

## TREES in the Bible

The Bible speaks of 36 types of trees:

Almond: (Eccles 12:5)      Apple: (SS 2:3)      Chestnut & Fir (Ezek 31:8)  
 Cedar, Accacia Myrtle & Fir (Is 41:19)      Cyprus (Is 44:14)      Palm: (Neh8:15)  
 Sycamore (Zacchaeus Lk 41:4)      Mustard (Lk 17:6)      Fig (Mt 21:19-22)  
 Oak (Terabinth), (Ex 15:15; Ezek 17:13) etc!

Everything in Creation and in life was seen as a symbol or type to teach us something about the mystery of God, ourselves or the exile on earth.

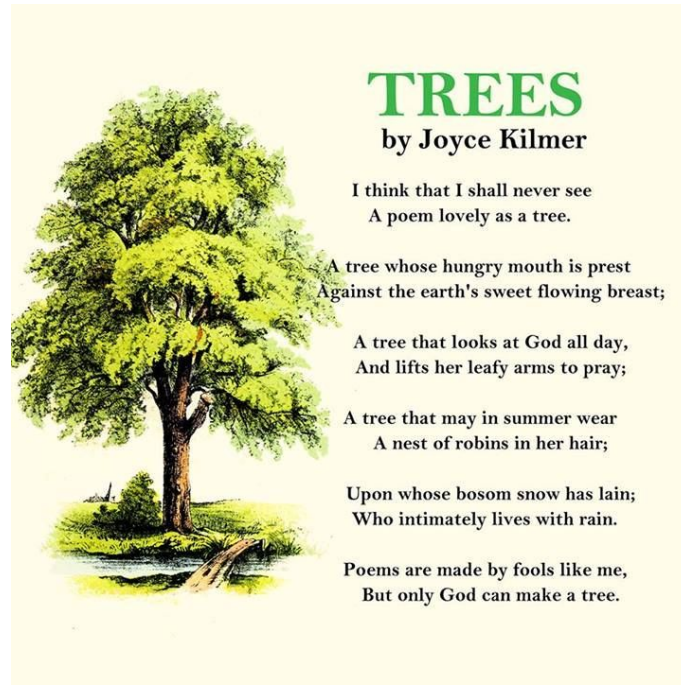
The tree represents **life itself** rooted in the earth, but reaching out to heaven “lifts her leafy arms to pray”. It represents personal growth, strength, beauty and perseverance in doing the Will of its Creator.

**The tree serves** by cleansing the air, providing food and shade from the sun....it stays in its place blooming where it was planted with no rebellion....it silently adores and serves God.



Isaiah 55:12: **“You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands”**

Examples: The Oak tree represented longevity, strength, stability, endurance, fertility and power.... The Apple tree represented human love and fertility – hence the apple in Eden and in SS 2:5



**The tree symbolises the Blessed Trinity** in its Roots, Trunk and Branches

**The Kingdom of Heaven** was compared to the Mustard tree in Mt 13: 31-32. It begins very small but stays the course to become the greatest tree of them all.

**Jesus compared to a tree:** a) Is 53:2 **“Like a sapling he grew up in front of us, like a root in arid ground**

**b) He died on a tree changing it into THE TREE OF LIFE** Gal 3:13: he died so that we wouldn't die the ultimate death.....

c) Jesus IS the tree; the **True Vine**: Jn 15:1

**Trees symbolise the People of God:** Ps 1 “He is like a tree planted by running water which yields its fruit in due season....”

Christians are like branches grafted on to the Vine: Rom 11: 17-18

OT figures associated with trees: Abraham and the Oak of Mamre: Gen 18:1

Noah and the Olive branch: Gen 8:11

Joseph **“is a fruitful creeper near the spring....”** Gen 49:22

Moses barefoot before the Burning Bush: Ex 3:2-5

Jer 17:7 **“A blessing on the man who puts his trust in the Lord, with THE LORD for his hope. He is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream: when the heat comes it feels no alarm, its foliage stays green; it has no worries in a year of drought, and never ceases to bear fruit”**

The saints in Rev 22:2 are the trees of life growing by the River of Life producing 12 crops a year!

Jesus spoke to us under the symbolism of a tree also: Mt 7: 15-20: **“Can you pick grapes from thorns or figs from thistles?.....a sound tree produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit.....”**

Prov 3:18 says that Wisdom is “a tree of life for those who hold her fast; those who cling to her live happy lives”

### **The 3 great trees in the Bible:**

- a) The Tree of life: **Our Origins**
- b) The Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil: **our Fall**
- c) The Tree of the Cross of Christ: **our recovery**
- d) Divine Will: Tree of Life **restored and lived again**

The story of these 3 trees fills the whole bible and explains life on earth!



**THE OLIVE TREE:** This is Israel’s national tree. The Olive has been cultivated by Mankind for 6,000 years! Today, Israel has 52,500 acres of Olive tree plantations! It is one of the 7 most important species in Israel.

The olive tree is tough and can handle drought, sub-zero temperatures and even fire! It is very resilient; its roots are strong and can regrow eve when one thinks that it is destroyed.

The olive tree symbolises Holiness, Beauty and Freshness, as well as Peace, wisdom and Harmony – everything that is needed in society to bring it to fullness.

Ps 52:8 **I am like a green olive tree in the House of God**

Jer 11:16: **A spreading olive tree so fair, so sturdy, was the Lord's name for you**

Hosea 14:6: **...he will have the beauty of the olive and the fragrance of Lebanon**

Rom 11:17: **.....like shoots of the wild olive, you have been grafted among the rest to share with them the rich sap of the olive tree itself.....it is the root that supports you.** This WILD OLIVE is used to represent either pagans joining the Chosen People or Chosen people in apostasy returning to the House of God.

Ps 128: 3 **your wife like a fruitful vine on the inner walls of your house. Your sons around your table like shoots round the olive tree. Such are the blessings that fall on the man who fears the Lord.**

**The Temple:** had 2 cherubs made from olivewood and doors of olivewood

Lev 24:2 shows that the priests only used pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp that stood before God's Presence. That lamp symbolised Christ, our Light, and the oil represented the Holy Spirit of God.

Finally, Jesus agonised in the Garden of olives because He too, was to be beaten and crushed to bring forth Pentecost for us. He also ascended into Heaven from the Mount of Olives having left the Holy Spirit among His People to help them on their journey back to God and paradise.

It is from this Mount of Olives that He will return in Glory to establish His Reign on earth after it and the Church has been crushed in the great chastisement of Revelation chapters 6-18.



**THE VINE:** Wine has always been important for the Chosen people. It has been cultivated in this land since 3,300 BC. Today Israel has a thriving youthful, dynamic and quality driven wine industry. There are 300 official wineries but every household has their own vines growing. There is a very large winery both in Jerusalem and in the Galilee today.

The plant is a climber which needs great supports in order to grow and develop. The wood of the Vine is useless; it is cultivated for its grapes.

The Vine was considered a symbol of the Chosen People from very early in its history:

Ps 128:3 **Your wife: a fruitful vine in the heart of your home.**

Isaiah 5:1-7 is the first parable of the Vineyard used to describe the relationship between God and His People. This vineyard built on a fertile hillside has become degenerate...it yielded sour grapes, so it faces the wrath of its owner.

Jeremiah 2:21 picks up the same theme - that Israel was a choice vine of sound stock: **Yet it was I who planted you, a precious vine of fine quality; how could you turn into a wild vine and become good for nothing?**

**Psalm 80: 8 -13** says that Israel was a vine that God uprooted from Egypt, and to plant it He drove out nations from Canaan to clear a space for it to grow, but now they have removed its fences so that anyone can ravage it - this means that they broke with God's Covenant which protected them....

Habakkuk 3:17-19: A sign of God's chastisement is that the fig tree, the vine and the olive all fail! Nevertheless, faith and trust in God will triumph!

**Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labour of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls – YET I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.**

**The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like hind's feet (deer), and He will make me walk on my high hills.**

**John 15: 1-17** Jesus identified Himself with this vine of the Father's choosing. He became the vine for all future generations so that leaning on His supports in His Word and Sacrament we could grow to fullness in His Kingdom. It is in Him that we triumph over all adversity.

The relationship between the vine and its branches explains the relationship between disciples and Jesus. He is the Source of Life, Grace, hope for us. The branches are utterly dependent on the vine for life, nourishment and for bearing fruit.

With His Divine Will governing our being we can bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in the Kingdom of God on earth: Gal 5:22. The fruits come through us, the branches, but he is the Source and the Power and the Life within those fruits.





**THE FIG TREE:** is a multi- trunk tree with smooth, grey bark. It grows to about 30 feet, and has a wide low canopy with dark green foliage.

The fig tree symbolises wisdom, success and abundance. The fig was so prized by the ancient Greeks that they considered it an honour to confer it upon the winners of the great games!

It is used as a symbol of the Chosen People: Joel 1:7 **It has laid waste my vines and torn my fig trees to pieces**

Lk 13: 6-9 Here Jesus uses the fig tree as a parable of the need to produce fruit, or face the consequences in chastisement or even ultimate judgement.

Mt 21:19-21: The fig tree (Israel) is now barren and faces judgement.

Mt 24:32: The fig tree is the announcer of Summertime, and the actions of its leaders will announce to the generation Jesus spoke to about the fulfilment of all that He spoke about.

Jn 1:47 **I saw you under the fig tree.** God watched over His people throughout their history, so Nathanael was not unknown to Jesus!



**THE THORN BUSH:** Was any thorny or spiny shrub or bush. It symbolises sin, Sorrow, pain and hardship.

Mt 13: 4-9 some seeds fell among thorns. Vs 22 The one who received the seed in thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so it produces nothing.

2 Cor 12: 7-9 St Paul spoke of a thorn in the flesh to torment him, but God's grace was sufficient to deal with it. No one knows what this suffering was but some hint that it was the constant Persecution.

Cf. Joshua 23:13: Your God will no longer drive these people before you; instead, they will be a snare and a pitfall for you, a scourge to your sides and thorns to your eyes, till you vanish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.

Jn 19:2 Jesus took the thorn bush on His head to cancel the sin, and the sorrow it brought on Humanity, to take away the pain of separation from God and the hardship that followed.

He also repaired for kings and emperors, for tyrants and all unworthy rulers who crushed people by their evil doings causing the death of millions.

Finally, Jesus wanted to crown us all with the royal crown of the rule of the Divine Will in our lives so that peace, harmony and happiness would be restored to His beloved children.

