

“The End Time Dimension Of The Parables” Lesson #6 - The Barren Fig Tree, Part 2

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. Ps. 119:142; Isa. 8:20; 41:21-29; Matt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4; 24:25-27, 32, 44-49; Jn. 3:16-17; 5:39; 8:58; 17:17; 1 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 1:1-25; 2 Pet. 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

Review: John’s message was one of judgment. He warned that every tree which did not produce fruit would be hewn [cut] down and thrown 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; Deuteronomy 28:49-53; Jeremiah 6:6

The chronology of John’s message is important. He began his preaching six months before Jesus began His ministry. ref. Luke 1:36-80 Luke 2:1-52; Luke 3:1-6

The Parable of Luke 13

1. This parable is addressed to those who felt better, than the Galileans whom Pilate slaughtered, and the eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell. (Luke 13:1-3)
2. The vineyard in this parable represents the house of Israel. ref. Luke 13:6; Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 21:33-46
3. The owner of the vineyard symbolizes God the Father. (COL, p. 216.1) ref. Lk. 13:6-7; Isa. 5:1-3; Jn. 21:33-46; see Jn. 15:1-2, 8-9
4. The dresser of the vineyard represents Jesus.¹ (COL, p. 216) ref. Luke 13:7-9; Isaiah 5:1-7

¹ The End Time Dimension of the Parables, #6, p. 42-43, by Pastor Stephen Bohr, SecretsUnsealed.org

5. The fig tree represented the “generation to whom the Savior had come. . .” (COL, p. 214.2) ref. Hosea 9:10; see Matthew 11:16-30

Note 1: “Israel was a cumberer of the ground. Its very existence was a curse; for it filled the place in the vineyard that a fruitful tree might fill. It robbed the world of the blessings that God designed to give. The Israelites had misrepresented God among the nations. They were not merely useless, but a decided hindrance. To a great degree their religion was misleading, and wrought ruin instead of salvation.” (COL, p. 215.2) The book “*The Desire Of Ages*” adds: “That barren tree, flaunting its pretentious foliage in the very face of Christ, was a symbol of the Jewish nation. The Savior desired to make plain to His disciples the cause and certainty of Israel’s doom.” (DA, p. 582.4) ref. Ex. 19:1-8; Jer. 40:1-4; Matt. 23; Matt. 24; Lk. 21; Hos. 4:6; 13:9; Jn. 8:12-59

6. The fig tree obviously had leaves. To the outward look it appeared to be healthy but it was devoid of fruit. (Luke 23:6) see 1 Samuel 16:7

Note 2: The Jewish nation was high on externals. They tithed, “kept” the Sabbath, fasted, practiced health reform, etc., but their lives were devoid of practical godliness. We might say that they appeared fine outside but they were rotten inside (see Matthew 23:23-28). “*The Desire of Ages*” remarks: “The Jewish religion, with its magnificent temple, its sacred altars, its mitred priests and impressive ceremonies, was indeed fair in outward appearance, but humility, love and benevolence were lacking.” (DA, p. 582.4) Matt.9:11-13; 12:7; Jn.13:35

7. Jesus called upon that generation to repent or they would perish. (Luke 13:1-3) see Mark 2:17; John 9:40-41

8. Most scholars agree that this parable was told by Jesus two and a half years into His ministry. This would mean that three years had passed since since John had begun to preach. This would explain why the owner of the vineyard came looking for fruit for a period of three years and found none. (Luke 13:7) ref. Isaiah 5:1-7

9. The dresser of the vineyard begged the owner to allow the fig tree to remain this year.² ref. Luke 13:8-9

Note 3: During the last year of His ministry Jesus dedicated special attention to the Jewish nation in the hopes that they would repent and

² ibid., p. 43-44

bear fruit. ref. Matt. 10:6; Matt. 15:24; Lk. 4:42-44; Jn. 12:20-33

10. The **parable of Luke 13:1-9** ends in suspense: “. . . if it bears fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” (Luke 13:9) Why don't we know at this point whether the tree bore fruit or not?

Note 4: “Jesus did not, in the parable, tell the result of the gardener's work. At that point **His story** was cut short. Its conclusion rested with the generation that heard His words. To them the solemn warning was given. “If not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” Upon them it depended whether the irrevocable words should be spoken. The day of wrath was near. In the calamities that had already befallen Israel, **the owner of the vineyard was mercifully forewarning** them of the destruction of the unfruitful tree.” (COL. p. 216.2) see Jonah 4:1-11

The Fig Tree Withers

1. On **Monday** before His death, **Jesus saw** in the distance a **fig tree with leaves** but when He arrived it had no fruit. (Mark 11:1-13) Matt. 21:19

Note 5: The fig tree first produces fruit and then leaves come out announcing that the tree has fruit. In other words, if the fig tree had leaves it should have had fruit as well!! *The Desire of Ages* remarks: “. . . one tree appeared to be in advance of all the others. It was already covered with leaves. It is the nature of the fig tree that before the leaves open, the growing fruit appears. Therefore this tree in full leaf gave promise of well-developed fruit.” But it adds that the tree “was a mass of pretentious foliage, nothing more.” (DA, p. 581.4) Jm. 1:22-25

2. There were other fig trees in that orchard that day, but they had no fruit. These trees represented the Gentiles. (DA, p. 583) Judges 9

Note 6: “All the trees in the fig orchard were destitute of fruit; but the leafless trees raised no expectation, and caused not disappointment. By these trees the Gentiles were represented. They were as **destitute** as were the Jews **of godliness**; but they had not professed to serve **God**. They made no boastful pretension of goodness. They were blind to the **works and ways of God.** With them the time of figs was not yet.”

3. **Jesus cursed** the fig tree with the following words: “*Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.*”³ (Matthew 21:19) see Matt. 23:37-39

³ ibid., p. 44; Note 6 ref. DA, p. 583.1

4. The next day when **Jesus and the disciples** passed by where the **fig tree** had stood, **it has dried up by its roots and had withered away.** (Matthew 21:20; Mark 11:20) see Matt. 27:25; Jn. 19:1-16; Acts 7:1-60

Note 7: If the fig tree represents the Jewish nation and the tree dried up by its roots and withered away, then **God's plan** for the Jewish nation is finished. Then the reestablishment of the Jewish nation in 1948 has not prophetic significance whatsoever!! “**Christ's Object Lessons**” solemnly warns: “The heart that does not respond to **divine agencies** becomes hardened until it is no longer susceptible to the **influence of the Holy Spirit**.” (COL, p. 218) ref. Deut.28:15-68; Matt. 23

5. This warning given to the Jewish nation not only applies to them: “The warning sounds down along the line to us in this generation.” (COL, p. 216.3) “**The warning is for all time. Christ's act** in cursing the tree which **His own power had created** stands as a warning to all churches and to all Christians.” (DA, p. 584.1) ref. 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 2 & 3 & 18

Note 8: It is highly suggested that the student of these lessons **carefully review Christ's message** to the Laodicean church in preparation of this lesson because Laodicea is repeating the history of ancient Israel. More on this in class!! ref. Rev. 3:14-22; Col. 4:16

6. What is represented by the **hunger of Jesus**? “**He** had come to Israel figuratively to find in them the **fruits of righteousness. He had lavished on them His gifts, that they might bear fruit for the blessing of the world.**” (DA, p. 583.2); ref. Isaiah 5:1-7; Lk. 19:41-44
7. Why did the Jewish nation bring ruin upon itself? “**They brought ruin upon themselves by refusing to minister to others. The treasures of truth which God had committed to them**, they did not give to the world.”⁴ (DA, p. 583.2) ref. Hosea 13:9; Acts 21 & 22:1-24

Closing: “In this generation there are many who are treading on the same ground as were the unbelieving Jews. They have witnessed the **manifestations of the power of God**: the **Holy Spirit has spoke** to their hearts; **but they cling to their unbelief and resistance. God sends them warnings and reproof**, but they are not willing to confess their errors and they reject **His message and His messenger. The very means He uses for their recovery** becomes to them a stone of stumbling.” (DA, p. 58) ref. Jer. 7:25; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Pet. 2:1-8; Rev. 2:14-22

⁴ ibid., p. 45

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Tune: O Zion haste, by James Walch⁵

**I know thy works, of charity, faith and service,
Which I will judge according to thy works.
Amid error and persecution,
I read each heart, I know who is Mine.**

**Resist error, stand for God's truth,
Know the reason for your hope.**

**Works of them selves, don't merit salvation,
God looks for hearts, yielded to His will.
outward display, of customs and traditions,
No substitute, for "Thus saith the Lord."**

**Satan knows his time has been determined,
Time for deception, coming to an end.
All who buy into his false religion,
Will, as with him, meet God's judgement.**

**O, won't you choose to be among the faithful?
Though times are hard, and life seems unfair!
Jesus has promised if we're overcomes,
We'll have His power, and a crown shall wear.**

⁵ Words adapted from Revelation 2:18, 26, & 28 by Barbara J. Hales, 5/3/17