

Trees of The Bible

A study course for Lent 2021

Written by: Revd Stephen Startup
Edited by: Carolyn Coulter

Forward by: Revd Andrew Jablonski

INTRODUCTION

Trees are often mentioned throughout the Bible and frequently linked to significant events. This study series examines six trees which illustrate God's plan of salvation.

Each week looks at one particular tree. Botanical details and pictures are given with the associated Bible verses and questions for individual reflection or group discussion. Devotional material including a psalm, intercessions and a prayer are also provided.

Week One **The Tree of the knowledge of good and evil (The Fig Tree)**

"The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:9)

Week Two **The Burning Bush (Rubus Sanctus)**

"There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up." (Exodus 3:2)

Week Three **The Cedar of Lebanon**

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon, planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God." (Psalm 92:12&13)

Week Four **The Willow Tree**

"By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the willows we hung our harps" (Psalm 137:1&2)

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)

Week Six **The Tree of Life (The Vine)**

"On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2)

The description and quotations for each tree are given to stimulate individual research. They do not necessarily represent my opinion.

The Bible quotations and passages have been carefully chosen. As far as possible, the Gospel of Mark has been selected, as this is the allocated Gospel for this liturgical year. The First Letter of Peter is referenced to build on our earlier study in 2020.

The reflection questions follow a well tried format, which progressively explores the subject:

- A) **OBSERVATION** QUESTION. What does the Bible passage actually say? Not what we think it says.
- B) **INTERPRETATION** QUESTION. What does it mean? You may need to consider its original context.
- C) **CORRELATION** QUESTION. How does the passage relate to the rest of the Bible or to today's society?
- D) **APPLICATION** QUESTION. What do we or I need to do? As St James says, we do not wish to be just hearers of The Word but DOERS (James 1:22).

The prayers and intercessions have been adapted from traditional Lenten liturgical sources.

I am grateful to Revd Andrew Jablonski for asking me to prepare this Lent study. I was surprised how the Trees of the Bible illustrate the significant events of Biblical History.

I am also grateful to my daughter, Carolyn Coulter, who has carefully edited each study and has given prayerful advice and encouragement.

We pray that through the Trees of the Bible we may all grow in the understanding of God and His purposes.

Revd Stephen Startup