

The Olive Tree: The Relationship of Jew and Gentile

Perhaps the greatest analogy ever given by the Spirit of Jew and Gentile in the family of God in the Bible is penned in Romans 11, when Paul paints this imagery of the olive tree. Here we see a brilliant illustration of what has taken place between Jew and Gentile in the kingdom of God through Yeshua/Jesus.

In this picture, the olive tree represents Israel, along with its branches, many of which are broken off through unbelief. The root of the tree is the Godhead, which provides its life and existence, and the wild olive tree along with its branches, are God's children from the nations, who are now grafted into Israel. This may be somewhat of a humbling image to modern-day believers, but it wasn't at all then, as Gentiles coming to Yeshua were incredibly grateful to become a part of Israel's rich heritage and history (Rom. 9:4-5) and to be grafted into Israel's covenants and promises as co-heirs. We should never forget our humble beginnings, which Paul reminds us of in this chapter.

Through faith in Yeshua, Gentiles could now be grafted into the olive tree (kingdom) and inherit its promises along with the people of Israel, who also believed; while unbelieving Israel was broken off through unbelief, but would be restored before the end, so that the family of God would be complete. Here we see a total picture of the children and family of God from beginning to end, His call to the first-born Israel, and His call to all of the other children from the nations and how we are all grafted together.

☒ And for the first couple of centuries, not only did both

groups co-exist, but they harmonized in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with great power and anointing upon them. However, their unity in the Spirit did not wipe out their callings, as it was evident that Jews continued to practice their heritage. Nor was it God's will for Gentile believers to become like Jews, but only in the Spirit, which the apostles made clear to us at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, and for both groups to dwell together in unity, despite their different callings.

Indeed, it was quite evident that the apostles continued to hold to their traditions as Jews (Acts 21:17-21), now having the grace and power of the Lord to do so (Rom. 8:4), so that they could also win their own people to the faith, which is vital for us to understand and contemplate during these days of Reconnection to help win Israel back to faith.

However, by the time Rome took control of the church, the Jerusalem church was no more and the percentage of Jews in the body of Messiah/Christ had greatly diminished. In addition, most of the church fathers misunderstood and wrongly interpreted Israel's plight and journey through their rejection of the gospel, thinking that God was now finished with Israel and teaching that the church had succeeded and replaced them.

This action actually severed the Jewish branch of the faith, then firmly establishing the Gentile branch as the only viable option. This is one of the main reasons why we see the church and Israel so separately, when in reality we are so interconnected and intricately linked. And so for the past 1,600 years, even amid the spiritual restoration of the church, this Gentile characteristic to the church has remained.

So much so that as the Lord now looks to awaken Israel in the last days and as a result, for the natural branch to re-emerge, it is just so foreign for Gentile believers in the

church to even contemplate, just as it was for the Jews back then, when Gentiles first started to come in. Isn't it interesting how the tables have turned? For there are numerous analogies we can draw between the two parts of the family when it comes to this spiritual reconnection between Jew and Gentile.

This is because the church still sees itself as Israel's replacement rather than its commonwealth, which it has been grafted into. And in light of the time and hour we are in before the Lord returns, this breach must be healed and our unity with our Jewish family restored; not only to help bring the balance of Israel forth because we are the catalyst of this mercy, but to complete the family and to prepare the bride for the Lord's coming.

The church is not a separate entity, but intricately linked into the vine, with a huge role to play out in Israel's spiritual restoration. Up to this time, the church has not yet properly understood this restoration because of its disconnection. This is the longing of our Father's heart, to restore His first-born and make us one.

The Israel piece is the final piece of the puzzle that ignites the rest, and just as God used them to bring us life through Yeshua/Jesus, so now in turn to complete the family circle, the church would be used to bring life back to them. Israel's spiritual restoration is absolutely essential to our future well-being and final destiny in the kingdom of God.

With this background in mind, we are now ready to take a closer at Romans 11, which we will do in February. {eo}

For part one of this article, click here.

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