

Opening Scripture Reading/Prayer:

Exodus 31:12-17

The Sabbath

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. . . . ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

Isaiah 58:13-14

¹³ “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and call the Sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah 66:22-23

²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
that I make
shall remain before me, says the LORD,
so shall your offspring and your name remain.
²³ From new moon to new moon,
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
declares the LORD.

Thursday, February 25, 2020 at 6pm began the Holiday PURIM and last until Sunday, February 29th at 6pm

Purim/Feast of Lots: (*reading of the book of Esther*)

14th - 15th Adar - "these days of Purim should be observed at their **appointed seasons,**" **Esther 9:31**

"For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place . . . And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" **Esther 4:14,**

(*Begins at sundown and Ends at sundown*)

2020

March 10, Friday

2021

February 26, Thursday

2022

March 16, Thursday

2023

March 6, Monday

One of the most joyous of all the Biblical festivals, **Purim** (Festival of Lots, by the enemy, a set time of destruction, but for God, a set time of “Destiny”, as encapsulated by the very words of Joseph to his brother, “*what you (man) intended for evil, God has destined it for good*”), celebrations the exemplary leadership and bravery of Hadassah (Esther), a Jewish girl who rose to become ancient Persia's Queen Esther. As the queen, Esther risked death to uncover and overturn a plot to murder the Jewish People in Persia. Purim is a “*Celebration of Forgetting*” – forgetting our enemy’s plan for our destruction and our remembering God’s plan for his destruction instead – **VICTORY OVER DEATH** (“blot out the memory of Amalek,” Ex 17:14, “you shall blot out the memory of Amalek,” Deut 25:19). Haman, the villain who wickedly plots to destroy the Jewish People, was a descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites, representing pure evil or those who have “given themselves over” to the dark side of impurity. Indeed, the name Amalek symbolically is an eye, meaning “doubt” and “haughty”, therefore represents “the evil eye of doubt”, understood in this way, Amalek represents spiritual blindness acting arrogantly in the world, and therefore the Lord vowed perpetual warfare against Amalek” (¹⁶saying, “A hand upon the throne^{al} of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation,” Ex 17:16). Concerning this verse, it suggests that God’s rule will be incomplete until the powers of darkness are totally wiped off the face of the earth (by the hand of Jesus our Lord; see Rev 19-20). Amalek embodies the principle of, the lack of the fear of God, and therefore represents the power of darkness and evil in the world.

In Jewish tradition, Amalek represents pure evil, or those who have “given themselves over” to the dark side of impurity. Indeed the name Amalek begins with the letter “Ayin” (symbolizing the eye) . . . meaning “doubt” and “haughty”. Amalek therefore represents “the evil eye of doubt”, or even “the severed eye”. Understood in this way, Amalek represents spiritual blindness acting arrogantly in the world, and therefore the Lord vowed perpetual warfare against Amalek” “The Hand is on God’s throne. God shall be at war with Amalek for all generations” (Exodus 17:16). Concerning this verse the great commentator Rashi noted that he term “God’s throne” is written incompletely in Hebrew . . . which

suggests that God’s rule will be incomplete until the powers of darkness are totally wiped off the face of the earth (by the hand of Yeshua our Lord; see Revelation 19-20) Amalek embodies the principle of, the lack of the fear of God, and therefore represents the power of darkness and evil in the world.

<https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Scripture/Parashah/Summaries/Tetzaveh/Amalek/amalek.html>

Like Esther, who submitted herself to a prolonged preparation time for the king, Believers, continuously dedicate themselves in preparation to meet Jesus their Messiah. This process begins with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who washes and renews us (Tit 3:5), brings us into unity (Eph 4:3) and enables us to obey the truth (1 Pe 1:22), among other important works. And like Esther who was **faithful, beautiful, pure, and courageous**, even to the point of being willing to lose her life to save her brethren, with the help of the Spirit, the Bride of Messiah is called to be faithful to God’s word, beautifully pure in spirit, and courageous in sharing the truth of who Jesus is. As a result of their courage, many Believers, past, present, and future, suffer and will suffer severe persecution, even death. Relying on God and not her own talents and natural abilities, Esther, like Believers, know they cannot accomplish anything for the kingdom of God without relying totally on God’s leading and protection. Carrying the full authority of the King and the seal of his signet ring, Esther is able to issue decrees that cannot be revoked (Esther 8:8), in the same manner, Jesus gives His followers the authority to defeat the works of the enemy (Lk 10:19).

"Future Prophetic Fulfillment" of the Feast of Lots: will be fulfilled at the unveiling of the worker of lawlessness who will erect an image of himself in the Temple, during what has been prophesied as the **"Abomination of Desolation"** (*"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)"* - Dan 7:25, 9:26-27, 11:3, Matt 24:15-28, 2 Thess 2:4, Rev 11:7, 13:5-6). And this, at an **Appointed Time**, as Jesus instructed, **"Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath,"** Matt 24:20, which describes a specific time, during a certain **Feast/Appointed Time**, the **Feast of Purim**, *"the Jews firmly obligated themselves and their offspring and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time Appointed every year, that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every clan, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants,"* Esther 9:27-28, which falls exactly 30 days before the Feast of Passover, but even more significantly, **falls most years, at the beginning of Spring, "not in winter or on a Sabbath"**. And like Haman in the story of Esther, the Anti-christ’s plan is to destroy God’s people, either by deception (*"The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception,"* 2 Thess 2:9-12) or persecution (*"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be,"* Matt 24:21).

Opening Message:

This Week’s Reading

Week 20: TETZAVEH (You shall Command) - Exodus 27:20–30:10; Ezekiel 43:10–27; 1 Peter 2:1–25

"Command [Tetzaveh] the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning." Exodus 27:20

In last week’s Torah reading, God instructed Moses and the Israelites to construct a Tabernacle (**Mishkan**) in the wilderness.

This week, God commands them to bring pure olive oil for the lamp and to create holy garments for the priests (cohanim).

The Role of Beauty and Splendor in Serving God

"These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve Me as priests." (Exodus 28:4)

In this Reading, sacred garments are to be made for the priests so they can serve God.

(Messianic Bible | Bibles For Israel)

Exodus 27:20-30:10

Oil for the Lamp

²⁰ *"You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn.*

you: And you shall command... (27:20) . . . (ESTHER . . . Does not mention God . . . He Must be Found)

Tetzaveh is the only Parshah in the Torah since Moses' birth in which Moses' name does not appear (with the exception of the book of Deuteronomy, which consists wholly of a first-person narrative spoken by Moses). The reason for this is that, [when the people of Israel sinned with the Golden Calf,] Moses said to G-d: "If You do not [forgive them,] erase me from the book that You have written" (Exodus 32:31). This was realized in the Parshah of Tetzaveh, since the censure of a righteous person, even if made conditional on an unfulfilled stipulation, always has some effect. (Baal HaTurim) While Moses' name does not appear in the Parshah of Tetzaveh, Moses himself is very much present: the entire Parshah consists of G-d's words to Moses! Indeed, the Parshah's first word is *ve'attah*, "and you"--the "you" being the person of Moses.

Indeed, the word "you" connotes its subject's very self, while a person's name is a more superficial "handle" on his personality. This means that Moses is *more* present in our Parshah--that is, present in a deeper, more essential way--than any mention of his name could possibly express.

This is fully in keeping with the Baal HaTurim's explanation (cited above). Because Moses was prepared to forgo mention of his name in the Torah for the sake of his people, he merited that his quintessential self--**the level of self that cannot be captured by any name or designation--be eternalized by the Torah.** It is this level of Moses' self that is expressed by his "nameless" presence in the Parshah of Tetzaveh.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

command: And you shall command the children of Israel (27:20)

The word *tetzaveh*, "to command," also means "to connect" and "to bond." Thus the verse can also be read as G-d saying to Moses: "And you shall bond with the Children of Israel.

(Ohr HaChaim)

Exodus 27:20-21

Oil for the Lamp

²⁰ "You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. ²¹ In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.

crushed: And that they bring to you pure olive oil... to raise an everlasting lamp... from evening to morning (27:20-21)

These verses contain a paradox: "everlasting flame" implies a state of perpetuality and changelessness; "from evening to morning" implies fluctuating conditions of lesser and greater luminance.

For such is our mission in life: to impart the eternity and perfection of the Divine to a temporal world, and to do so not by annihilating or overwhelming the world's temporality and diversity, but by illuminating its every state and condition-- from "evening" to "morning"--with the divine light.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Pure olive oil, crushed for the light (27:20)

Just as the olive yields light only when it is pounded, so are man's greatest potentials realized only under the pressure of adversity.

(The Talmud)

Revelation 2:5

⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent**, and do the works you did at first. If not, **I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.**

Grafting An Olive Tree

The fertile rocky hills there are covered in ancient terraces *in Israel* making them ideal for growing olives.

Trees are such a precious gift from our Creator. They not only provide oxygen for us to breathe, but also food to eat, wood for building, pulp for paper, fuel for light and warmth as well as shade for comfort. In their great variety, trees provide natural beauty for our eyes to behold.

Perhaps the **most remarkable fruit tree is the olive tree.** The olive is considered the **most important of all the trees** because over the years it **has provided food, light and healing.** The following facts on olives is compiled from various sources.

This robust olive tree can live for centuries, even scattered in dry, barren, and rocky wilderness. To harvest the olives in Biblical times, a green olive tree would be beaten with sticks to knock the fruit from its branches. In spite of that, the tree would continue to produce new fruit.

That is because **the strength of this tree is not in its branches but comes from its roots** which go deep into the earth. A green olive tree's roots are so deep and so strong that they survive even if the tree's trunk is burned or cut down to the ground. The root survives deep down and it will send up new shoots, and over time they will bear fruit. The green olive tree can survive and thrive even in the harshest of environments. They are virtually indestructible, even though they may appear dead, the tree will revive even appearing to have been dead for years.

The remarkable olive tree is an evergreen. After the flood, when **Noah (name meaning "Rest" and "Peace")** sent the dove out to determine if dry land had appeared, the dove returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. Even the flood's devastation did not kill that olive tree!

Genesis 8:11-12

¹¹ And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹² Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

The Hebrew scriptures tell us *that Noah* sent out the Dove again; it comes back in the evening with the leaf of an olive tree in its beak. Evening signifies the end of a season; the olive leaf is full of prophetic significance.

According to the Biblical story, after the great flood, Noah sends out a dove to see if the waters have subsided. The dove returns with a fresh olive leaf in her beak and since then the dove has become a symbol of peace. It is generally accepted that the olive branch is not food for the dove but is a symbol of freedom, because he who the Son sets free is free indeed. The Dove, which is seen by the world as a symbol of peace, is in fact that very peace itself; the Son whom the Dove represents is a symbol of freedom. The Olive branch is the Shalom of the Mashiach, and is used even to this day as peace offering to settle differences. The Hebrew word for Dove is linked to wine and that is a

symbol of the Holy Spirit, thus in the same way the Dove also represents the third Person of the Godhead; this is emphasised when Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily shape as a dove upon him. The primary meaning of the Olive Branch is Israel; the wild olive represents the Gentiles. The olive branch also represents the Shalom of the Mashiach. Olive oil used to anoint kings and priests was taken from the olive tree; when the dove returned with an olive leaf and gave it to Noah it was symbolic of the time Jesus was explaining to His disciples that He would be returning to the Father. Then as the Dove / Mashiach returns to the Father in the ascension; the disciples filled with the Shalom of Christ and in obedience to Jesus could continue God's *redemptive plan*. That would naturally include gentiles becoming one with Israel

Bryen Gaskell says
August 18, 2016 at 4:12 pm
<https://messianic-revolution.com/8-3-significance-raven-dove-noah-sent/>

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you. But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the **sign** of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” **Matthew 12:38-40**

The Pharisees, who knew the Scriptures well, also lied concerning Jesus when they said, “Search and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee. (John 7:52) They disregarded Jonah, who was born in Gath Hopher a town in the Galilee, three miles north of the town of Nazareth where Jesus was raised.

God sent Jonah as a prophet not to the Jews but to the **gentiles**. Immediately after Jonah came forth from the fish he traveled to the wicked city of Nineveh. The city was so large that it would take three days to walk all of its streets. **Yet on the first day of Jonah's preaching the people repented and the city was spared.**

- The name **Jonah** means “dove”.
- In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, **and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him.** (Mark 1:9-10) This passage of Scripture could also be read as: In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and **the Spirit like a Jonah descending upon Him.**
- From the text above we see that **the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove (Jonah).**
- **Immediately after Jesus' ascension into heaven the Holy Spirit (a dove or Jonah) came upon the Church with the power to prophesy or witness. Which even before Jesus' ascension, we see this instruction demonstrated in the following passage:**

John 20:19-22

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am

sending you.”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

- **The message proclaimed is the gospel ... the “good news” of how to make peace with God. This takes us back to the story of Noah who released a dove (Jonah) three times (Genesis 8:8-12). The first time the dove returned to Noah, the second time the dove brought an olive branch back to Noah and the third time the dove did not return.** The olive branch that the dove carried in its mouth was the symbol of peace, the same message that the Holy Spirit is speaking through the mouths of Christians.
- **In the story of Jonah, God sent Jonah (dove or Holy Spirit) the first time and he experienced three days and nights in the belly of the fish.** This is indicative of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had the dove descend upon Him at His baptism, declared that the Kingdom of God was at hand and **spent three days and nights in the grave.**
- **God sent Jonah a second time and he preached to the gentile city of Nineveh “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying ...” (Jonah 3:1) This is indicative of the Holy Spirit coming upon the Church at Pentecost. The message that has been preached for the last two thousand years has primarily been to the gentiles.**
- **God will send the Holy Spirit (dove or Jonah) the third time. We see this beginning to happen immediately prior to the sounding of the seventh (last) trumpet in the book of Revelation:**

And they said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.” **Revelation 10:11**

At that time the **two witnesses** and the 144,000 Israelites who have been **sealed** preach the **truth**.

Two witnesses: (The two witnesses are Elijah and Moses)

³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. ⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit^[a] will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically^[b] is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood

up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. " **Revelation 11:3-12**

The Two Witnesses

The two witnesses in Revelation 11:1-14 appear to be Moses and Elijah. These two are seen standing with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. (Matthew 16:28-17:3)

This same allusion of the three together can be seen in Zechariah. 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) 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?" 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 4:11-14) This is confirmed by Revelation 11:4, These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

What four pressings were made of the olives for oil?

In biblical times, **four pressings were made of the olives for oil**. Each pressing produced a different quality of oil used for distinct purposes. **Heavy stones were used to extract the oil**. The purest oil from **the first pressing (one stone) was reserved for Temple worship**. The oil produced in the **second pressing (two stones) was used for cooking and eating**. The oil produced from **the third pressing (three stones) was used for lamp oil**, and the **fourth pressing (four stones) was used to produce soap and medicine**.

2 Corinthians 4:7-9

Treasure in Jars of Clay

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted/pressed in every way (pressed on every side), but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

So how should we be like an olive tree?

We should be rooted in Messiah and **faithful to Him at all times (evergreen) and always bear fruit (Gal. 5:22)**. **Our lives should be a pure offering to the Lord (like the first pressed oil) and a light to the world**. **We should recognize that just as the fruit of the olive is released through pressure or crushing, that God may also allow stress or strain, even tribulation to produce the character traits He desires.** "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" **James 1:2-4**.

Description of an Olive Tree Characteristics of the olive tree...

The young olive tree generally only bears olives after seven years of growth and proper grafting, but it will take at least two years to germinate, due to the fruit-bearing pattern of olive trees.

If you have an olive tree that you want to clone, you can do this with grafting. And believe it or not grafting can take more than **2 years** to produce any olives (type of Discipleship).

Romans 11:16-24

¹⁶ If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root^[a] of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²² Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

Because of the injurious method of harvesting the olives by using sticks to knock off the fruit, the trees only bear a full crop every other year. Some twenty gallons of oil are often derived from the olives of one tree. **The fruit are harvested in the Fall Feast season during the fall month of October**. (type of End Times Judgement)

After the olive tree reaches its maturity, its fruitfulness lasts for many, many years. Its longevity is one of the remarkable characteristics of the tree. Many 1,000 year old trees survive today. The old Olive tree is often seen to have several young shoots springing up all around it from its roots. It was this picture that the Psalmist had in mind when he wrote:

"Thy children like olive plants round about thy table" (Psalm 128:3).

Scripture often speaks of the beauty and attractiveness of the olive tree and it is always concerning a metaphor of God's people Israel. The prophet Jeremiah said: “the Lord called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit” (Jeremiah 11:16). The prophet Hosea said, “His beauty shall be as the olive tree” (Hosea 14:6). And David asserted: “I am like a green olive tree in the house of God” (Psalm 52:8).

Olive trees have a remarkable number of blossoms, many of which fall to the ground without ever maturing into fruit. When a wind storm blows many blossoms simple fall to the ground. The Book of Job makes a comparison to this: “And shall cast off his flower as the olive” (Job 15:33).

With that foundation let's look at grafting an olive tree...

In a natural state left unattended, the olive tree will grow wild, so the trees are must be cultivated; first they must be grafted to bear fruit. A graft of a cultivated olive tree is inserted into the stem of the wild olive tree, and then the wild olive tree is cut down close to the ground. The part below becomes both root and feeder for the grafted branch.

This is the customary process of grafting. But the Apostle Paul speaks of a different method. He speaks of GOD grafting the wild olive branch onto the cultivated tree. (see Romans 11:24, “For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.”). Here we learn once again that God's ways are not man's (Isaiah 55:9, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”).

Harvesting the olive crop...

The harvest of crop of olives in the Holy Land is still accomplished by beating the trees with sticks in order to knock off the fruit. *This is very significant.*

Instead of hand picking them, they beat the branches making the fruit to fall. The tender shoots that would ordinarily bear fruit the following year are usually damaged during the harvest so as to interfere greatly with the next year's crop. This is no doubt the reason for the trees yielding a good crop only every other year.

Isaiah also speaks of the obtaining fruit left by the olive harvesters. **It seems the Biblical use of the term grape harvest in Revelation is actually the olive:** “Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof” **Isaiah 17:6.**

The process of making olive oil...

Years ago olive mills were used for making oil. They had oil presses in addition to the vat, and an upright stone with a large hole in it. In this hole a beam was inserted. **This beam rested on the olives which were to be pressed, extending far beyond the receptacle containing the olives, and weights were hung on the end farthest from the stone.**

The Garden of Gethsemane was in reality an olive orchard, and believe it or not the word, "Gethsemane," means "Oil-Press." Remember, it was in the Garden of Gethsemane (Gat Shemen in Hebrew, literally, the place of the "olive press"), where the Messiah spent much of His time in Jerusalem with His disciples.

"Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him" (Luke 22:39).

Another Bible-time **way of making oil was to tread the olives with the feet.** This primitive method was mentioned by the prophet Micah: "Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil". (Micah 6:15)

The wide use of olive oil in Bible lands...

The most famous example of this is "the ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Matthew 25:1). Also oil is used today in Bible lands in the manufacture of soap, and it is quite likely that it was so used in Bible days. And oil was often used for anointing the body. Naomi told Ruth, "Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor" (Ruth 3:3).

There is a blessing from this magnificent tree in God's own words...

Deuteronomy 24:20. ¹⁹ “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ **When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.** ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.*

Lessons from the Psalms...

The olive tree symbolizes faithfulness and steadfastness. Psalms 52:8 says, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercies of God forever and ever."

This Scripture passage reminds us that no matter the tribulations of life, we should remain steadfast as the olive tree in the presence of God, evergreen (faithful) and bearing fruit. The olive tree is mentioned over 30 times in the Bible, it is one of the first plants mentioned and the most significant.

In Psalm 1 the Lord promises that the godly will flourish like a tree planted by streams of water. The Psalmist seems to have enjoyed considering certain trees, learning about them, and then making spiritual application from their characteristics.

In Psalm 52 David was concerned that Doeg, the Edomite, would reveal his hiding place to King Saul who was seeking to kill him. David considered Doeg's wicked condition and his end under God's punishment, then he turned his mind from his enemies and declared, “But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the mercy (steadfast love, undeserved favor) of God forever and ever.”

We should review the characteristics of the olive tree and apply them to our lives.

The olive was a basis of life in the Mediterranean world. **(Is Jesus-Yeshua the basis and root of your life?)**

Like us, it takes the olive tree 17 to 30 years to reach full vintage, and its best fruit is harvested in later years. It lives for centuries. The fruit is used for eating, its oil for cooking and for lighting lamps. The wood is richly grained and sturdy. (Can God use me to bring glory to Himself?)

Throughout the ages the olive has stood for peace, for steadfast love, for undeserved favor (mercy) and newness of life. (Is this quality of mercy being manifested in my life?)

No wonder God diverted David's mind from his enemies to the green olive tree. Although we, too, live in a world of hardship, adversity and disappointment, let us seek the Lord so that we may flourish like the green olive tree, and like David, have our hearts and minds rooted in the Lord. We will then be able to claim the promises in Psalm 1:

Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
²but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
³He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
⁴The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
⁶for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

More olive tree Scriptures...

- Deuteronomy 6:11 And houses full of all good [things], which thou filled not, and wells digged, which thou digged not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou planted not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full. - Hosea 14:6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

- Jeremiah 11:16 The LORD called thy name, 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.

- Judges 9:8 The trees went forth [on a time] to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

- Psalms 52:8 But I [am] like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

- Zechariah 4:3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right [side] of the bowl, and the other upon the left [side] thereof.

- Romans 11:17 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;

- Romans 11:24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree?

- Revelation 11:4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

<http://www.myscripturestudies.com/p/the-olive-tree.html>

Exodus 27:20-30:10
The Priests' Garments

The Role of Beauty and Splendor in Serving God

“These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve Me as priests.” (Exodus 28:4)

In this Reading, sacred garments are to be made for the priests so they can serve God.

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1 Peter 2:9

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of **him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**

Ephesians 6:10-18

The Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹²**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.

1 Thessalonians 5

The Day of the Lord

5 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers,^[a] you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children^[b] of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸**But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.** ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; **¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.**

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.^[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

One of them is the **Choshen Hamishpat** (Breastplate of Judgment).

The breastplate is associated with the Urim and Thummim, objects used to **discern** the will of the Lord.

The priestly breastplate was made of embroidered linen sized and shaped into a square cubit. It contained four rows, each with three precious gems embedded within the plate and surrounded with gold.

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Isaiah 54:11

“O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires.

God is building a life for each one of us that is **“Rock Solid”**. He wants our gifts shown Brilliantly and with slender. He wants us to Shine and Sparkle as we are held up to the Light. Our setting (**antimony**) is Durable and Mighty and it displays God’s Faithfulness to us. Now that is **Antimony!**

Antimony: the sense is not that the stones would have fair colors, but that the **cement (antimony)** which would be used would be that which was commonly employed to **make the most valued colors.** The structure (**antimony**) which would be reared would be as costly and magnificent as if the very **cement** of the stones consisted of the most precious coloring matter; used also for flame proofing material (ex. components and function of the prongs on a Brilliant Wedding Ring).

Each jewel in the priest’s breastplate represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel, whose names were engraved upon the stones. God would use the individual letters of these names to spell out His judgments for Israel when the Urim was used to consult Him.

“He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in.” (*Numbers 27:21*)

In the Brit Chadashah (New Testament), John describes his vision of the New Jerusalem in which the foundation stones of the city walls are adorned with 12 gems. Some, if not all, of these gems are also in the breastplate.

Some of the stones’ true identities may have been lost, since the Hebrew and Greek cultures shared no definitive gem names, especially during the 1,000 years between the writing of 1 Samuel and the Book of Revelation.

“The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoyprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.” (*Revelation 21:19–20*)

There are over 30 different opinions concerning the identification of the breastplate stones in rabbinical literature and tradition. (*Temple Institute*)

What we see in the description of the breastplate and New Jerusalem is that God considers beauty to be glorifying as we serve Him on earth and in Heaven, where we will one day be surrounded by the brilliant splendor of streets paved with gold and divinely cut jewels embedded in foundations.

God also considers certain colors and material that are used in service to Him to be glorifying, such as the garments worn by the Kohen HaGadol (High Priest).

“You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.” (*Exodus 28:2*)

The ephod, or garment underneath the breastplate, was made out of fine linen and woven out of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet threads. Although a priestly garment, it seems that King David wore it when he brought back the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

“Now David was clothed with a robe of fine linen with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the singing with the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen.” (*1 Chronicles 15:27; see also 2 Samuel 6:14*)

Serving God in the Beauty of Holiness

Everything God creates in His physical world helps us understand His spiritual world. The use of physical gems on the breastplate of the Kohen Gadol is no different.

Since these stones represent the 12 tribes, and the breastplate is connected with discovering the will of God, the stones represent how precious Israel is to the Lord and His desire to lead them into His will.

The precious stones embedded in the foundations of the New Jerusalem (*Revelation 21:19–20*) also represent the 12 tribes. From this we can understand that Israel retains foundational importance in the Messianic Age.

All Believers in Yeshua play a significant role, as well. Scripture says that we are a holy priesthood and living stones, a spiritual house through Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah):

“And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Messiah Yeshua.” (*1 Peter 2:4–5*)

Like a precious jewel, precisely cut, shaped, and polished by a master lapidary, we each have the ability to uniquely reflect the beauty and glory of God’s Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) as we serve Him.

When we fulfill that destiny, we take our place in a spiritual house, whose cornerstone — the One who holds it all together — is, of course, Yeshua HaMashiach.

“Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” (*1 Peter 2:6*)

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READ: Exodus 28:1-30:10

Prophetic Message Today

Haftarah Tetzaveh: A Vision of Hope

“So the altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar and upward shall be four horns.” (*Ezekiel 43:15*)

Today’s *Prophetic Reading* falls in the midst of a longer section that discusses the building of the Third Temple. Today’s portion from the Book of Ezekiel begins with God’s instruction to describe the coming Temple to the children of Israel who are exiled in Babylon.

The reason for this is not to build anticipation or excitement but, rather, to give them hope after expressing shame for the sins that caused the First Temple to be destroyed and the people to go into exile.

God tells Ezekiel that only when the people are embarrassed because of their sins, then He could show them the plan of His House, which reflects His holiness.

There, only 14 years into the Babylonian exile, which stretched on for more than another 50 plus years, the people received a message of hope and comfort — “the priests are to present your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you, declares the Sovereign LORD.” (Ezekiel 43:27)

What God is Doing Today with Prophecy (Purim, Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles, Great Day of Salvation): At that point in their exile, they must have thought themselves totally rejected by God, but God reaches into their darkness to show them a vision of eternal redemption.

Israel obviously did repent (current & picture futuristically) because the Book of Ezekiel goes on to describe the Third Temple in great detail and the coming of the Messiah in the final eight chapters.

God loves Israel, and this timely message of repentance reveals that no matter what predicament God's people find themselves in, they can play a role in God's present and future plans by turning from their sin.

May each of us put on the garments of holiness and serve Him with all of our strength.

“You will again have compassion on us; You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19)

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Next Weeks Reading:

Week 21 - KI TISA (When You Take)
Exodus 30:11–34:35; 1 Kings 18:1–39; Matthew 17:1–13