

“The End Time Dimension Of The Parables” Lesson #6 - The Barren Fig Tree, Part 1

Focus: “The Bible is the fully inspired Word of God. It is the infallible revelation of His will. It is the authoritative revealer of doctrine, and it is the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. Prayerfully and humbly read and study the Bible more. For in it we will find hope for every crisis. But more importantly, we will find our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who died to redeem us from our sins.” ref. Psalm 119:142; Isaiah 8:20; 41:21-29; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-49; John 3:16-17; John 5:39; John 8:58; John 17:17; 1 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1:1-25; 2 Peter 1:16-21

READ: Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:11-14, 19-26; Matthew 3:1-2, 7-12; Luke 13:1-10; see 1 John 5:13-14; Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 212-218; The Desire Of Ages, pg. 97-108; Ellen G. White

Introduction: In this lesson we will study the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree. We are told in the book “*Desire of Ages*” that this was an “acted parable” (DA, p. 582.4). In order to understand this parable, it will be necessary to study two other “tree passages”. One is found in Matthew 3:7-12, and the other in Luke 13:1-10. Let’s delve right into our study.

The Message of John the Baptist

1. In Isaiah 61:3 God’s plan for Israel is compared with a fruitful tree:
“*That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.*”
2. What symbol did John employ to represent the Israel of his day? A fruit tree (Matthew 3:10).
3. Present when John preached were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. These people felt rich and increased with goods because they were sons of Abraham (Matthew 3:7, 9). see Jn. 8:33-34; Rev. 3:14-22

Note 1: John’s message was imparted to a nation which professed great piety and laid claim to the special favor of God. They were like a tree with abundant leaves but no fruit. see Matthew 23

4. John rebuked the Jewish nation because they were like trees without fruit (Matthew 3:8).¹

¹ The End Time Dimension of the Parables, #6, p. 41, by Pastor Stephen Bohr, SecretsUnsealed.org

Note 2: “Not by its name, but by its fruit, is the value of a tree determined. If the fruit is worthless, the name cannot save the tree from destruction. John declared to the Jews that their standing before God was to be decided by their character and life. Profession was worthless.” (DA, p.107.1) ref. Matthew 3:1-12; see Matthew 7:16-29

5. John encouraged the Jewish people to repent and bear fruits which flow from repentance (Matthew 3:2, 8). see Acts 2:38-40

Note 3: John’s call to repentance must have been a great surprise to the Jewish religious leaders. After all, were they not children of Abraham? Were they not keepers of the law? Did they not fast, pay tithe and keep the Sabbath? What were they to repent of? Lk. 18:33-40

6. There were other groups of people present when John preached. The parallel account in Luke (Luke 3:10; Luke 3:12; Luke 3:14) tells us that the people, the publicans [tax collectors], and the soldiers asked John what they should do. see Acts 13:42-45

Note 4: John the Baptist told the religious leaders that God could produce children of Abraham from stones. Notice that John was not speaking of literal stones: “As He called Abraham out from a heathen people, so He could call others to His service. Their hearts might now appear as lifeless as the stones of the desert, but His Spirit could quicken them to do His will, and receive the fulfillment of His promise.” (DA, p. 106.4) ref. Genesis 12:1-4; Jonah 4:9-11; John 10:16

7. John told the people to share their coats and food. He told the publicans to exact [charge] no more than what was appointed to them, and he exhorted the soldiers to not use violence or accuse falsely, and to be content with their wages. (Luke 3:10-14) Heb.13:11

Note 5: All these exhortations given by John had to do with human relations. This is the fruit which God expected the Jewish nation to produce. A broader description of the fruit is found in Galatians 5:22-26.² see 2 Peter 1:1-11

8. John’s message was one of judgment. He warned that every tree which did not produce fruit would be hewn [cut] down and thrown

² ibid., p. 41-42

into the fire ([Matthew 3:10](#)). He warned that this judgment process would be executed by the Messiah who would have His fan in His hand to thoroughly purge His floor. He would gather His wheat into His barn, but would burn the chaff with unquenchable fire ([Matthew 3:12](#)). see [Matthew 10:34-42](#)

Note 6: The chronology of John's message is important. He began his preaching six months before Jesus began His ministry.³ ref. [Luke 1:36-80](#); [Luke 2:1-52](#); [Luke 3:1-6](#)

Appeal Song:

Closing: “The Pharisees were very strict in regard to the outward observance of forms and customs, and were filled with haughty, worldly, hypocritical self-righteousness. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels, and were skeptical in regard to God. This sect was largely composed of unworthy characters, many of whom were licentious in their habits. By the word “vipers”, John meant those who were opposed to the expressed will of God. John exhorted these men to “*bring forth fruits meet for repentance.*” That is, Show that you are converted, that characters are transformed. . . . Neither words nor profession, but fruits—the forsaking of sins, and obedience to the commandments of God—show the reality of genuine repentance and true conversion.” *Ellen G. White, Manuscript 112, 1901*; ref. [Luke 18:9-14](#); [John 9:40-41](#); [Matthew 22:23](#); [Mark 12:18](#); [Luke 20:27](#); [Acts 23:8](#); [Acts 24:21](#); [John 11:45-54](#); [John 7:31-53](#); [John 8:1-11](#); [Luke 7:36-50](#); [Luke 22:31-34](#); [Acts 26:19-20](#)

³ *ibid.*, p. 42

Lesson #6 - The Barren Fig Tree, Part 1

Tune of "O Zion Haste," by James Wall⁴

Jesus came to the fig tree hungry,
Wanting to find figs hidden by it's leaves;
And He came to Israel hungry, hoping
To find fruit of righteousness.

Jesus is hungry, looking for righteousness,
In His followers to share and bless the world.

Israel was given every privilege
They had good gifts to share with all the world.
God's law could keep them, as it kept Jesus,
Seeking the lost to share His love for them.

Pride and self-sufficiency, brought Israel to ruin
Souls eligible for salvation were not told of God.

Because they did not kept God's law in earnest,
They could not do the work's of Jesus Christ;
Their selfishness brought ruin to their nation,
Thinking of self, they shun the grace of God.

Treasure of truth, they did not share,
They did not spread good news every where.

In the barren fig tree they might have read,
Both their sin and their punishment;
The tree showed what the Jews would become
When God's was removed from them.

Refusing to bless others, their blessings ceased;
Israel had fallen by their own iniquity.

⁴ Words adapted by Barbara J. Hales on June, 27, 2022, from from E.G.White's, *Desire of Ages* p. 583.