

On the Corner Fringe: Men Like Trees November 16, 2017

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/zvpwvzm/otcf-men-like-trees>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

On the Corner Fringe: Men Like Trees

In this presentation from **Corner Fringe Ministries**, **Pastor Daniel Joseph** examines a unique biblical miracle in the **Gospel of Mark** where a blind man initially perceives **people as walking trees**. Daniel suggests this was not a failed healing, but a deliberate opening of the man's **spiritual vision** to see humanity through a divine lens. By referencing the **Tanakh**, he illustrates how the **righteous in Israel** are frequently symbolized as trees, specifically **olive trees**, throughout Scripture. He further connects the physical life of an olive tree to the **believer's journey**, noting how being **beaten and crushed** through life's trials ultimately allows a person to **produce light**. Finally, Daniel uses the image of **new shoots** growing from old stumps to serve as a powerful metaphor for **resurrection and hope**.

[Introduction]



Insightful—Challenging—Cutting Edge—Biblical

[Daniel Joseph]

Welcome everyone, you're *On the Fringe* with Daniel Joseph.

This week, I was reading in the Gospel of Mark, and I came across a really peculiar passage. It's found in the 8th chapter. In fact, I would argue it's probably one of the most peculiar passages in all of the New Testament. You'll understand why in a moment. But here you get to the eighth chapter, and there's a story about a blind man who's looking to be healed. He wants to be healed, and Yeshua accommodates him. But how He does it is extremely unusual. We're told that Yeshua spits on his eyes, then places his hands on them, and asks him, "Do you see anything?" Well, he responds, and he does see something, but it's not what you would expect. In Mark 8:24, he says, **And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."** We're told in the story that Yeshua again lays His hands on the man's eyes, and then the man sees plainly. Then he can see clearly.

Now you begin to ask yourself, "Well, what just happened here?" I mean, how peculiar is it to have this man be touched by the Lord and then for him not to see clearly, for him not to see plainly? Was it merely a situation where the Lord underestimated the amount of power He would need to actually heal

the man? And of course, if you're a believer, you know that that would be absolutely silly. This is the man who commands the winds and seas, and they obey Him. This is the man who commands dead men to rise, and they obey Him. This certainly is not an issue of the Lord underestimating the amount of power that He would need to actually heal the man. So, what is it? I mean, what's really going on here? It's very peculiar, and it definitely strikes curiosity.

Well, when you read the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, I believe it sheds a little bit of light on this to help us understand, actually, what he is seeing here with these men like trees. And when you read the Tanakh, what you find is that in Israel, the righteous are actually likened to trees. I mean, throughout the Tanakh, we find this. For example, in Psalm 52:8, David likens himself to a **green olive tree in the house of God**. In Isaiah 61:3, the righteous are actually called **trees of righteousness**. You think about that. You think of all these examples that we have where Israel and the righteous are being likened to trees, and then we come to this passage, and we see this man who the Lord touched, and he did see something, but he saw men like trees walking.

You look at how the prophets describe Israel, and you look at how the prophets describe the righteous man, and then you go into this story, and you see Yeshua touches him, and it appears that what he saw was what the prophet saw. His eyes were opened up into the spiritual realm. I mean, that's a really powerful concept. Now, why would the Lord allow him to see what he saw and to show him this? We're not told. So, I mean, we could speculate till the cows come home, but the story is fascinating, nonetheless. And especially when you couple it with all the information we're given within the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh, over and over again, the righteous are called trees. Very, very fascinating.

In addition, I just got back from Israel, and I thought it would be appropriate to share this with you, considering the story we just read. I got to the land; one of the things that stunned me was that it is covered with olive trees. I couldn't believe these things are everywhere. You find them in the hills and in the valleys. They're scattered throughout the land. I was in awe of how many of these trees there were, especially when you consider that all you're looking at is dirt and rock. When you're going out to Israel, it's dirt and rock, and you've got these olive trees everywhere. Absolutely incredible, but I want to let you in on something that I saw when I came into the land.

See, when I came to the land, and I saw all these olive trees everywhere, I pictured the Israelites. It just struck me. It hit me. It's just for whatever reason, and well, the Bible would probably support this reason for why I saw what I saw, but I imagine the Israelites; when I'm looking at all these trees, all I could imagine were all the Israelites that covered the land, and it's really an amazing thing because, as I mentioned before, in Psalm, chapter 52, David likens himself to an olive tree. In Romans 11, the Apostle Paul calls Israel what? He calls them an olive tree, and the Gentiles who believe in Yeshua would be grafted in; they would be this wild olive branch grafted into the olive tree. That's a really awesome thing when you start to think about it. And so, I thought it was quite appropriate; you know, as I'm pondering, why am I visualizing all these Israelites? It's because this is what the Bible actually likens Israel to.

Taking it a step further than that. You think of olive trees; what do they bear? They bear olives. Very significant because I was actually there during the olive harvest, and the first thing they do is they beat the olive trees. I mean, these trees take a beating. I actually watch guys; they walk around, and they're just hammering these olive trees with sticks, and all these olives are dropping under the tree, and they collect the olives. But here's the thing: this story is not done. They collect the olives. Then what do they do? A lot of these olives go to the olive press, where they crush them to make olive oil. Now, in the first

century, you need to understand that the primary source of light came from the olive that was first beaten and then crushed, and then it could produce light.

Think about how deep that teaching is for us because the bottom line is Paul says in Romans 5:3-4, **And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.** In other words, when we are beaten and crushed, that's when we are refined, and the pureness is drawn out. We are refined like pure olive oil, and it's only at that moment, upon being beaten and crushed, that we produce light. I mean, it's a powerful concept. When you're in the land and you're looking at all these olive trees and the deepness and the richness of the Word, it just comes out. It's powerful.

The other thing I noticed about the olive tree, and I'll put it up here. I actually took a picture of an olive tree on the Temple Mount, and it was really unusual. Olive trees die, and the way they get it to spring to life is they chop off its branches, and then literally you're looking at a new shoot that's coming out of this olive tree that essentially died. In other words, we get a picture of resurrection, a powerful picture of resurrection.



And you think of Job 14:7-9; it says, **For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. ⁸ Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, ⁹ Yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant.**

That's crazy when you think about it. You know I'm looking at a dead tree. It was a dead tree, but now it has sprouted to life, and so you go to the land, and you start looking at the olive trees, and all you get from it is Scripture. You can't help it; there's some magical supernatural connection that is made, and then of course, pun intended, it illuminates stories like what I started with today in Mark, chapter 8, where this guy saw men like trees walking.

Well, that's all I have for today. —Numbers 6:24-26—**May the LORD bless you and keep you and make his face to shine upon**

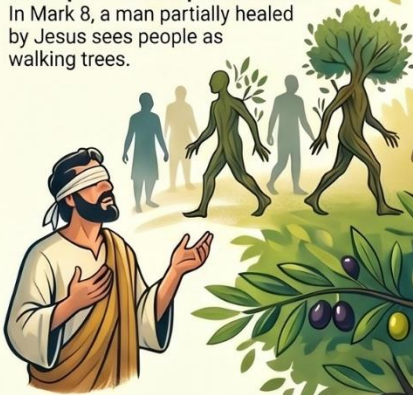
you. Bless you, guys.

Men Like Trees:

The Spiritual Symbolism of the Olive Tree

THE VISION OF THE "TREE-MAN"

A Glimpse into the Spiritual Realm:
In Mark 8, a man partially healed by Jesus sees people as walking trees.



The Tanakh Metaphor

The Hebrew Bible frequently calls the righteous "trees of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:3).



Israel as the Olive Tree

Biblical authors like David and Paul liken Israel to a green olive tree.



ISRAEL

THE REFINING PROCESS OF THE OLIVE

Beaten and Crushed to Produce Light

Olive produce oil for light only after being hammered and pressed.



Tribulation Produces Character

Much like the olive, human refinement often requires the "crushing" of trials.



OLIVE HARVESTING STAGE vs. SPIRITUAL PARALLEL



A Living Picture of Resurrection

New shoots frequently sprout from dead olive stumps, symbolizing hope and rebirth.



Facing tribulations and trials



Refinement of character and hope



Generating spiritual light and purity