

THE SECRET OF HIS PURPOSE THE PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE KING,
EVERYTHING IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH,
IN JESUS....

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Olive Tree in Scripture

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The olive tree is a fascinating and complex subject. However, as I have tried to research its meaning in scripture, I have not discovered any extensive commentary on it that I found helpful. With this in mind, I decided to simply go through scripture looking at the main references to the olive tree and its parts. What follows is a result of this study.

Before looking at scripture, perhaps it would be good to consider the natural or physical olive tree, for its very nature and character give us an indication of its spiritual significance.

The Natural Olive Tree

The olive tree is an evergreen tree that is native to the coastal areas of the eastern Mediterranean and adjoining coastal areas of southeastern Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa. It grows best in the direct sun, and is suited for rocky calcareous subsoil. Its trunk is knotty and gnarled; its bark is smooth and ash colored; its leaves are leathery and silvery green, suggestive of "tenacious strength"; its wood is fine grained, solid and yellowish; its flower is feathery white; and it produces an edible fruit (the olive). Its olive oil is good for health.

It is very hardy due to its drought, disease, and fire resistance. This is, in large part, due to its extensive and robust root system that is capable of regenerating itself even if the trunk is destroyed by fire. Consequently, it can and does live a very long time. Some individual olive trees in the Mediterranean area have been estimated to be 2,000 years of age; most are hundreds of years of age.

It is generally seen as a symbol of peace but can also be a symbol of wisdom, glory, fertility, power, and pureness. It is also associated with the color green, which signifies life.

It should be obvious that several of the characteristics of the natural olive tree have very significant spiritual meaning. Clearly, the Lord created the olive tree this way and then used its characteristics to reveal or symbolize spiritual truths or principles.

In a metaphorical and symbolic sense, the olive tree is portrayed as one of the most important trees in scripture. The only tree that exceeds the olive tree is the tree of life; however, in some respects, they are very similar, if not the same; simply different varieties expressing Christ.

The Challenge

As we begin, the greatest challenge faced in putting this together was trying to stay on subject because there are many side issues that relate to the olive tree and, without an understanding of these, some of the spiritual significance of the olive tree might be missed or misunderstood.

For example, much misunderstanding comes in when one fails to make a distinction between the house of Israel and the house of Judah, or between the Israelite and the Jew, or between the modern-day state of Israel (misnamed) and God's true Israel. In the first version of this article, I included a number of pages to address these subjects, but with this revision, I have pulled those pages and incorporated them into other articles. The primary ones are found at these links.

Abraham's Multitude of Nations — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art63.pdf>

Dualism, Reversionism, Graftage — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art39.pdf>

Fullness of the Nations—All Israel Saved — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art64.pdf>

Until Shiloh Comes — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art66.pdf>

To this end, as much detail as possible has been incorporated without overloading this study with side eddies.

So, let us turn to God's word, as presented in twelve major sets of scripture, to see what we can glean about the olive tree itself, along with its leaves, oil, and wood.

1. Olive Leaf—New Life, New Beginning

The law of first mention is sometimes (not always) helpful to determine the meaning of a word or concept as it is used throughout scripture that follows. In the case of the olive tree, the olive leaf first came into view with Noah as he was on the ark waiting for the water to recede.

So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. (Genesis 8:10-11 NASB)

Presumably, Noah had waited for seven days and on the eighth day he released the dove and she came back that evening. The seventh and the eighth signify the ages to come as the glory of the Lord fills all the earth (Numbers 14:20), revealing the sons of God, and setting creation and the nations free from the groaning bondage of sin and the tyranny of man (Romans 8:19-25).

The number 7 signifies the *completion of that which is in view or divine perfection*. It speaks of the advancement or progression of the kingdom of God when, after six days and on the seventh, the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15) clearly manifests among the nations so that all know who has been, is, and will continue to be in charge—Jesus, the King of kings, and the present ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5). We could say that the summing up of all things in Christ kicks into high gear for all to see and experience.

The number 8 signifies new birth, resurrection life, new life, new beginning, or new creation. All who are in Christ (past, present, and future) are new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15); they are of the eighth day as God declares: *Behold, I am making all things new* (Revelation 21:5). This may be a difficult concept to grasp, but we who are in Christ are now of the eighth day. We could say, as some theologians state to make other points about the kingdom, it is now but not yet. It has not been consummated but continues to progress toward the goal of God when God the Father is truly all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Moving on; by bringing a freshly picked olive leaf to Noah, the dove was signifying that there was new life growing on earth. Scripture especially makes it clear that this leaf was no dead leaf floating on the surface someplace. No; it was freshly picked.

The hardy olive tree lived up to its reputation for regeneration even if its trunk and branches are destroyed. Neither rain, nor hail, nor wind can destroy God's choice tree. Tenacious it is!

Thus, at the outset of scripture, the olive tree is established as the symbol for new life or freshness or a fresh beginning, which not only speaks of new life but of renewal or revival. Either way, it is clear that the olive tree, especially its leaf, is most associated with life.

Also, it is quite significant that the dove, not some other bird, delivered the olive leaf, for the dove is a symbol of the holy spirit. We see this most clearly in the baptism of Jesus.

And John witnessed, saying, I have seen the Spirit coming down as a dove out of Heaven, and He abode on Him. (John 1:32 LITV; also, Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22)

So, the dove returning to Noah with an olive leaf in its beak signified new life on earth. We could say that she was bringing life to Noah and his family and all the animals on the ark. As the deliverer of this sign of life, the dove herself signified the holy spirit that gives life. This is confirmed by Jesus' own words.

It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh does not profit, nothing! The Words which I speak to you are spirit and are life. (John 6:63 LITV)

The dove, a symbol of the spirit of God, on the eighth day, gave Noah a sign of new or regenerated life on earth, starting with the olive tree, which pointed to all the nations on earth eventually being blessed in and by the olive tree.

2. Olive Oil—Holy and Anointed

The next mention of the olive tree is in reference to its oil.

"Take also for yourself the finest of spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred and fifty, and of fragrant cane two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin. "You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. (Exodus 30:23-25 NASB)

Moses was commanded to take fine spices and mix them in olive oil to make holy anointing oil for consecrating the tent of meeting and the ark of the covenant. Since the oil from the fruit of the tree was used to consecrate the tabernacle, the tree itself must also be consecrated or holy, that is, set apart unto the Lord. If the root is holy, so also the branches (Romans 11:16)—and we could add, so is everything that comes out from the root.

In the ancient, natural realm, olive oil had a wide application of uses that included food and medicine for the body, and fuel for lamps. Even today, olive oil is touted as a good thing for health.

In the spirit realm, olive oil symbolizes the anointing of the holy spirit, both of Christ and His people. Even the beating or crushing of the olive fruit to produce the oil has spiritual meaning, for Christ Himself was crushed on the cross so that the holy spirit would be poured out on His ecclesia (church) after His final ascension back to His Father in heaven. Thus, metaphorically speaking, Jesus is the olive tree of God.

Consider how the oil is explained in the *Bible Encyclopedia and Dictionary* by A.R. Fausset (Zondervan Publishing House; page 523: Oil).

"Its three principal uses among the Hebrews were: (1) To anoint the body so as to mollify the skin, heal injuries, and strengthen muscles (Psalm 104:15; 109:18; 141:5; Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34; 2 Chronicles 28:15; Mark 6:13; James 5:14. (2) As we use butter, as food (Numbers 11:8; 1 Kings 17:12; 1 Chronicles 12:40; Ezekiel 16:13, 19; Hosea 2:5). (3) To burn in lamps (Exodus 25:6; Matthew 25:3). Type of the Holy Spirit's unction; (2 Corinthians 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27) and illumination (Zechariah 4:11, 12)."

"The supply of grace comes not from a dead reservoir of oil, but through living "olive trees." Ordinances and ministers are channels, not the grace itself; Zechariah 4:14, "anointed one." In Hebrew, they are "sons of oil." Isaiah 5:1 reads "very fruitful hill," but in Hebrew it means "honor of the son of oil."

"The Lord Jesus has the fullness of grace from double olive trees of the Holy Spirit, so as to be at once our priest and king; He is the tree, ministers the branches, "emptying the golden oil out of themselves" for the supply of the church and to the glory of the Author of grace."

"In the sanctuary, oil served the three purposes: (1) anointing the priests and holy things, (2) as food in the bloodless offerings, (3) it kept alive the lights in "the pure candlestick"; "the lamp of God" (1 Samuel 3:3) in the holy place."

"Messiah is the Antitype "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Hebrews 1:9; Psalm 45:7); not only above us, the adopted members of God's family, but above the angels, partakers with Him, though infinitely His inferiors, in the holiness and joys of heaven. His "anointing" with "the oil of exulting joy" took place not at His baptism when He began His ministry for us, but at His triumphant completion of His work, at His ascension (Ephesians 4:8; Psalm 68:18), when He obtained the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34), to impart to us in measure."

"The oil of gladness shall be in the fullest sense His "in the day of espousals, in the day of the gladness of His heart" (Song of Solomon 3:11; Revelation 19:7). Guests were anointed with oil at feasts; so He anoints us (Psalm 23:5). The offering of oil on the altar was the offerer's acknowledgment that all his spiritual gifts were from Jehovah."

"The "beaten oil" for the sanctuary light was made from olives bruised in a mortar. So Messiahs bruising preceded His pouring out of the Spirit on us (Exodus 25:6; 27:20). The olives were sometimes "trodden" (Micah 6:15), or "pressed" in a "press," making the vats overthrow (Joel 2:24; 3:13; Haggai 2:16)."

"Meat offerings were mingled or anointed with oil (Leviticus 7:10, 12); but the sin offering and the offering of jealousy were without oil (Leviticus 7:11; Numbers 5:15). The oil indicated "gladness"; its absence sorrow and humiliation (Isaiah 61:3; Joel 2:19; Psalm 45:7)."

3. Olive Oil—Good of the Land

Next, Moses and the sons of Israel were encouraged to have the faith to enter the promised land of Canaan, for it was a good land.

"For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey.... (Deuteronomy 8:7-8 NASB)

Part of the good of the land was the fact that it was a land of olive oil, which means it had an abundance of olive trees. It becomes clear that all the spiritual truths regarding the olive tree are manifested and experienced in the good land, which under the new covenant is not about a piece of real estate on earth in the Middle East. On one level, it is about the whole earth that Jesus possesses as given to Him by His Father (Psalm 2:8). On another level, it is about receiving an immortal body in the image of the Son of God, filled with the spirit of God and shining brightly with the glory (light) of God. This is the inheritance promised to those who have the faith of Abraham; it is a life that joins heaven and earth together, and signifies the true nature of God's kingdom.

The hope of mankind is to go from the experience of Passover (applying the blood to one's heart; justification by faith), to Pentecost (receiving an earnest of the spirit; sanctification), and finally, to Tabernacles (receiving an immortal, celestial, spiritual body in the image of Christ; glorification as a son of God in the Father's kingdom (Matthew 13:38, 43; Revelation 21:7). Of course, this only comes about through faith in Jesus; those who receive His faith and believe. What a glorious gospel!

Much later, the king of Assyria tried to entice Judah to surrender to him by undermining Hezekiah by lying to the people about their true intentions. However, in his lie, the king's messenger did state a truth when he told them the olive tree was a sign of life not death.

'Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria, "Make your peace with me and come out to me, and eat each of his vine and each of his fig tree and drink each of the waters of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live and not die." (2 Kings 18:31-32 NASB)

As stated earlier, a case could be made for the olive tree being closely aligned with the tree of life. Both speak of life and both provide fruit for healing and, as such, both are conduits of life to all who partake of the oil pressed from its fruit, which signifies the spirit of God that gives life, and both are essential blessings to all the nations.

4. Olive Wood—Doors of the Inner Sanctuary

Next, when Solomon built the house of the Lord, he used olive wood for the doors to the inner sanctuary or the most holy place. He then had cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers carved into the wood and had it overlaid with gold.

For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood, the lintel and five-sided doorposts. So he made two doors of olive wood, and he carved on them carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread the gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. So also he made for the entrance of the nave four-sided doorposts of olive wood and two doors of cypress wood; the two leaves of the one door turned on pivots, and the two leaves of the other door turned on pivots. He carved on it cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold evenly applied on the engraved work. (1 Kings 6:31-35 NASB)

It is significant that the cherubim were carved into olive wood.

The cherubim were stationed in the garden of Eden to guard the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). They covered the mercy seat that was placed in the most holy place of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:20). The Lord dwelled between them (Exodus 25:22). They were associated with the brightness of the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel 1). They were in the midst of and around the throne and glory of God (Revelation 4:6), constantly joining in with other living creatures of the heavenly host in the adoration of God. They are depicted as in perpetual motion, continually crying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty"; meaning God would not remain in one physical temple on earth made of stone and wood, but that through His Son He would take up residence in a people that will fill the whole earth and beyond. This new temple that is still under construction will have no bounds in heaven and on earth.

Obviously, there is much associated with the cherubim; but, in reference to the olive tree, we see life, not only in the garden of Eden but also in the most holy place, at the mercy seat, and especially around the throne of glory. Also, the fact that the olive wood was overlaid with gold signifies the very life of the Lord; divine life of the one who is the door and the life.

So, olive wood symbolizes Christ the door and the life. Only through Him does anyone enter into eonian and immortal life and come into the presence of God, which is symbolized by the most holy place. And, we might add, all of this speaks of entering into the kingdom of God.

5. Olive Plants—Children Born of the Olive Tree

A Song of Ascents. How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways. When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. The LORD bless you from Zion, and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Indeed, may you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel! (Psalm 128:1-6 NASB)

Those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways are likened to olive trees that bear children likened to olive plants or sucklings, not full-grown trees. In other words, one who is blessed of the Lord is fruitful. When Elohim created Adam from the soil of the earth and fashioned Eve from his rib, He blessed them to be fruitful and multiply; a blessing that was repeated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Perhaps, we could say that this was the genesis of the olive tree with Adam and Eve being types. They were to partake of the tree of life and be fruitful in bringing forth olive plants, progeny in their own image (the image of God) prior to their fall.

Thus, a man who fears the Lord is an olive tree, and he will be blessed with olive plant children, destined to grow into trees bearing much fruit as they live to a ripe old age.

But there is one more, perhaps greater, application dealing with the kingdom. Speaking to the bad figs of Judah that were broken off the cultivated olive tree, Jesus said: *Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation, producing the fruit of it* (Matthew 21:43). The fruit He was and is looking for is the twelve fruit of the spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, righteousness, truth, and holiness (Romans 6:22; 14:17; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9), which reveals the character of the kingdom of God.

6. Olive Tree—Choicest of the Trees

Now, in one of the oldest parables in scripture, as recorded in Judges, nations are symbolized as trees. In the parable, the olive tree or olive nation is the most prominent since the other trees turn to it first.

"Once the trees 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, 'Shall I leave my fatness with which God and men are honored, and go to wave over the trees?' (Judges 9:8-9 NASB)

Symbolically, the olive tree nation is characterized by fatness, which signifies the choicest of all that can and should be offered to the Lord. Thus, as a nation, the olive tree signifies the choicest of nations.

The choicest are expressed many ways, for example, the fatness of the earth, the fat [firstfruits] of the wheat, and the fat of the mighty (Genesis 28:28; Deuteronomy 32:14 [KJV]; Numbers 18:12 [footnote: literally *fat*]; 2 Samuel 1:22).

Further, the fat was closely associated with the blood in sacrifices, as it was considered the richest part and special to God (Leviticus 3:16, 17). Given this, the olive tree identifies with the ultimate sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross of Calvary for the sin of the world.

Carrying this over to the olive nation, we could say that the olive tree nation is one that has been pressed in the press (trials, suffering) of life to produce the anointing oil of Christ to light the world with the light of the world. If indeed we suffer with Him, we may also be glorified with Him (Romans 8:17). This is the nation of God that produces fruit for God, the transformed Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) made up of those with the same faith as Abraham. In some respects, this nation could be traced all the way back to Abraham, the father of a multitude of nations—especially the one nation that became the true, spiritual Israel of God (not the one that failed) that continues to grow into a mighty tree in Christ Jesus.

7. Green Olive Tree—House of Israel in Covenant Relationship

As we move through scripture and build upon the significance of the olive tree, we come to two references to the *green* olive tree, which add another dimension to its meaning.

First, David wrote of being a green olive tree in the house of the Lord, which refers to constantly dwelling in the presence of the Lord, which can only be done *in spirit*, through the holy spirit.

The righteous will see and fear, and will laugh at him, saying, "Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and was strong in his evil desire." But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever. I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it, and I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones. (Psalm 52:6-9 NASB)

David was a man according to the heart of God, who did God's will (1 Samuel 13:14; Psalm 89:20; Acts 13:22). The Lord spoke of the king of Israel: *My servant David who kept My commandments, and who walked after Me with all his heart, to do only that which is right in My eyes* (1 Kings 14:8 LITV).

Without any doubt, it could be said of David, the king of Israel, that he had an intimate, heart-to-heart covenant relationship with the Lord, and this relationship is likened to a green olive tree in the house of God, which is synonymous with entering into the kingdom of God.

Second, in bringing judgment upon the house of Israel and the house of Judah, the Lord reminded the whole house of Israel (all 12 tribes of Judah and Israel) that He gave them the name *green olive tree*. This was not a Jewish tree; it was an Israelite tree.

The LORD called your name, "A green olive tree, beautiful in fruit and form"; with the noise of a great tumult He has kindled fire on it, and its branches are worthless. (Jeremiah 11:16 NASB)

In other words, the Lord named them a green olive tree or, we could say, an olive nation. When the nation remained in covenant relationship with the Lord as His kingdom nation, they were beautiful in fruit and form. However, Israel broke that covenant, and they lost their beauty and identity as a green olive tree. The restoration of Israel began with the cross and is now known as

the church of God, the true Israel of God. Hosea prophesied that Israel's beauty will be like the olive tree (Hosea 14:6).

When the sons of Israel came out of Egypt and arrived at Mount Sinai in Arabia, Moses went up on the mountain and the Lord told him to warn the sons of Israel.

'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Exodus 19:5-6 NASB)

Unfortunately, after the glory and peaceful years of Solomon's kingdom when the tribes were split into Israel (northern kingdom of 10 tribes) and Judah (southern kingdom of 2 tribes plus the Levites), they went after other gods and broke God's covenant.

"They have turned back to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers." (Jeremiah 11:10 NASB)

It is in this context that the Lord told them that they had been called a green olive tree. However, in breaking the covenant with God, their branches became worthless, except for use as kindling wood for a fire, metaphorically speaking. They were no longer a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians in 745-721 BC and scattered among the nations, losing their national identity as the house of Israel; a loss that exists to this day. Judah was taken captive by the Babylonians in 604-534 BC; however, a remnant returned to Jerusalem as the fig tree of Judah, which was pruned of the bad figs from 33-73 AD to become the good fig tree of the true church (Jeremiah 24; Matthew 21:19-21, 43; 24:32; Luke 13:6-7; 21:29; John 15:1-11) and to continue on as the cultivated olive tree.

In these two green olive tree citations we see two extremes, both of which refer to a covenant relationship with the Lord and entering into His kingdom; one was kept and blessed, the other was broken and cursed. As we will see, the latter was broken off from the cultivated olive tree.

Now, let us consider Nehemiah 8:15 followed by Romans 11, for they both refer to two types of olive branches (dual metaphor).

8. Olive and Wild Olive Branches—Prophetic Sign of Tabernacles

When Nehemiah and a remnant of Judah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple (534-515 BC), Ezra the scribe was asked to bring forth the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given Israel. On the first day of the seventh month the Law began to be read to the people. On the second day they found written in the words of the law that in the seventh month they were to live in booths, celebrating the feast of booths or tabernacles (Nehemiah 8:1-2, 14) as a sign of coming out of the wilderness and into the promised land. As a reminder, as Stephen testified before the high priest, he referred to Israel as *the ecclesia (church) in the wilderness*

(Acts 7:38). This should cause some pause for those who teach *replacement theology*. We who believe today are in a long line of those who had faith all the way back to Abraham.

So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of other leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."
(Nehemiah 8:15 NASB)

Olive branches weren't the only branches used to make the booths, for the myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees were included; however, the olive tree was the only one identified with two types of branches, one was simply called *olive branches* and the other *wild olive branches*.

It appears that the olive branches came from the domesticated or, as Paul called them (Romans 11:17, 24), cultivated olive trees, and the wild olive branches came from trees that appear in the wild, not in the cultivated orchards. The NASB uses the term *wild olive branches* but other translations refer to them as *branches from the oil trees*, *branches from beautiful wood*, *pine branches*, or *branches of field olives*.

As seen in the next section, the field olives most accurately and prophetically describe the wild olives that began to be grafted into the Lord's cultivated olive tree, especially after Calvary, nearly 600 years after Nehemiah.

However, we must not lose sight of the prophetic significance of the relationship between the two types of olive branches and tabernacles. The fact that Nehemiah referred to cultivated and wild olive branches in reference to tabernacles is quite significant, for it speaks of God bringing both together in the experience of tabernacles (booths) that comes in the next age, when the Lord's chosen people put on immortal spirit-animated bodies—new booths from heaven.

For all who are under the new covenant (i.e., Christians), tabernacles is about sonship and coming into a new dwelling out of heaven or, as Paul wrote, to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven (out of, not in heaven), so that what is mortal will be swallowed up in life (2 Corinthians 5:2, 4). Tabernacles is about putting off mortality and putting on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53). Again, it is not about a piece of real estate on earth.

As an aside, some believe that the heavenly body is already within the believer; it is the inner man that grows from the inside out until that which is mortal is swallowed up.

On one level, Nehemiah's prophetic olive branches speak of the one new man that came about when Christ broke down the dividing wall between the commonwealth of Israel and all the nations [*ethnos*] on earth (Ephesians 2:11-22). On another level, it speaks of a remnant of grace from the Israelites that were saved and continued on as the cultivated olive tree. And yet, on another level, it speaks of the lost sheep of the house of Israel as wild olive branches in the field of the world grafted back into the cultivated olive tree, as well as all the nations ultimately being grafted into the cultivated olive tree. All are destined to come under the new covenant, all in relationship to the rich root of the cultivated olive tree, which is Christ. So, all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26).

9. Cultivated and Wild Olive Trees—Pruning and Grafting

Paul picked up Nehemiah's theme of the olive branches and wild olive branches in his epistle to the Romans in which he referred to a remnant of grace being saved from among his fellow Israelites, with the majority broken off [pruned] from the cultivated olive tree.

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree... For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? (Romans 11:17, 24 NASB)

Interestingly, Paul did not explain the meaning of the cultivated olive tree, as if his readers understood what it meant, and yet, it is not specifically explained in scripture either. For that understanding, we must study all references to the olive tree, as is being done in this study.

For a more in-depth study of Romans 11, please see the earlier noted link for *Fullness of the Nations*.

10. Zechariah's Vision of Two Olive Trees and Two Branches

Now, let us consider Zechariah's vision of two olive trees and its branches, and a lampstand. His vision most parallels John's vision of the two witnesses but with some differences. Zechariah saw olive branches; whereas, John did not record that he saw any—and John saw two lampstands, which were not described in any detail; whereas, Zechariah only saw one, which was described with some detail.

He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side." (Zechariah 4:2-3 NASB)

As the prophet pondered this vision, he was puzzled over it, so he inquired of the angel.

Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, my lord?" So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." (Zechariah 4:4-5 NASB)

We are not told directly which part of the vision the prophet was questioning. Surely, Zechariah understood the meaning of the lampstand, but it seems that he was puzzled about the olive trees and their branches, for later he inquired more directly a second time when the angel obviously did not answer his question to his satisfaction.

Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?" And I answered the second time and said to him, "What are the two olive branches

which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?" (Zechariah 4:11-12 NASB)

Zechariah's Two Branches

Because the angel's answer to the first question is more involved and germane to this study, we will consider the answer to this second question first.

So he answered me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth." (Zechariah 4:13-14 NASB)

The *two branches* of the olive tree were identified as *two anointed ones*, which, contextually, refer to Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, who were raised up to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple that had been destroyed when Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity.

A remnant of Jews had returned to Jerusalem along with them to do the work. However, they faced many challenges in their attempt to fulfill God's word. They were challenged by foes from within and without. Within Judah there was lethargy, smallness of vision, and lack of faith. Without Judah there were "mighty mountains" of opposition and evil cunning of the enemies of God—obstacles that could not be overcome by human power. Nevertheless, they were urged by the Lord to be strong and complete the task. The Lord Himself would reduce the mountain of opposition to level ground, and the victory would be won by the Spirit of God and by His grace, not by human power.

In the midst of all of this, Haggai was raised up to speak a word to the people to consider their ways. They heard and obeyed, and the Lord promised that His spirit would abide in their midst. The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the spirit of Joshua, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts (Haggai 1:14). They were a remnant of grace.

But also note that Haggai prophesied in a way that points to a day far greater than the day of Joshua and Zerubbabel.

"Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison? But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of hosts. 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD

of hosts. 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts." (Haggai 2:2-9 NASB)

A glory is to come to the house of the Lord that is far greater than the former glory, and it will come about as the Lord of hosts shakes the heavens and the earth. It will come "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts." When it is finished, a shout will go forth, "Grace, grace to it!" (Zechariah 4:6-7). In that day, there will be true, everlasting peace.

An argument could be made that Haggai's shaking occurred in 70 AD when the latter house built upon Moses was literally shaken to its very foundations as the Lord sent the Roman army to utterly destroy Jerusalem and the temple—thus, making obsolete Judaism and all it stood for. The much better had come built upon the foundation of God's Son, the final sacrifice and true temple of God. At Messiah Jesus' consummational arrival the word will go forth once again: *Grace, grace to it!*

Returning to the context: Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor of Judah were identified as the two olive tree *branches* beside the golden lampstand serving as conduits for the oil that was coming forth from the tree. They were the anointed witnesses of that day, for they stood by the Lord of the whole earth. But keep in mind that they were branches of the olive trees, meaning they came forth from it; however, they were not olive trees per se.

They were simply conduits of the oil of the tree—the spirit of grace that was needed to serve the Lord in the rebuilding project during times of trial and conflict. Joshua and Zerubbabel were "sons of oil" ministering to the Lord and to the remnant that had returned to Jerusalem.

As Fausset stated in explaining the oil: *The supply of grace comes not from a dead reservoir of oil, but through living "olive trees." Ordinances and ministers are channels, not the grace itself. "The Lord Jesus has the fullness of grace from double olive trees of the Holy Spirit, so as to be at once our priest and king; He is the tree, ministers the branches, "emptying the golden oil out of themselves" for the supply of the church and to the glory of the Author of grace.*

Finally, these sons of oil were types of the builders of the true church of God, representing both the priestly and the kingly role of the conquerors of Christ who, like Christ, are according to the order of Melchizedek, the king of Salem (king of peace) and the priest of the Most High God (Hebrews 5:5-6; 7). They are types of the sons of God that are being built up as New Jerusalem, which is God's present-day building project. *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth* (Revelation 5:10 KJV).

Zechariah's Two Olive Trees

Now, let us return to the first question Zechariah asked of the angel.

Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, my lord?" So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." (Zechariah 4:4-5 NASB)

What was Zechariah referring to when he asked about "*these*"? In other words, what was he referring to in the vision in his question to the angel?

Zechariah first told the angel that he saw the lampstand. Next, he saw the two olive trees. Since they are the last subject noun of verse 3 before he asked the question, it is possible that the prophet was referring to them and not so much the lampstand or its bowls. Another indication is that Zechariah inquired about "*these*," meaning more than one. Of course, he could have been referring back to all that he saw, so we need to be open to the possibility.

The he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'" (Zechariah 4:6-7 NASB)

Interestingly, the angel said the two olive trees signified a specific word of the Lord as an encouragement to Zerubbabel; the Lord was in the work the governor was called to do and that it would be completed by His spirit and by His grace. This is the most obvious way to explain the answer the angel gave to Zechariah in reference to the two trees, but perhaps there is another way to view it that has greater spiritual significance.

Pull back a bit from these two verses; what four words do you see? How about the words *word*, *Spirit*, *grace*, and mountain?

Let's break it apart.

First, the angel had asked the prophet if he knew what they were—meaning the olive trees. In explaining the olive trees, the angel first said, *This is the word of the Lord*. Then, the angel specifically said the word had to do with the spirit of the Lord, and he summed it up *with grace, grace*.

The *word* and *grace* go hand-in-hand. In fact, His word is about His grace; or as the book of Acts records, it is called the word of His grace.

Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3 NASB)

"And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:32 NASB)

Of course, our Lord Jesus is the word, and He is full of grace.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NASB)

Second, the word of the Lord is also likened to a sword.

And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17 NASB)

As the epistle to the Hebrews tells us, the sword of the spirit is sharper than any physical sword of man.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NASB)

It is this sword that will settle all things between God and man, which leads to the next point.

Third, nestled between the words *spirit* and *grace* is the word *mountain*, which scripturally signifies a *kingdom*. What will bring down the kingdoms of this world and usher in the kingdom of Christ? Will the kingdoms of men come down by the physical sword, or by the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God? They will fall by the surgical hand of God wielding the sword of the spirit.

Putting all this together, the spiritual emphasis of Zechariah is not on Zerubbabel per se but on *the word, the spirit, the grace, and the kingdom*.

We could sum it up like this: The spirit of the Lord spoke the word of the Lord, which is the word of His grace and of His truth, and this is what will bring forth the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Of course, all this speaks of our Lord Jesus who is the word and who is full of grace and truth and who is the king of the kingdom of God. He is also the high priest ministering in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of His people. In other words, He is the King-Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6; 7:1-3).

He is all of these! And from the mouth of the King of kings will come the two-edged sword to divide and conquer.

From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. (Revelation 19:15 NASB)

All of scripture, both old and new, both Hebrew and Greek, reveal the Son in types, shadows, and in reality, or antitype as He is explained and manifested, especially throughout the new testament. After His resurrection but before His final ascension, Jesus said...

"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44 NASB)

The first book of the Bible starts with God the creator, and the last book of the Bible starts with *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. The creator God is none other than Jesus, the Son of God, and the word that was in the beginning who spoke "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3).

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16-17 NASB)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5 NASB)

Obviously, volumes could be filled in an attempt to reveal the word of God as given to us in the written word, but this is way beyond the scope of this particular study. The point that needs to be written on our hearts is that the olive trees are intimately connected not only to the written word of God but also to His Son who is the word.

The olive trees signify the word of God that presses out of its fruit the fatness of the olive oil that flows forth as the life of the tree anointing its branches to fill the lamps to fill the earth with the light of the world. As Jesus said: *You are the light of the world* (Matthew 5:14).

Now, all of this raises another question: Why were there two olive trees; why not just one? The simple answer is because they serve as a witness, for the law of the witness requires two or three witnesses to confirm a matter (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).

Given the angel's answer to Zechariah, the two witnesses could be the spirit and grace, or the spirit and the word, or the spirit and the word of His grace. It is quite difficult to separate these, so, in a sense, these three combinations are all witnesses.

In a much broader sense, there is another possibility.

The Old Testament and the New Testament

In his *People's New Testament, Commentary on the Two Witnesses*, Barton Warren Johnson (1833-1894), an American minister and educator, suggested that the entire Bible, divided into the old and the new testaments, could be the two witnesses of Revelation 11. The witnesses are taken up in the next section; but, since it dovetails the above, it is best to deal with it at this point.

Brother Johnson did not make a distinction between the two olive trees and the two lampstands; he simply grouped them together as the two witnesses. Whether this is the best way to interpret the two witnesses, I leave for others to decide. If we take his insight about the two witnesses as referring to the two olive trees, I believe he provides some value to our understanding, even if he does not bring us into complete clarity on how to interpret the witnesses.

In this regard, there are a number of schools of thought held by commentators regarding how to interpret Revelation—either along the lines of eschatology (end-times), history, symbology, or allegory. Obviously, how one views the witnesses comes from the interpretative approach taken for John's vision. In this article, I purposely refrain from applying any one of these schools of thought.

The following is an extract from Johnson's commentary on the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

"There are a number of facts recorded here which must be true of witnesses, and the business of the interpreter is simply to ascertain whether there is anything of which they are true and which would correspond with these facts.

(1) The first one of the fourteen facts I have noted is that there were only *two* witnesses. I have lying before me an open Bible. I find that the book of Revelation is in what is called the *New Testament*. The whole Bible is divided into two great divisions, which are called the *Old* and *New Testaments*. There are, then *two* Testaments. Note further that the term *testament* is a word that signifies to bear *witness*. It is derived from a Latin word, *testor*, which means "I testify." The two testaments, then, imply *two* witnesses. We have, therefore, in the Old Testament and New Testament, two witnesses, whether they are those described by John or not.

(2) These two witnesses of the Bible each testify of the Lord. He said to the Jews concerning the Old Testament Scriptures, "They testify of me." The Apostle John says concerning his life of the Savior, "These things were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." One of these witnesses testifies of the Lord in type and prophecy; the other testifies by its history of facts.

(3) The two witnesses are the *Lord's*. He gives them their power and they testify of Him. Thus far the two witnesses of the Bible correspond exactly with the two witnesses of the prophecy.

(4) The two witnesses of the Word are fed with the oil of inspiration and give forth light.

(5) These two witnesses speak by inspiration, or "prophecy."

(6) Passing over some marks of minor importance, we come to the statement that the two witnesses have power to destroy. The Word of God can save and it can destroy. It can justify and it can condemn. In the Judgment the fate of men will be decided by the Word. If the reader will turn to Revelation 19:11-15, and read what is written of the conquests, triumphs, and destruction by the Word of God, he will require nothing more upon this point. In fact, everything stated of the power of the two witnesses has been affirmed of the Word of God.

(7) It is said that for 1260 days the witness shall prophesy in sackcloth. Every reader knows that for ages the Bible was forbidden to the people and locked up in the dead languages. It was even a crime, for which many suffered death, to have the Bible in the tongue of the

people. It is proper that we should consider here this period of mourning in which, if I am correct, the witness of the Old Testament and New Testament shall be given in sorrow."

The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God

I would add to the above by referencing some scripture that specifically speaks of the nature of the word of God, which we know includes the law, the words spoken through the prophets, and the psalms. Without doubt, what follows explains some of the work performed by the two witnesses that is especially signified by the two olive trees.

First, the word of God is likened to fire, or we could say, the fire of God is the law of God. This is important, for fire comes forth from the mouths of the two witnesses.

"Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" (Jeremiah 23:29 NASB)

The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. (Psalm 29:7 NASB)

"Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words [commands, law] from the midst of the fire." (Deuteronomy 4:36 NASB)

From his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deuteronomy 33:2 KJV)

God's word is His law, and it is a fiery law. In fact, God's throne is described as a blazing flame of fire. Both Daniel and John were given visions of the judgment of God going forth from His throne. Compare Daniel 7:9-10 and Revelation 20:11-15 and you will discover that Daniel saw the throne of God ablaze with fire, along with a river of fire flowing from the throne, and John saw a lake of fire before the throne. In other words, the river became a lake. Putting the two visions together reveals that the source of the fire is the throne. In fact, the throne is ablaze with fire, which speaks of the law emanating from God Himself.

Further confirmation of all this comes through Jesus Himself.

For the mystery of lawlessness already is working, only he is holding back now, until it comes out of the midst. And then "the Lawless One" will be revealed, "whom" "the Lord" "will consume" "by the spirit of His mouth," and will bring to nought by the brightness of His presence. Isa. 11:4 (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 LITV)

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the

wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-16 NASB)

These verses do not say that fire comes from His mouth; however, we do know that His word is like fire, so we can assume that, figuratively speaking, the Lord's words are like fire that consumes. Without doubt, we know that what proceeds from the mouth of the Lord is His word that is like a sharp sword. Again, the epistle to the Hebrews makes the point for us.

For the Word of God is living, and powerfully working, and sharper than every two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; and there is no creature unrevealed before Him; but all things are naked and laid open to His eyes, with whom is our account. (Hebrews 4:12-13 LITV)

Paul aptly described the word as the sword of the Spirit.

Also, take "the helmet of salvation," and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; Isa. 59:17 LXX-Isa. 11:4; MT-Isa. 49:2; LXX and MT-Hos. 6:5 through all prayer and petition, praying at all times in the Spirit, and watching to this same thing with all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints. (Ephesians 6:17-18 LITV)

It is a rather sad commentary of our day that nations that have a Christian history, like the USA, think nothing of taking up the physical sword of man to deal with their enemies, rather than taking up the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Perhaps the physical sword was necessary or allowed under the old covenant. However, no place in scripture are we told to take up the physical sword under the new covenant. Even Jesus chided Peter for taking up the sword and cutting off the ear of the slave (John 18:10-11).

Besides, in speaking of the apparent Jews that rejected Him as the king of Judah and usurped His throne, Jesus warned: *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force* (Matthew 11:12).

Finally, Paul made it abundantly clear that our battle is not fought with the physical sword that can only kill the flesh because our war is not with the flesh but with spiritual fortresses and forces.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6 NASB)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 NASB)

11. Olive Trees—Witnesses

Now, with all this background, we come to the last reference to olive trees and the one that most closely aligns with Zechariah. It comes from John's Patmos vision recorded in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.

"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. (Revelation 11:3-4 NASB)

As stated already, I am purposely avoiding applying an interpretative approach to Revelation. Whether the two witnesses are literal human prophets or symbols of some greater meaning, I leave for others to debate. But what is clear is that John's vision employs Zechariah's imagery, along with imagery from Exodus.

Clearly, the scene portrayed is limited in time (1,260 day) and pertains to judgment and repentance (sackcloth). Outwardly, their ministry is not positive, as they stand against enemies and devour them until they themselves are killed and raised up by the Lord. It would appear that they prophesy in a time that is best called a time of trial, persecution, and tribulation. The key to our subject at hand is the fire that comes out of their mouth. Some might think it is literal fire, as if they are like dragons, but this is taking the literal too far in a book that is filled with symbols. The fire must be the fiery word of God. I expend some energy in explaining the fiery word in one of my articles. Rather than explaining it here, please check out this link.

See *Second Death—Lake of Fire* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art61.pdf>

The two witnesses speak forth God's word likened to a fire that devours carnal flesh. Fire is often seen as something negative, but *God is a consuming fire* and His fire is for cleansing and purifying, not for annihilation. Keeping with the flow of Zechariah, the positive side of the two olive trees most likely symbolizes the *enduring* word of His grace, the sword of His spirit that speaks forth light, life, and truth, even in times of trial, persecution, and tribulation. It stands and withstands in the darkness of the world, until it brings all into its purifying divine light, to the glory of God.

BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you. ... The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. ... Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 40:8; Psalm 119:105 NASB)

12. Mount of Olives

Finally, to close out this study, there is one loose end that speaks to the significance of the Mount of Olives (mountain of olive trees) in the life of Jesus.

Jesus often went up on the Mount of Olives to be with His Father in prayer (Luke 21:37; John 8:1). Jesus approached Jerusalem by way of the Mount of Olives as He made His descent to face the Cross of Calvary as the King of Judah and Savior of the world (Matthew 21:1; Luke 19:29, 37). He

spoke of the coming of His kingdom from the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:3). After He instituted the Lord's Supper with His disciples, Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30). He entered the garden of Gethsemane (meaning, *oil-press*) at the foot of the Mount of Olives, which was probably where the oil was pressed out of the olives taken from the surrounding hills. Here He entered into the anguish of His soul (Matthew 26:36-57). Finally, the Lord Jesus ascended back to His Father in heaven from the Mount of Olives, and He is returning to earth in like fashion (Acts 1:9-12).

Is it any wonder why the olive tree has such great spiritual meaning in the life of the true Church of Christ?

Conclusion

Christ is the root and trunk of the tree, and the branches are collectively *spiritual* Israelites, the conquerors who draw their life from Christ through His spirit, signified by olive oil. The tree speaks of the covenant relationship between Christ the head and His body that live by the word of His grace and shine forth as His light in the world and in the midst.

The natural olive tree grows best in the direct sun, is suited for rocky calcareous subsoil, and its leaves are leathery and silvery green, suggestive of "tenacious strength."

The spiritual olive tree, the true church of God, *spiritual* Israel, grows best in the light of the sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2), the Son of God, and thrives in the rocky places of adversity; the trials, tribulations, and even persecutions of life. No matter what comes her way, even if she is struck and beaten down like an olive in the press of life, just as she has been in various periods of her history, she has come back to life stronger than before. The more the church has been persecuted, the more she has thrived and the more the oil and fatness have come forth. She is tenacious. Consider the millions of Christians on earth today.

The natural olive tree is very hardy and lives a long time due to its drought, disease, and fire resistance, due, in large part, to its extensive and robust root system that is capable of regenerating itself even if the trunk is destroyed by fire.

The spiritual olive tree of the true church resists all that comes against her; she will reign forever, for her robust root system and trunk is the very creator of life itself, the one who called life into being by His word and by His grace and who will bring peace and life to all the nations, all mankind, even all of creation. This is New Jerusalem, God's building project, which is a holy temple in the Lord, being built into a dwelling of God in spirit—a one new man conformed to the image of the Son of God (Ephesians 2:15, 19-22).

And, finally, all of this speaks mightily of the kingdom of God that rules in hearts today but will rule ALL the nations beginning in the next age of tabernacles when the true sons of God, the king-priests according to the order of Melchizedek, are manifested to rule and reign with Christ over the nations in the earthly realm and to minister to God in the spirit realm.

The following chart summarizes the primary signification of the olive tree.

Olive...	Symbology	Scripture	
Leaf	Life; Renewal; Revival	Genesis 8:10-11	
Oil	Holy Anointing (service, consecration)	Exodus 30:23-25	
	Fuel for Light	Exodus 25:6	
	Good of the Promised Land (Tabernacles)	Deuteronomy 8:7-8	
	Grace & the Spirit of God	Zechariah 4:6-7, 12	
Wood	Entering the Presence of God through the Door and the Life of Christ	1 Kings 6:31-35 John 10:7, 9	
Plants	Fruitfulness (children)	Psalms 128:1-6	
	Fruit of the kingdom (of the Spirit, character)	Matthew 21:43	
Branches (cultivated, wild/field)	Lost sheep of the house of Israel	Ezekiel 34:2, 11, 16 Matthew 13:38, 44; 15:24	
	Anointed ones	Zechariah 4:11-14	
	Conduits of His Word, Grace, Spirit	Zechariah 4	
	Remnant of Grace	Romans 11:1-5; 19-22	
	Nations (<i>ethnos</i>)	Romans 11:12, 25	
	Conquerors	Revelation 2, 3	
	Tabernacle booths (sons of <i>spiritual</i> Israel)	Nehemiah 8:13-18	
	Glorification of the sons of God	Romans 8:18-23 1 Thessalonians 1:10 Hebrews 2:10	
	Tree	Covenant Relationship (House of God)	Exodus 19:5-6
		Fatness; Choicest, Beautiful Nation	Judges 9:8-9; Hosea 14:6
Kingdom of priests, holy nation		Psalms 52:6-9	
House of Israel (all 12 tribes)		Jeremiah 11:10, 16	
<i>Spiritual</i> Israel, <i>New Jerusalem</i>		Galatians 6:14-16 Revelation 21, 22	
Kingdom of God (mountain)		Zechariah 4:7	
Witness of His Word, Grace, Spirit	Zechariah 4:11-14		
Witness of the Kingdom of God	Revelation 11:3-4, 15		
Root	Christ ... <i>I AM</i> ...		
	The Root of David (i.e., the Kingdom)	Revelation 22:16 Isaiah 11:10; 27:6 Romans 11:17	
	The Word of Life	1 John 1:1	
	The Resurrection, Life, Light, Door	John 11:25; 8:12; 10:7, 9	
	Full of Grace, Truth, the Holy Spirit	John 1:14; Luke 4:1	
	King-Priest (Melchizedek)	Hebrews 5,7	
	The Anointed One (the Christ, Messiah)		
	Abrahamic Covenant	Genesis 12:1-3; 17:2-6; 18:17-18	