

(Matt. 24:32) – It is interesting that in the midst of all this revelation of the destruction of the temple and the end of the age leading up to His second coming, the Lord spoke “*A PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE.*” The significance of this parable is that it gives us a clue concerning the meaning of all these signs and the time period in which they will appear. It also gives His disciples (who were then present) that a great change in God’s providential dealings with men is about to come, and this great change is connected with and predicated upon His death on the cross. Is there any doubt that Christ is coming again? No! He has given us signs and warnings. Just as the moment a fig tree sprouts buds and leaves, we know summer is coming, we can know that when we see all these things come to pass, Christ is coming soon. The lesson is this – **WE AS TRUE BELIEVERS MUST LIVE BY FAITH IN CHRIST, LOOKING FOR HIM TO COME ANY MOMENT AND EXPECTING HIM TO COME FOR US.**

This message took place in the week leading up to Christ’s arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. The main point of all this is to show that the salvation of sinners lies neither in the Old Covenant law, nor in any connection with the physical nation of Israel (Abraham’s physical seed), nor in the temple in Jerusalem. Salvation is totally by God’s grace in the glorious Person and finished work of redemption (righteousness) of Messiah (God manifests in the flesh) Who is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. Everything necessary for the salvation of God’s elect will be fulfilled perfectly by the Lord Jesus Christ as the Surety, Substitute, Redeemer, and Life-Giver of God’s chosen people. This is true in the case of every sinner who is given the gifts of spiritual life, faith, repentance, and perseverance as they truly believe and rest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Matt. 24:33) – Notice the contrast between this fig tree and the one in Matthew 21:17-22 (cf. Mark 11:20-24). The cursed fig tree represents the nation Israel under God’s curse for their unbelief. Christ told them that the withering of the fig tree was nothing compared to what would take place in the lives of all who have faith in Him. The miracle of God’s grace in salvation would remove every obstacle that would hinder the kingdom of God, even “this mountain” which was a metaphor for the nation Israel which in God’s plan stood exalted as a mountain among the nations. This was the chosen nation that was greatly used of God to fulfill His purpose of grace for His chosen people in Christ. But now, in light of the Old Covenant being finished and the New Covenant established, and in light of them (as a nation) bearing no fruit of faith and repentance, Israel has been “cast into the sea,” trodden down and oppressed under the feet of the Gentiles. They would be scattered and lost in the world. Matthew 21:22 is speaking of all blessings of salvation and ministry which are given to God’s people (Jew

and Gentile) and come to fruition in spite of all that would oppose them. God's purpose shall stand.

In Matthew 22 we see the different groups that characterize unbelieving Israel trying to discredit the Lord, and He shuts them up. In Matthew 23 He exposes the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees and closes with a statement of the desolate state of the temple (Matt. 23:38). But here He speaks of the fig tree that "*PUTTETH FORTH LEAVES.*" This speaks of life. Even though Israel as a nation is cursed and spiritually dead, out of them will come life in and through the Messiah. This life would come from His obedience unto death in the establishment of righteousness so that God could save and justify His people. Also, out of this dead nation would come a remnant of grace. Even though compared to the nation as a whole they were few, many Jews were converted under Christ's public ministry, and many were converted at Pentecost and later. This would indicate the beginning of the age just as spring indicates that "*SUMMER IS NIGH.*"

(Matt. 24:34) – When "*ALL THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED*" – the abomination of desolation, the apostasy of the churches during the final tribulation period, the multiplication of false gospels featuring signs and wonders, the fig tree coming in leaf – know that Christ is very near, even at the doors. Keep in mind that the nearness of Christ's second coming cannot be measured by our view of time. It must be measured by God's view (2 Pet. 3:8). "*THIS GENERATION*" refers to the whole time of the New Covenant age involving the salvation of all of God's elect, both Jew and Gentile (cf. Psalm 22:30-31).

(Matt. 24:35) – Every earthly thing that holds our time and attention and captures our hearts will pass away (2 Pet. 3:10-14), but God's Word will not pass away (1 Pet. 1:24-25). We live in a sinful and dying world in which everything is temporal and passing away. We are all going to a world in which everything is eternal. Our standing, state, and condition in the unseen world of eternity depend entirely upon our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ in this world of time. And the only way we can know our relationship to HIM is by the Word of God – the Gospel of God's grace in Him by which sinners are reconciled to God. If you are washed in Christ's blood and robed in His righteousness now, you will be clean and holy forever. If you trust Christ as your Savior now, He will be your Savior forever. If you are one with Christ now, you shall be one with Christ in eternity. If you love Christ and are loved of Christ now, you shall love Christ and be loved of Christ forever. God's "*WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY.*" This includes His words of mercy for sinners in Christ and His words of condemnation to all who appear before Him without Christ.