

~OLIVE (392)

[Hebrew, *za'yith*, Greek, *e-lai'a*]

.. Grafting

.. Groves And Presses

.. Figurative Use

- The **olive tree** was unquestionably one of the most valuable plants in Bible times, of equal importance with the vine and the fig tree.
- Once upon a time the trees went to anoint a king over them. So they said to the **olive tree**; Do be king over us. (**Judges 9:8**)
- But the **olive tree** said to them; Must I give up my fatness with which they glorify God and men, and must I go to wave over the other trees? (**Judges 9:9**)
- Then the trees said to the fig tree; You come, be queen over us. (**Judges 9:10**)
- But the fig tree said to them; Must I give up my sweetness and my good produce, and must I go to wave over the other trees? (**Judges 9:11**)
- Next the trees said to the vine; You come, be queen over us. (**Judges 9:12**)
- In turn the vine said to them; Must I give up my new wine that makes God and men rejoice, and must I go to wave over the trees? (**Judges 9:13**)
- At that he said to him; Did not my heart itself go along just as the man turned to get down off his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to accept silver or to accept garments or **olive groves** or vineyards or sheep or cattle or menservants or maidservants? (**2 Kings 5:26**)
- Although the fig tree itself may not blossom, and there may be no yield on the vines, the work of the **olive tree** may actually turn out a failure, and the terraces themselves may actually produce no food, the flock may actually be severed from the pen, and there may be no herd in the enclosures. (**Habakkuk 3:17**)

- My brothers, a fig tree cannot produce **olives** or a vine figs, can it? Neither can salt water produce sweet water. (**James 3:12**)
- It appears early in the Bible record, following the Flood it was an **olive leaf** brought back by a dove that indicated to Noah the recession of the waters.
- Later on the dove came to him about the time of evening and, look! There was an **olive leaf** freshly plucked in its bill, and so Noah got to know that the waters had abated from the earth. (**Genesis 8:11**)
- The **olive tree**, *Olea europaea*, thrives on mountain slopes of Galilee and Samaria and up in the central highlands, as well as throughout the entire Mediterranean area.
- You will come to have **olive trees** in all your territory, but you will rub yourself with no oil, because your **olives** will drop off. (**Deuteronomy 28:40**)
- With that he set fire to the torches and sent them out into the fields of standing grain of the Philistines. Thus he set on fire everything from sheaf to standing grain and the vineyards and the **olive groves**. (**Judges 15:5**)
- It flourishes in rocky, chalky soil, too dry for many other plants, and it can endure frequent droughts. At the time of the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were promised that the land into which they would come was one of **oil olives** and honey, with vineyards and **olive trees** that they did not plant.
- And houses full of all good things and that you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out that you did not hew out, vineyards and **olive trees** that you did not plant, and you shall have eaten and become satisfied. (**Deuteronomy 6:11**)
- A land of wheat and barley and vines and figs and pomegranates, a land of oil **olives** and honey. (**Deuteronomy 8:8**)
- Thus I gave you a land for which you had not toiled and cities that you had not built, and you took up dwelling in them. Vineyards and **olive groves** that you did not plant are what you are eating. (**Joshua 24:13**)

- Since the **olive** is a slow-growing tree and may take ten years or more to begin bearing good harvests, the fact that these trees were already growing was a decided advantage for the Israelites. The tree is exceptionally long-lived, producing fruit for hundreds of years, and it is suggested that some of the **olive trees** in Palestine date back more than 1,000 years.

- The **olive trees** present a refreshing view throughout Palestine, often growing on rocky hillside terraces or carpeting the valley floors. The tree may exceed 6 meters (20 feet) in height. The gnarled trunk with its ash-colored bark has a profuse branch system bearing a thick foliage of slender grayish-green leaves.

- Though not generally thought of by many as being such, the tree is an evergreen. It generally flowers about May and is covered with thousands of pale-yellow blossoms. The ease with which these flowers are blown off is mentioned in the Bible.

- He will thrust away his unripe grapes just like a vine, and cast off his blossoms just like an **olive tree**. (**Job 15:33**)

- The fruit, or **olive berry**, is green when immature but ripens into a deep purplish to black color. Harvesting is done in the autumn, **October-November**, and the ancient method of beating the tree with rods is still frequently employed.

- In case you beat your **olive tree**, you must not go over its boughs following up yourself. It should stay for the alien resident, for the fatherless boy and for the widow. (**Deuteronomy 24:20**)

- For thus it will become in the midst of the land, in among the peoples, like the beating off of the **olive tree**, like the gleaning when the grape gathering has come to an end. (**Isaiah 24:13**)

- In Bible times gleaners gathered the remaining fruit.

- And there must remain in it a gleaning as when there is a beating off of the **olive tree**, two or three ripe **olives** in the top of the branch, four or five on the fruit-bearing boughs thereof, is the utterance of Yehowah the God of Israel. (**Isaiah 17:6**)

- By nature the tree is an alternately bearing one, that is, its good harvest is followed by a slack one the following year. The fresh fruit

contains a bitter substance that is removed by soaking the **olives** in brine, and the olives are then eaten raw or pickled.

- Their chief value, however, is in their oil, which composes as much as 30 percent or more by weight of the fresh fruit. One good tree, yielding from 38 to 57 liters (10 to 15 gallons) in a year, thus could provide the proportion of fats needed in the diet of a family of five or six persons. The wood of the tree is very hard and must be seasoned for years to be of value for woodworking.
- The **olive tree** not only lives for centuries but, if cut down, will send up as many as six new shoots from its roots to develop into new trunks, and aged trees also will often perpetuate themselves in this way.
- New trees are frequently planted by using **slips** cut from a grown tree. Thus the psalmists illustration is very apt when likening the blessed man's sons to **slips** of olive trees all around your table.
- Your wife will be like a fruit-bearing vine in the innermost parts of your house. Your sons will be like **slips** of **olive trees** all around your table. (**Psalms 128:3**)

•• Grafting

- Wild **olive trees** growing on hillsides were often subjected to grafting with cuttings from the cultivated productive trees so that they would produce good fruit.
- It was quite contrary to the regular procedure, therefore, for wild stock to be grafted into a cultivated tree, inasmuch as the wild stock would continue to bear its own fruit. This heightens the force of Paul's illustration at;
- However, if some of the branches were broken off but you, although being a wild **olive**, were grafted in among them and became a sharer of the **olives root of fatness**. (**Romans 11:17**)
- Do not be exulting over the branches. If, though, you are exulting over them, it is not you that bear the root, but **the root bears you**. (**Romans 11:18**)
- You will say, then; Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. (**Romans 11:19**)

- **All right! For their lack of faith they were broken off, but you are standing by faith. Quit having lofty ideas, but be in fear. (Romans 11:20)**
- **For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. (Romans 11:21)**
- **See, therefore, God's kindness and severity. Toward those who fell there is severity, but toward you there is God's kindness, provided you remain in his kindness, otherwise, you also will be lopped off. (Romans 11:22)**
- **They also, if they do not remain in their lack of faith, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (Romans 11:23)**
- **For if you were cut out of the olive tree that is wild by nature and were grafted contrary to nature into the garden olive tree, how much rather will these who are natural be grafted into their own olive tree! (Romans 11:24)**
- **In which he likened the Gentile Christians who became part of the seed of Abraham to branches of a wild olive tree grafted into a cultivated tree to replace the unproductive branches that were broken off and that represented the rejected natural Jewish members removed from the symbolic tree for their lack of faith.**
- **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one person in union with Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)**
- **Moreover, if you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham's seed, heirs with reference to a promise. (Galatians 3:29)**
- **This act, contrary to nature, emphasizes God's undeserved kindness toward such Gentile believers, stresses the benefits resulting to them as branches of a wild olive in receiving of the fatness of the garden olives roots, and thus removes any basis for boasting on the part of these Gentile Christians.**
- **Already the ax is lying at the root of the trees, every tree, then, that does not produce fine fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matthew 3:10)**

- I am the true vine, and my Father is the cultivator. (**John 15:1**)
- Every branch in me not bearing fruit he takes away, and every one bearing fruit he cleans, that it may bear more fruit. (**John 15:2**)
- You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. (**John 15:3**)
- Remain in union with me, and I in union with you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, in the same way neither can you, unless you remain in union with me. (**John 15:4**)
- I am the vine, you are the branches. He that remains in union with me, and I in union with him, this one bears much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing at all. (**John 15:5**)
- If anyone does not remain in union with me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up, and men gather those branches up and pitch them into the fire and they are burned. (**John 15:6**)
- If you remain in union with me and my sayings remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will take place for you. (**John 15:7**)
- My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples. (**John 15:8**)
- Just as the Father has loved me and I have loved you, remain in my love. (**John 15:9**)
- If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love. (**John 15:10**)

See Also GRAFTING

•• Groves And Presses

- Conditions permitting, nearly every village in Palestine had its **olive grove**. Its failure, as when damaged by its principal enemy, the caterpillar, constituted a grave disaster for the people.
- I struck you people with scorching and mildew. There was a

- multiplying of your gardens and of your vineyards, but your fig trees and your **olive trees** the caterpillar would devour, yet you did not come back to me, is the utterance of Yehowah. (**Amos 4:9**)
- King David had valued **olive groves** in the Shephelah region.
 - And over the **olive groves** and the sycamore trees that were in the Shephelah there was Baal-hanan the Gederite, and over the oil supplies there was Joash. (**1 Chronicles 27:28**)
 - The mountain ridge to the East of Jerusalem about a Sabbath days journey distant was noted for its **olives** in King David's day and, by Zechariah's time, was already called, **the mountain of the olive trees**.
 - And David was going up by the ascent of the **Olives**, weeping as he went up, with his head covered, and he was walking barefoot, and all the people that were with him covered each one his head, and they went up weeping as they went up. (**2 Samuel 15:30**)
 - And his feet will actually stand in that day upon the **mountain of the olive trees**, which is in front of Jerusalem, on the east, and the mountain of the olive trees must be split at its middle, from the sunrising and to the west. There will be a very great valley, and half of the mountain will actually be moved to the north, and half of it to the south. (**Zechariah 14:4**)
 - And when he got near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mountain called **Mount of Olives**, he sent forth two of the disciples. (**Luke 19:29**)
 - On going out he went as customarily to the **Mount of Olives**, and the disciples also followed him. (**Luke 22:39**)
 - Then they returned to Jerusalem from a mountain called the **Mount of Olives**, which is near Jerusalem, being a Sabbath day's journey away. (**Acts of Apostles 1:12**)
 - The large number of ancient stone **olive** presses found throughout Palestine testifies to the extensive cultivation of the tree. The gardens of that time were frequently in the nature of an orchard and often contained an **olive press**.

- Thus the garden named Gethsemane, to which Jesus retired after his last supper with his disciples, draws its name from an **Aramaic** term, *gath shema-neh* meaning, **an oil press**. **Olives** were also trodden by foot at times.

- You, for your part, will sow seed, but you will not reap. You, for your part, will tread **olives**, but you will not grease yourself with oil, also sweet wine, but you will not drink wine. (**Micah 6:15**)

•• Figurative Use

- The **olive** tree is used figuratively in the Bible as a **symbol of fruitfulness, beauty, and dignity**.

- But I shall be like a luxuriant **olive tree** in God's house, I do trust in the loving-kindness of God to time indefinite, even forever. (**Psalms 52:8**)

- A luxuriant **olive tree**, pretty with fruit and in form, is what Yehowah has called your name. With sound of the great roaring, he has set a fire blazing against her, and they have broken its branches. (**Jeremiah 11:16**)

- His twigs will go forth, and his dignity will become like that of the **olive tree**, and his fragrance will be like that of Lebanon. (**Hosea 14:6**)

- Its branches were among those used in the Festival of Booths.

- And that they should make proclamation and cause a call to pass throughout all their cities and throughout Jerusalem, saying; Go out to the mountainous region and bring in **olive leaves** and the leaves of oil trees and myrtle leaves and palm leaves and the leaves of branchy trees to make booths, according to what is written. (**Nehemiah 8:15**)

- And you must take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, the fronds of palm trees and the boughs of branchy trees and poplars of the torrent valley, and you must rejoice before Yehowah your God seven days. (**Leviticus 23:40**)

- And there are two **olive trees** alongside it, one on the right side of the bowl and one on its left side. (**Zechariah 4:3**)

- And I proceeded to answer and say to him; What do these two **olive trees** on the right side of the lampstand and on its left side mean? (**Zechariah 4:11**)
- Then I answered the second time and said to him; What are the two bunches of twigs of the **olive** trees that, by means of the two golden tubes, are pouring forth from within themselves the golden liquid? (**Zechariah 4:12**)
- So he said to me; Do you not really know what these things mean? In turn I said; No, my lord. (**Zechariah 4:13**)
- Accordingly he said; These are the two anointed ones who are standing alongside the Lord of the whole earth. (**Zechariah 4:14**)
- And I will cause my two witnesses to prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days dressed in sackcloth. (**Revelation 11:3**)
- These are symbolized by the **two olive trees** and the two lampstands and are standing before the Lord of the earth. (**Revelation 11:4**)
- **Olive trees** are used as symbols of **God's anointed ones and witnesses**.