therefore, olive oil is associated with everlasting life which is only available to those who have God's Holy Spirit as the next scripture confirms.

But if the Spirit of Him (Almighty God) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised

Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies **because of His Spirit which dwells in you** (Rom. 8:11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, olive oil that was placed upon the High Priest at his inauguration symbolized God's Holy Spirit being poured out on that individual to assist him with his important responsibilities. This same process occurs when someone repents of their sins and is baptized. Following baptism, every repentant individual receives the help of God's Holy Spirit to resist Satan's values, which explains why the term "Helper" is used many times in scripture.

And I (Christ) will pray (to) the Father, and **He will give you another Helper**, that He (the Father) may abide with you forever, ¹⁷(this Helper is) **the Spirit of truth**, which the world cannot receive... (Jn. 14:16-17a; cf. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Heb. 13:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me: **Lord, be my helper!** (Ps. 30:10; emphasis added).

Behold, **God is my helper**; the Lord is with those who uphold my life (Ps. 54:4; emphasis added).

Not only does Almighty God use the oil produced by olives to represent the action of His Holy Spirit, He associates this oil with His law and commandments, which are always compared to "light".

And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure **oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually** (Ex. 27:20; emphasis added).

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light... (Ps. Prov. 6:23a; emphasis added).

As this "light" in the tabernacle of meeting was not to be extinguished; so God's commandments are never to be extinguished as Christ confirmed.



HEAR, O LORD, AND HAVE MERCY ON ME: LORD, BE MY HELPER!

Psalms 30:10; emphasis added

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Mt. 5:17-18).

Following his resurrection, Jesus Christ returned to heaven and began using the power of his Father's Holy Spirit to strengthen and assist those called out of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4). But when the Helper comes, which I (Christ) shall send to you from the Father, **the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father**, it will testify of me (Jn. 15:26; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As the Holy Spirit is compared to olive oil, and as the "light" produced by olive oil is compared to God's law and commandments, it should be no surprise that Christ himself is compared to an olive tree.

And if some of the branches (representing rebellious Israelites) were broken off, and you (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them become a partaker of **the root and richness of the olive tree** (representing Christ) (Rom. 11:17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because Christ is compared to an olive tree, those who recognize him as Almighty God's representative will associate themselves with an

olive tree, as confirmed by King David who was "a man after God's heart" (Ac. 13:22),

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

Angels who are faithful and obedient to Almighty God are also associated with the olive tree.

Inside the inner sanctuary he (Solomon) made **two cherubim of olive wood**, each ten cubits high (1Kgs. 6:23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, there are two angels described as olive trees, which stand either side of the "Lord of the whole earth" (Isa. 54:5; Ps. 97:5; cf. Col. 1:12-23).



THE LORD CALLED YOUR NAME, **GREEN OLIVE TREE**, LOVELY AND OF GOOD FRUIT...

Jeremiah 11:16a

Then I (Zechariah) answered and said to him, "**What are these two olives trees**, one at the right of the lampstand and the other at its left? ¹²And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the hands of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" (Zech. 4:11-12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So he said, "**These are the two anointed ones** (sons of fresh oil), **who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.**" (Zech. 14:14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There are also two olives trees described in the book of Revelation that appear to be linked to those mentioned by Zechariah.

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth (symbol of mourning). **These are the two olive trees** and the two lampstands **standing before the Lord of the earth** (Rev. 11:3-4; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In the temple that Solomon built, the doors leading into the Most Holy Place were constructed from olive wood.

For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he (Solomon) made **doors of olive wood**... (1Kgs. 6:31a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

These doors are connected to Jesus Christ because no one can enter the Most Holy Place except through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:15-16).

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **I am the door** of the sheep." (Jn. 10:7; emphasis added).

I am the door. If anyone enters by me (through Christ's shed blood), he will be saved... (Jn. 10:9a; cf. Heb. 9:22; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life (everlasting). No one comes to the Father **except through me** (Jn. 14:6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The ancient nation of Israel was also compared to a green olive tree because it had "the Lord", now known as Jesus Christ, leading them (1Cor. 10:1-4; cf. Heb. 13:8).

The Lord called your name, **Green Olive tree**, lovely and of good fruit... (Jer. 11:16a)

For **the Lord** of hosts, **who planted you**, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the **house of Israel and of the house of Judah**, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense to Baal (Jer. 11:17).

It is due to rebellion that this "green olive tree" will be shaken, or disciplined for its persistent rebellion against Almighty God and His representative, Jesus Christ. As a result of "the Lord's" corrective action, only a few will remain faithful to Almighty God's law and commandments. These are described figuratively as olives that cling to the tree.

In that day (of judgment) it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob will wane (as the moon wanes each month until it becomes completely dark), and the fatness of his flesh grow lean (starved of God's truth). ⁵It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain, and reaps the heads with his arm; it shall be as he who gathers heads of grain in the *Valley of Rephaim* (area of rebellious "giants" in Canaan). ⁶Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it, **like the shaking of an olive tree, two or three olives at the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in its most fruitful branches...** (Isa. 17:4-6a; cf. **Isa. 24:5-13**; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

This confirms that some of God's servants will remain faithful, while many of His children will not. Those who remain faithful will be a blessing to those who have lost their trust, or never trusted, in God. Those who experience the corrective actions of God will be brought to a point of humility that makes them more receptive and teachable.

Now therefore, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. ¹³So rend your heart, and not your

garments (outward show of remorse); return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and he relents from doing harm. ¹⁴**Who knows if he will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him..** (Joel 2:12-14a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This "blessing" will include encouragement combined with truthful instruction from God's loyal servants. Again, these loyal servants can be compared to "olives" that cling to the olive tree which represents Jesus Christ.

And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but **your eyes shall see your teachers.** ²¹**Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"** whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left (Isa. 30-20-21; emphasis added).

And I will give you **shepherds** according to My heart, **who will feed you with knowledge and understanding** (Jer. 3:14; emphasis added).

But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase (in the knowledge of God; cf. 2Pet. 3:18). ⁴**I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them** (God's truth); and they shall fear no more (2Tim. 1:7), nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking.... (Jer. 23:3-4a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

There is a connection between the olives that represent loyal servants of God, and the olives that are not gleaned from the trees as commanded by God's law.

When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Dt. 24:20).

So God's law in Deuteronomy 24:20 shows that there is a serious need to care for those who are in an unfortunate situation, and there is no worse situation than being "a stranger to God and His truth", being "separated from your heavenly Father", and being "a widow because your husband, Jesus Christ, is separated from you" due to sinful conduct (2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23; Rev. 21:2). Hence, the need to assist "deceived mankind" through the work provided by the "olives" that loyally serve Almighty God and His son Jesus Christ.

In contrast to the olive tree that represents Jesus Christ, and the branches with olives that represent those who faithfully serve God, much of this present evil world (Gal. 1:4) focuses on another tree that requires artificial light because it is no longer illuminated by the law and commandments of God (Prov. 6:23; cf. 2Cor. 11:12-15). This tree is described as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). One of its physical counterparts is the Christmas tree which is found in many homes each year (Jer. 10:2-5). It is not unusual for these trees to have a star on top, and according to God's word "stars" represent angels (Rev. 1:20). Therefore, the angel or "star" at the top of these trees represents Satan, who is the god of this world and deceives the majority of mankind into believing it is quite acceptable to create a holiday on December 25th that actually commemorates the rebirth of the pagan god Mithra (2Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9). Just as natural Christmas trees are shredded or burned every year, so Satan and the fallen angels will be extinguished prior to the second resurrection.

If anyone does not abide in me (Christ), he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they

gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned (Jn. 15:6; cf. Rev. 18:8; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In the opening paragraph of this study it was mentioned that God assigns various responsibilities to different angels, but the proclivity is to want more and more rather than being content with what has been granted (Php. 4:11; Heb. 13:5). However, the olive tree mentioned in the next section of scripture is content and grateful to fulfill whatever task his heavenly Father gives him; and this olive tree represents Jesus Christ.

The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, "Reign over us!"⁹ But the olive tree said to them, "Should I cease giving my oil, with which they honor God and men, and go sway over trees?" (Jgs. 9:8-9).

Jesus Christ's motivation has always been to serve his heavenly Father and fulfill every task that is given to him. He has never been motivated by self-aggrandizement and, as the following scripture confirms, Christ was willing to give up his position in heaven so he could become the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of mankind and fallen angels.

(Christ), though he was in the form of God (while still in heaven), did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death... (Php. 2:7-8a; RSV; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because Christ deeply respects his heavenly Father and walks in all His ways, he will have a very happy marriage in the future with many children who are compared to olive plants.

Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways (Ps. 128:1).

Your wife (the collective church; cf. Eph. 5:23-32) shall be like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house, your ***children** (individual church members) **like olive plants all around your table** (Ps. 128:3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).



**BLESSED IS EVERY ONE WHO FEARS
THE LORD, WHO WALKS IN HIS WAYS.**

[Psalms 128.1](#)

So olives, olive trees, and branches are all symbols meant to remind us about Christ and various aspects of the work he has fulfilled as well as the tasks that are still before him (1Cor. 15:22-28). The other tree involved with Christmas celebrations actually represents Satan and his "lawless" values. This latter tree will eventually be extinguished after Christ's return to rule this planet (2Thes. 2:8).

*When reading Psalm 128:3, it is important to note that "children" and "little children" are used frequently in scripture to describe church members who have repented of their sins and become "like children" because they are humble and teachable (Mt. 18:3; Jn. 13:33; Gal. 4:19; 1Jn. 2:1; 2:12-13,18, 28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21).

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