

THE OLIVE TREE & THE ROOT AND BRANCHES OF YOUR FAITH

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Do you know anything about your spiritual or religious family tree? We're not talking about what religious denomination your grandma belonged to. We're talking about long before then—back 2000 years. "I don't care about my roots," you may say. "I'm saved and 'going to heaven,' that's all I care about." Well, your Heavenly Father cares a bout your roots! The Bible teaches that there is a spiritual family tree—an olive tree—that has deep roots and *only* those who come from that tree will be in YHWH's eternal kingdom. Are you now ready to know about your spiritual family tree? Then please read on.

—**In Romans 11:17-24 the Apostle Paul talks about an olive tree.** According to Paul, this olive tree has both Jewish and Gentile branches. He goes on to say that the Gentile branches have been grafted into the olive tree. And then he says in verse 18, speaking to the Gentile "branches," **You do not support the root, but the root supports you.** The "you" here is referring to the "Gentile, or non-Jewish" branches. If you are a believer in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah then you are part of that olive tree. But who or what is that olive tree? Let's let the Bible tell us who or what the olive tree represents:

—THE OLIVE TREE = ISRAEL:

•**Jer. 11:16—The LORD called thy name** [referring to the whole nation of Israel, both northern and southern kingdoms], **A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.**

•**Hos. 14:6—His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree** [referring to the people or nation of Israel], **and his smell as Lebanon His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.**

•**Ps. 52:8—But I am like a green olive tree** [referring to King David, a Jewish believer] **in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.**

—**IS THERE ONE OLIVE TREE OR TWO OLIVE TREES? Is there any place in Scripture which speaks of two separate and distinct olive trees:** a Jewish olive tree and a Gentile olive tree? Not a one!

Or we could ask the question in another way: Does Scripture in any place talk about a Jewish or Israelite Church and a non-Jewish, or non-Israelite or Gentile Church with the two being totally separate and distinct from each other? Again, not in a single place!

Now let's ask a third question: Most of us believe that when Messiah Yeshua returns he will be marrying his bride, the Church and they will live happily ever after in his kingdom. So let's ask this question: if there are

two churches as many Bible teachers purport—a Jewish church and a Christian one—doesn't this mean that Yeshua will have to marry two churches or two brides: a Jewish one and a Christian one? If so, wouldn't that make him a polygamist? The Bible nowhere teaches this, yet this is the logical conclusion of dispensational teaching which says that there are two separate churches: a Jewish and a Gentile one. Yet Scripture plainly states that Yeshua came to make one new man in himself, that the middle wall of partition would be abolished between Jew and Gentile and that both would become one in him (Eph. 2:11-16). This is stated in Ephesians 2 where Paul goes on to tell the Ephesian believers that **in time past you were Gentiles, that you were without Messiah, being aliens from citizenship in the nation of Israel [which is the Olive Tree] and strangers from the covenants of promise, without God and without hope in this world.** He goes on to say in the same passage that they are no longer Gentiles but that they have become one new man with the Jewish believers. This is exactly what Paul is saying in Romans 11 when he says that the wild Gentile branches would be grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel. Didn't Yeshua himself say that **salvation is of the Jews** (John 4:22)?

Let's be absolutely clear at this point. Nowhere does the Bible teach that the Christian church would become a separate entity independent from its Jewish roots. This theological concept does not exist anywhere in the New Testament. This concept was hatched up by some Christian theologian a long time ago in attempts to discredit the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and to separate the Christian church from the olive tree of Israel. But Scripture says that this is impossible to do since there is only one olive tree and it is into this one olive tree that both Jews and those of the nations must be grafted.

You may say, "So what, I don't care about my roots. I'm saved and I know Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I know that when I die I'm going to go to heaven. Who cares about all this Jewish roots stuff?" The Bible does(!), not to mention the fact that your Jesus' real name was Yeshua—his Hebrew name. He was Jewish, he spoke Hebrew, he lived as an orthodox law-keeping Jew and Scripture refers to him as a Jewish rabbi in numerous places.

How well do you know this orthodox Jewish rabbi? If he is your Lord and Savior you may want to get to know this side of him. The apostle Paul said to follow him as he follows Yeshua the Messiah (1 Cor. 11:1). If we're going to follow someone, first we had better know who they really are, not just what we think they are. Second, if we're going to follow someone, this means that we have to be just like them. Yeshua said, I am the way, the truth and the life, if anyone follows me he will not walk in darkness, and I am the only way to the Father." To not know this Jewish rabbi and Messiah is to walk in spiritual darkness.

—**KNOW YOUR HEBREW ROOTS SO THAT YOU CAN TRULY KNOW THE JEWISH MESSIAH AND THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES!** Knowing about the Jewish roots of your faith is vitally important for your spiritual health and well-being! Then and only then can we truly understand who Messiah Yeshua was and is. Only then can we truly understand what the authors of the Bible were saying. Most were Hebrew, they spoke Hebrew, they thought as Hebrews, and they lived as Hebrews.

—**THE KNOWLEDGE OF ROOTS IN THE BIBLE. THE knowledge of BEGINNINGS is central to biblical/Hebraic thought.** —To be cognizant of one's past is essential for establishing confidence about the future. It helps you to...

- Know who you are.
- Where you've come from.
- Where you're at presently in light of a greater historical context.
- Where you're going,— your destiny as a people (prophetically—without prophetic vision a people will perish [Prov. 29:18]).
- Learn lessons from the past; i.e., not to repeat mistakes of your ancestors.

—**EXAMPLE OF GENEALOGIES IN SCRIPTURE:** For example, the Tenach ("Old Testament") opens with the words "B'resheit... (In the beginning...)." In Genesis (as well as many other places in the Tanach) we find many genealogical tables that fix the beginnings of the human races as well as the Hebrew

people. The Brit Hadasha in (“New Testament”) the Gospel of Matthew starts with a genealogy.

—**SCRIPTURE ADMONISHES US TO NOT FORGET YOUR ROOTS!** People tend to stray from their roots. YHWH knew this would happen. This is why in about 70 places in Scripture he commands us to ,“**Remember”** and to “**Forget not.**” Here are a few examples:

- Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy...
- Remember my covenant...
- Remember and do all the commandments of YHWH...
- Forget not my commandments...
- Forget not the covenant of YHWH
- Forget not the works of Elohim
- Forget not the word of YHWH
- Forget not all YHWH’s blessings
- Remember the word which Moses the servant of YHWH spoke...
- Forget not my Torah-truth...
- Remember the Torah-law of Moses my servant...
- Remember Lot’s wife...

—**YHWH SENT PROPHETS TO BRING HIS PEOPLE BACK TO THEIR ROOTS.** He sent prophets to help his people to remember the forgotten or misplaced roots of their faith the result of which was their straying from his paths of truth and righteousness and turning to pagan religious practices and beliefs. It was the mission of nearly all the biblical prophets to call Israel back to their ROOTS—TO TORAH (YHWH’s instructions in righteousness as found in the first five books of the Bible), and to the FAITH OF THEIR FATHERS. To not heed the calls of these divinely appointed messengers was to be walking a very dangerous path right into the arms of certain judgment, woe and destruction.

—**RETURN TO THE ANCIENT PATHS!** The prophets, like Jeremiah were calling Israel to RETURN TO THE ANCIENT PATHS OF TORAH.

Jer. 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the ancient paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Mal. 4:4 ¶ Remember ye the Torah of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Note: this prophet will turn the people back to their fathers—to their roots!

—**There is SECURITY in the ANCIENT PATHS of Torah-truth/light.** Jer. 6:16 calls it a **good way** and that in it you will **find rest for your souls.**

—Again, humans have the tendency to FORGET TORAH. YHWH knows this. And again, that’s why throughout Scripture He directs the imperative command at Israel to “REMEMBER” or “FORGET NOT” 70 times.

—**OUR ROOTS STARTED WITH ABRAHAM.** YHWH’s SOVEREIGN PLAN in history was to ESTABLISH A COVENANT through Abraham and to start a nation through his offspring through which the world would be

evangelized in the ways of Torah—both the Written and Living Torah; a nation and a people through whom the Messiah, the Living Torah, Redeemer and Savior of mankind would come.

—YHWH promised our father Abraham that ALL PEOPLE of the earth would be BLESSED THROUGH HIM (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). THIS RELATES TO US! We're part of the all peoples! Please note that Abraham was the only man who was both a Hebrew (or in a loose sense, a Jew) and a Gentile at the same time (for he left Ur as a Gentile and later became the father of the Jews which makes him a Jew) which makes him the father of both Jews and Gentiles.

—**ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL CHILDREN.** Physical as well as spiritual descendants both share in kinship to Abraham:

-Gal. 3:7-9 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

-Rom 5:16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

—The term (used in Jn. 8:53 and Acts 7:2) “OUR FATHER ABRAHAM” expresses the family relationship that every person of faith has with “man of faith” (Gal. 3:9).

—Abraham is the father of believers: **Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? —James 2:21**

—**WHO OR WHAT IS THAT ROOT THAT SUPPORTS YOU?** Now let's go back to **Rom. 11: 18** which says, “**You do not support the root, but the root supports you.**” To whom or what is Paul referring in this passage of Scripture?

The ROOT represents the PATRIARCHS through whom all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Furthermore, the roots support the branches (Rom. 11:18); therefore, the roots precede the branches.

The olive tree with its roots not only points back to the Jewish/Israelite people of whom Yeshua said belonged the way of salvation (**Salvation is of the Jews —Jn. 4:22**) and to the patriarchs, as we have noted above, but also to the source of that root: THE TORAH, which is living and vibrant, which is THE WORD OF YHWH which was later made flesh and became YESHUA THE MESSIAH. What is the deeper spiritual meaning of the olive tree, the literal Tree of Life for the believer?

- That olive tree is planted by the River of Life and draws sustenance from that River so that it can produce fruit (Ps. 1:3; Rev. 22:2).

- Yeshua said in Jn. 15:5 that he was the vine and we are the branches. In other words, He is the Tree of Life of the Garden of Eden. This is a picture of the menorah with Yeshua being the shamash or center stem with six stems branching off and receiving oil from the “trunk” of the tree (six = the number of man). This is another picture of the olive tree.

- The body of Yeshua is that menorah, for Yeshua said that members of that body are a lampstand set on a hill to show the nations the way of Torah-truth/light. This corresponds to the seven-branched menorah representing the seven kehilot (“churches”) —the Body of Yeshua — in Rev. 2:20).

•Yeshua, the Living Torah, the Tree of Life, is the Rock of Ages/Rock of Salvation, upon which the house of Israel (Body of Believers who have the testimony of Yeshua and keep his Torah-mitzvot) is built (Mt. 7:24).

—**CONCLUSION: One thing is certain, the Christian Church has divorced itself from its Patriarchal and Hebraic roots.** Much of its beliefs and theologies reflect this estrangement and separation. Some of the churches' beliefs are downright antagonistic towards its Hebraic roots. Many well-meaning Christian believers have the idea that spiritually they are a separate entity floating somewhere out in spiritual space totally independent of their spiritual Jewish roots. Yet Rabbi Apostle Paul (Sha'ul) cautioned against this mindset when he said to you and me in **Romans 11:18, "Boast not against the branches [of the olive tree]. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."** The CJB translation says, **"[Don't] boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you."**

May you, the honest truth-seeker, the believer in and ardent follower of Yeshua the Messiah, be blessed abundantly as you dig into the rich and fertile ground of the spiritual roots of your faith. May you truly be an olive tree planted by the rivers of the waters of life that bears fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither in the hot sun of trials, adversity, weariness and persecution.