

Trees of The Bible

A study course for Lent 2021

Week Five: The Olive Tree

*‘But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever.’
Psalm 52:8*

Introduction

Jesus died on a tree/cross. Throughout the ages, various suggestions have been made as to what type of tree this might have been, e.g. elder, dogwood. However, recent archaeological evidence from Israel suggests that the Romans used local olive trees. This makes sense as we know that there were olive groves around Jerusalem, e.g. Gethsemane.

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. “By His stripes you are healed.”

1 Peter 2:24



“ The olive tree is plain and frugal; it grows in poor soil, yields precious fruit, and can live for more than a thousand years. Throughout history, the Olive branch has been used as a symbol for peace, and together with the vine and the fig tree, the Olive Tree is also a symbol of wisdom, prosperity and happiness. “

<http://www.jai-pal.org/en/campaigns/olive-tree-campaign>

READ Psalm 51; Mark 15: 21-39 and 1 Peter 2:20-24

LOOK UP Genesis 7: 6-11; Deuteronomy 21:22,23 & Galatians 3:13

REFLECT

What are the qualities of the olive tree?

Why does Judaism consider anyone cursed who dies on a tree?

[Compare to Islam, which does not accept Jesus died on the cross. They say God substituted someone else (Quran 4:157-158): “*They did not kill or crucify him, but it appeared so to them*”.]

How can we be more like an olive tree, bringing peace and reconciliation to the world?

[*Check out the jai-pal.org website to learn about olive tree planting in Palestine and the campaign to bring about reconciliation between Arabs and Jews.*]

RECITE - Psalm 52

¹Why do you boast, O mighty one, of mischief done against the godly? All day long

²you are plotting destruction. Your tongue is like a sharp razor, you worker of treachery.

³You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth. Selah

⁴You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

⁵But God will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah

⁶The righteous will see, and fear, and will laugh at the evildoer, saying,

⁷“See the one who would not take refuge in God, but trusted in abundant riches, and sought refuge in wealth!”

⁸But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever.

⁹I will thank you forever, because of what you have done. In the presence of the faithful I will proclaim your name, for it is good.

Silence

PRAY

For those who make laws, interpret them, and administer them, that our common life may be ordered in justice and mercy.....

For those who still make Jerusalem a battleground.....

For those who have the courage and honesty to work openly for justice and peace.....

For those who, weighed down with hardship, failure, or sorrow, feel that God is far from them.....

For those who are tempted to give up the way of the cross.....

Most gracious Father, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on a tree we may triumph in your unfailing love. **Amen.**

Lords Prayer

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**