

Tu B'Shvat – Celebrating God's Creation in the Year to Come

We all celebrate the start of a New Year on January 1. And as you probably know, the start of the New Year on the Jewish calendar is observed on Rosh Hashanah. But did you know that the Jewish people also celebrate another New Year?

It's called Tu B'Shvat, the "New Year for Trees," and it carries a message for all people of faith, Christian or Jew: God is still growing things, even when we can't see it.

What Is Tu B'Shvat?

Tu B'Shvat (pronounced *too bish-VAT*) is celebrated on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. In Jewish tradition, it marks the beginning of a new cycle of growth for trees in the Land of Israel. In Bible times, it served a practical purpose: it helped determine the age of fruit trees and how produce was tithed as commanded by God.

Over time, Tu B'Shvat became a celebration of God's Creation and a reminder of His blessings that come from the land. Many Jewish families observe Tu B'Shvat by eating fruit—especially fruit associated with Israel—and by planting trees.

Tu B'Shvat is a day that invites gratitude, reflection, and hope. It's also filled with biblical symbolism, as God's Word often uses trees to teach us about our faith.

Why Trees Matter in the Bible

Scripture is filled with images of trees and fruitfulness. In Psalm 1, the righteous person is said to be "like a tree

planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season.” That phrase “in season” is important. It reminds us that fruitfulness does not happen instantly, and growth is not always immediate. God works in seasons.

Tu B’Shvat arrives at a time when trees may look bare and lifeless, especially in colder climates. But Jewish tradition teaches that even when nothing seems to be happening on the outside, the process of new life has already begun on the inside. The sap starts to rise. The roots strengthen. The tree prepares for the fruit to come.

Our spiritual growth happens the same way. There are seasons when we may not feel strong, joyful, or especially “fruitful.” But that doesn’t mean God is absent; He is still there, preparing us and strengthening us.

How to Apply Tu B’Shvat to Your Faith

Although Tu B’Shvat is a Jewish holiday, it offers timeless wisdom for Christians as well—especially those who want to better understand the Jewish roots of their faith. Its themes and traditions can inspire us all.

Some choose to plant something—a tree, flowers, or even a small herb garden—as a reminder that growth takes time. Others use the day as a moment to pray for spiritual rootedness and ask God to deepen their faith for the year ahead.

It can also be a wonderful time to read passages of Scripture that connect faith to fruitfulness, such as Psalm 1 and

Jeremiah 17. God's Word reminds us that our lives are meant to bear fruit, and that fruit grows out of deep roots.

Finally, Tu B'Shvat offers an invitation to bless others. Fruit, in the biblical sense, is not only about personal growth; it's also about what our lives produce for others—compassion, generosity, and courage. Sometimes the most meaningful fruit we bear is the good we do when no one is watching.

A Fresh Start for Creation... and for Us

Tu B'Shvat also offers something important for people of faith in today's world: a deeper appreciation for God's Word, the Bible. Scripture was first given and entrusted to the people of Israel. The covenants, the prophets, and the promises of God came through the Jewish people. And through God's gifts, we all can gain perspective, gratitude, and a deeper understanding of the faith we hold dear.

At a time when antisemitism is rising and hatred is growing louder, it matters more than ever for Christians to stand with God's people. Tu B'Shvat may be a celebration of trees, but it is also a celebration of life, faithfulness, and fruit that comes in season. As you step into the year ahead, remember that even if your life feels like winter right now, God is still working. With deep roots in Him, you will bear fruit—at the right time, and in the right way.

Yael Eckstein is the President and Global CEO of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, the leading non-profit blessing Israel and the Jewish people with lifesaving aid. Learn more about the Jewish roots of your Christian faith, how you can support God's children, and this joyful celebration of God's Creation.