



*Judges 9*

**YOTAM  
AND THE TREES**

*Study pack*



GKW 01.12.21

## THE TREES NEED A RULER

Judges 9:8-15 (adapted from NJPS translation)

The trees went out to anoint a king over them. They said to the olive tree: “Reign over us.”

But the olive tree said to them: “Should I leave my oil, with which by me they honour God and man, and go to hold sway over the trees?”

And the trees said to the fig tree: “Come, you reign over us.”

But the fig tree said to them: “Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to hold sway over the trees?”

Then said the trees to the vine: “Then you, come reign over us.”

And the vine said to them: “Should I leave my wine, which cheers God and human, and go to hold sway over the trees?”

Then said all the trees to the bramble: “Come you, and reign over us.”

And the bramble said to the trees: “If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, fire will issue from the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.”

הָלוֹךְ הִלְכוּ הָעֵצִים לְמַשֵּׁחַ עֲלֵיהֶם  
מֶלֶךְ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לַזַּיִת מְלָכָה עָלֵינוּ:  
וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַזַּיִת הַחֲדָלְתִּי אֶת  
הַשֶּׁנִּי אֲשֶׁר בִּי יִכְבְּדוּ אֱלֹהִים  
וְאֲנָשִׁים וְהִלְכָתִי לְנוּעַ עַל הָעֵצִים:  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעֵצִים לְתֵאנָה לְכִי אִתָּךְ  
מֶלְכִי עָלֵינוּ: וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַתֵּאנָה  
הַחֲדָלְתִּי אֶת מְתֻקִי וְאֶת תְּנוּבָתִי  
הַטּוֹבָה וְהִלְכָתִי לְנוּעַ עַל הָעֵצִים:  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעֵצִים לְגִפֵּן לְכִי אִתָּךְ  
מֶלְכִי עָלֵינוּ: וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַגִּפֵּן  
הַחֲדָלְתִּי אֶת תִּירוּשֵׁי הַמְשָׁמֵחַ  
אֱלֹהִים וְאֲנָשִׁים וְהִלְכָתִי לְנוּעַ עַל  
הָעֵצִים: וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל הָעֵצִים אֶל  
הָאֶטָד לֵךְ אִתָּךְ מֶלֶךְ עָלֵינוּ:  
וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֶטָד אֶל הָעֵצִים אִם  
בְּאֵמַת אַתֶּם מְשָׁחִים אֹתִי לְמֶלֶךְ  
עָלֵיכֶם בָּאוּ חֶסֶוּ בְּצִלִי וְאִם אֵין  
תֵּצֵא אִשׁ מִן הָאֶטָד וְתֹאכַל אֶת  
אֲרְזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן:

## IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME

*Aesop's fable 262 (Perry edition)*

The trees went forth so that they could anoint a king to rule over them. They said to the olive tree: "Please be our ruler." The olive tree said to them: "Why would I abandon my oil, which is valued by the gods and men, in order to become the head of the trees?" The trees said to the fig tree: "Agree to rule over us." The fig tree answered: "Why would I abandon my sweetness and delightful fruit in order to become the head of the trees?" The trees said to the thorn bush: "Rule over us." The thorn bush said to the trees: "If indeed you have resolved to anoint me to be your king, come and rest under my shadow. Otherwise, a fire will come forth from the thorn bush and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

## THE PEOPLE NEED A RULER

*Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishma'el, Ba-chodesh 5*

Why does the Torah not begin with the Ten Commandments?  
A parable: somebody entered a province and said to the people: "I will be your king." The people replied: "What have you ever done for us, that you should rule over us?!"

So what did he do? He built them a city wall; he set up a sewage system; and he fought their battles for them. Then he said to them: "I will be your king." The people replied: "Yes, yes!"

מפני מה לא נאמרו עשרת הדברות  
בתחלת התורה, משלו... אחד שנכנס  
במדינה, אמר להם, אמלוך עליכם;  
אמרו לו, כלום עשית לנו טובה  
שתמלוך עלינו. מה עשה, בנה להם  
את החומה, הכניס להם את המים,  
עשה להם מלחמות. אמר להם,  
אמלוך עליכם; אמרו לו, הן והן.

## A MODERN OLIVE TREE?

Joshua Rozenberg, “Why Geoffrey Cox should stand firm”, 10 November 2021

Labour’s deputy leader, Angela Rayner, said yesterday: “You can be an MP serving your constituents or a barrister working for a tax haven. You can’t be both and Boris Johnson needs to make his mind up which one Geoffrey Cox will be.”



That view is at odds with the view of Parliament that ... I have held all my life. Being a backbench MP should not be a full-time job. Our representatives in Parliament should remain in touch with the real world.

... I was speaking to a former MP the other evening. He was first elected in the days when the route into Parliament did not begin in a political party’s research department. Conservative MPs in those days were not former special advisers. They had achieved success in commerce, the professions or other walks of life before offering their experience to the country at large. Labour MPs, who might have worked down the mines or in heavy industry before rising up through the trade union movement, were closely in touch with the needs and hopes of their fellow citizens.

... If he is forced to choose between his career as a barrister and his future as a backbench MP, I suspect Cox will not remain in Parliament for a moment longer. The Commons will not only lose a member of real stature in the world outside Westminster. It will also lose potential members who are not prepared to sacrifice their careers for a parliament that has lost its way.