

### **Trees: Props for The Teacher**

*Trees with their wood, paper and added stone were literally the building blocks for our civilization. Trees remain one of God's most beautiful creations. They enhance living all around us, are often barely noticed as backdrops amid our busy days. Yet upon reflection, we really couldn't survive without them. Billions strong, they prove efficient, as significant cleansers of the atmosphere, including functioning as prime contributors of oxygen production. Trees also provide homes to wildlife. They build up humus, an in-depth blanket-of-habitat for countless trillions of soil microorganisms that maintain and buildup soil. Trees moderate our climate with increased humidity through evapo-transpiration. Their incredible complexes of spreading roots stabilize hills and mountainsides largely preventing disastrous lethal mud and rock slides while concurrently pervasively shading, that allows streams to run clear and cool enhancing fish and other aquatic life. And of course, trees provide a profusion of fruits and nuts that sustain us along with a vast array of species. Forests with their multi purposed assortment of beautiful wood offers man's creativity opportunity to produce all types of practical and spectacular furniture such as a family seated around their expansive polished dining room table. Trees shelter and warm us from the cold and still directly fuel our cooking for an amazing, even at this late date, large swath of subsisting humanity spangled throughout the third world while simultaneously providing fuel for the recreational, often reflective ambiance of a campfire.*

*God as the Creator, was obviously aware of the powerful, positive influences trees would provide for us. Thus he used trees and other living things as examples to convey spiritual principles inherent within His teachings. Especially noteworthy is His selection of "a seed," as a "theological prop," one single living thing having to die to ensure future flourishing generations just as He also had to die in order to generate eternal spiritual life for believers.*

John 12:23-24 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

*The Bible is replete with tree, vine and other plant references; dozens of tree names abound and are used to establish understanding of God's teachings as essential, highly relevant to our lives, inspiring our faith. By using an object such as a tree, God unlocks understanding of arcane spiritual principles that otherwise would remain unintelligible, shrouded in verbose explanations.*

*With the earth left without form and void in darkness, God willed, breathed upon it, and the process of creation became our existence. In the middle of the Garden of Eden was a very special tree imbued with divine powers: The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The foundation of humanity's relationship with God down to present time is founded upon our parents, Adam and Eve, their disobedience, their transgression of God's strict command not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil despite*

*innumerable surrounding fair trees offering endless bounties of delectable, palatable fruit.*

Genesis 2: 16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

*Another divine tree, The Tree of Life, mentioned in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, occurs in the new Kingdom, the Heavenly Jerusalem, having descended to earth.*

Revelation 22:2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

*The tree of life in the Garden of Eden was to sustain life and it was this tree that was forbidden from Adam and Eve because of their transgression. It was this tree that would sustain life forever. They were expelled from the garden to prevent them from achieving eternal life.*

Genesis 3:22-24 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:**23** Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.**24** So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

*The olive tree, ubiquitous to the Middle East, was used for centuries for anointing in religious or civil ceremonies for high office, for invoking God's intervention for healing, for artistic figure carvings of its beautiful wood, for fashioning cooking implements, and as a healthful, savory cooking ingredient. Biblically, three parts of the olive tree have been used by God for symbolic religious significance: first, the "Root" symbolizing our Savior, Yahshua, second, its natural "native" branches symbolizing the Israelites, the original twelve tribes, the Chosen People, and third, the "grafted-in" branches of a related but wild olive tree, the Gentiles.*

Romans 11:16b-25 "...If the root be holy, so are the branches. 16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 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, 18 do not

boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 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? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

*The Israelites, (often inaccurately, collectively labeled, as the "Jews"), the Chosen People, then and now, did not trust, have faith in, but rejected Yahshua as the coming Messiah. Ironically, during Yahshua's ministry, His preaching had been exclusively directed to them. But finally, God the Father, Yah, because of their stubborn lack of faith and trust, expelled, disinherited, "broke off" those native, disobedient branches and proceeded to allow others to receive His Word: the "grafting in," process, whereby non-Jews, the Gentiles, were substituted in their place, afforded to receive the gospel's Good Word. This decision was done in part by God to provoke the Jews into jealousy.*

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

*Of course, it remained The Root, the Messiah, who sustained and sustains both native and grafted in branches with spiritual life. Yet these new additions, the Gentiles, were given almost a rebuke in a warning: if the native branches, due to their stubbornness and unbelief, can be readily broken off, how much more readily could you, the merely grafted-in non-native branches, (the Gentiles) be lopped off upon their rejection and/or disobedience of Him! We/they should not brag! To this day, besides the Messianic Congregations, most of God's Chosen People do not believe that Yahshua is the Messiah, the Chosen One, and thus tragically remain part of the massive anti-Christ tide of unbelievers.*

1John 2:22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

*Yahshua applies the same principle of His essential role in providing spiritual life to a vine in John 15: 1-2 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

John 15:4, 5, 8 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

*A generic orchard tree was also symbolically used to designate humanity's moral choices to produce good fruits, righteous acts through loving obedience, or bad fruits incapable of nutrition or any benefit through disobedience to God's laws in one's life.*

Luke 3:9 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

Luke 6:43-45 "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 "For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Matthew 7:17-21 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Matthew 12:33-37 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. 34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

*Other tree species follow: Numerous magnificent cedars of Lebanon were used in the construction of Solomon's Temple including rare woods. As an example, the two fifteen foot cherubim's spanning the wall in back of the Mercy Seat were of olive wood, while the sprouted, flowering almond branch that confirmed the House of Aaron for the priesthood remained by the two tablets by the jar of mana in the Holy of Holies. Many beautiful carvings in the temple including the great doors were fashioned out of fir.*

1Kings 6:23 Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high.

Numbers 17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.

Kings 6:32-34 The two doors were of olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. 33 So for the door of the sanctuary he also made doorposts of olive wood, one-fourth of the wall. 34 And the two doors were of cypress wood; two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door.

*Perhaps because of its characteristic great size and spreading shade in contrast its tiny seed used in an example of true faith, plus the facility of most anyone being able to easily climb into its lower limbs, the Lord used this tree, the sycamore, as a prop for Zacchaeus:*

Luke 19:4 So he Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way.

*Yes, Zacchaeus the tax collector upon climbing up into this tree to be seen by Yahshua found salvation, the change to righteous behavior that kindled his generosity as a new spirit of charity cut him to the heart to refund all the ill-gotten funds back to those most in need.*

Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Luke 17:6 So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

*In another instance, Yahshua being hungry and somewhat frustrated that there were no figs, still used the fig tree as yet another teaching example of the moment to emphasize the power of what true faith can accomplish:*

Matthew 21:19-22 And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. 20 And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" 21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

*This study has only scratched the surface of the diverse varieties of trees and plants composing biblical botany: Oaks of Bashan (Is 2:13), pomegranate, palm, apple (Joel*

1:.), teil tree (Is 6:13 ), cedar, shittah tree, the myrtle tree, the oil tree, the box tree (Is 41:19), mulberry (2Sam5:23, 24), chestnut (Eze 31:8) and many more.

*Although the tree species were not named, trees were intimately involved in the execution of Yahshua:*

Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29

5:30: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.

10: 39: "And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.

13: 29: "Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.

*The ancient icon of today's ubiquitous Christmas tree is amazingly described by the prophet Jeremiah as a disparagingly pagan custom centuries ago. Still is!*

Jeremiah 10:2-4 Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. 3 For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. 4 They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple.

*As a summary, I have chosen the last paragraph of an outstanding study by Bill Onisick, "The Branch of God's Planting," from Forerunner, "Ready Answer."*

*"We are the branch of God's planting, grafted into His family. As we humble ourselves and embrace His engrafted Word of life, we grow in union with Him, transformed into righteous, holy branches that produce the self-sacrificial fruit of love. One day soon, the branches of God's planting will inherit the land forever and glorify our great God and Father." Selah*

*All study verses taken from King James Version of the Holy Bible*

Proverb to ponder:

Proverb 3:18 She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retains [holds her fast].

*Action of Belief Ministry*  
[ActionofBeliefMinistry@gmail.com](mailto:ActionofBeliefMinistry@gmail.com)  
[www.ActionofBeliefMinistry.org](http://www.ActionofBeliefMinistry.org)