

History of the Olive Tree

The olive was one of the most valuable trees to the ancient Hebrews. It is first mentioned in Scripture when the dove returned to Noah's ark carrying an olive branch in its beak (Gen.8:11). Since that time, the olive branch has been a symbol of "peace" to the world, and we often hear the expression, "extending an olive branch" to another person as a desire for peace.

The olive also figures prominently on the seal of the United States of America. The seal pictures an olive branch with a cluster of thirteen leaves and thirteen olives. Why the number "thirteen"? Because the U.S. began with 13 colonies, and the Anglo-Saxon people of the United States are mainly descended from the "thirteenth tribe" of ancient Israel – the tribe of Ephraim, the youngest ("thirteenth") son of the patriarch Joseph!

When Israel conquered Canaan, the olive tree was a prominent feature among the flora of the land. It was described as a "land of olive oil" (Deut.8:8). The olive was a very important source of revenue to the early Israelites. It was tithed upon along with all the produce of the land (Deut.12:17).

Grafting Olives

However, it is most instructive to note that the fruit of the olive tree, in its wild state, is both small and worthless. It must be properly tended and cultivated to produce optimum fruit. To become truly prolific, the olive tree must be *grafted*, a process by which good stock is made to grow upon a wild shrub.

Speaking of the vitality of this truth, the apostle Paul wrote, comparing Israel and the Gentile nations to the olive tree. Paul wrote to the Romans, "For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 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, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, 'Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.' Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 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. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 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?" (Romans 11:16-24).

Source: <http://www.triumphpro.com/olive-tree-mystery.htm>

In Bible times, it was very common to graft olive trees. A branch from a good olive tree was taken and grafted onto a wild olive tree. The wild olive tree, called agrielaos, did not produce very good fruit. But the good cultivated olive tree, called kallielaios, did produce very good fruit. Wild olive trees would grow up and take up space with it's root system. To keep from having to cut down a tree and plant a new seedling, a branch from the good tree would be grafted onto the wild tree. This good branch would then produce fruit while getting nourishment from the wild tree root system. Several branches would be grafted onto a wild tree.

In Romans 11:17 we read, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree."

God was using the grafting process to make a very important point. Instead of grafting a good branch onto a bad tree, God took a bad branch and grafted it onto a good tree. This was opposite of the way the first century people grafted olive trees. God had a good tree with a good root system. The Israelite nation was the tree with the root system of the patriarchal law, mosaical law, and the new law. The Gentiles were represented by the wild olive tree. God took the wild olive tree, the Gentiles, and grafted them into the good tree and it's root system. Source:

http://www.oldpaths.org/Classes/Children/WC/Stories/wc06_15.html

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom [The Holy Spirit in The Lion's Heart], and the man that getteth understanding [The Mind of Christ].¹⁴ For the merchandise of it [The Holy Spirit] is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.¹⁵ She [The Holy Spirit] is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her [The Holy Spirit].¹⁶ Length of days is in her [The Holy Spirit's] right hand; and in her [The Holy Spirit's] left hand riches and honour [glory from God – esteem or dignity from God – see the essay “The Spirit”].¹⁷ Her [The Holy Spirit's] ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her [The Holy Spirit's] paths are peace.¹⁸ She [The Holy Spirit] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her [The Holy Spirit]. Proverbs 3

⁷ Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.⁸ For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. Jeremiah 17

¹⁶ For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.¹⁷ And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;¹⁸ Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Romans 11

source: the essay “The Spirit of Wisdom” @ www.hopeishere.com