

Hi John and Doves,
Herewith, Part One, of a meditation on the fig trees of Israel,
while we wait for the Second Coming of our Lord.
Blessings,
EAR

The fig trees of Israel, and the end time generation – Part One

Introduction:

After the Jews fought to revive their nationhood and the State of Israel was declared mid-20th Century, many Bible scholars pointed to Jesus' parable about the **fig tree** that had **tender branches and leaves**, as a prophetic symbol of Judah's revival as a nation.

*Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you KNOW that **summer is near**. (Mark 13:28)*

N.B. In Jeremiah 24:1-7, 29:15–20; and Hosea 9:10; **Israel** is likened to a **fig tree** that produces both good and bad figs; so these scriptures provided a precedent for Jesus to use fig-tree parables/metaphors to represent Israel. Jesus' disciples and the Jews, who heard Him speak, were educated with a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, so they would have been well aware of this prophetic connection.

Because modern Bible scholars concluded that **the tender [young] branches** on the fig tree in this parable were about Israel, they thought the birth of the **State of Israel** in May 1948 was **a sign to that generation** of Christ's imminent Second Coming. Then, others thought that the fig tree **putting forth leaves** referred to the **six-day war in July 1967** (when Israel took possession of additional territories in Gaza, Sinai, Golan Heights and eastern Jerusalem); therefore, **Israel's expansion** was **the sign** to this **later generation** that Jesus would soon return. Subsequently, Israel's continuing existence, development and increased influence—during the last 76 years—have been regarded as **conclusive signs** to **this present generation** who saw all these things occurring in Israel that Christ's Second Coming must be very near! [See end note ¹]

However, I have found this fig tree parable rather intriguing because it is positioned **after the signs** that precede Jesus' Second Coming, right in the middle of the dialogue about His return! (Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21) Also, although Jesus drew His disciples' attention to this fig tree's state of growth, Israel is not mentioned! So, the central position of this parable in Jesus' dissertation caused me to question why is it recorded right there (in all three Gospels), and to ponder about the relationship this fig tree might have to the other fig trees mentioned by Jesus?

Since I believe there is much more information that can be gleaned from the scripture passages that surround this particular parable (besides the eleven words that describe the fig tree's growth), this series of studies will explore some of the deeper meanings to be found within Jesus' fig tree parables, and examine the words that Jesus spoke about His return.

~~~~~

### **The Gospel words have been combined:**

Because there are several major topics and different figures (in the scriptures that enclose this parable), I have used background colours to help you follow each subject... i.e., **celestial events, signs and disasters**, **the generation still alive**, **Christ's Second Coming**, **His angel messengers**, and **Father God etc.**, **the Disciples**, and **God's elect**, and **the fig tree parable**. Also, within these verses there are a few nouns and loose pronouns that refer to definite topics, so these have been linked through the colours used! I have also posted separately, a coloured summary of these scriptures in both PDF and Scanned versions, which I suggest you print out if you want to follow this study.

Notably, in the scripture passage under review, Matthew and Luke provide almost identical words to those used in Mark's Gospel, but they also add some **crucial phrases** to Mark's **basic narrative** (below, or on the sheet). Consequently, to get the full meaning of what Jesus said on that occasion, I have inserted those **additional phrases** in subject context as Matt. etc. Omissions are noted similarly. Several of the **highlighted/coloured topics** will be commented on in the course of the series of studies I am preparing on this scripture passage. You will understand when you read it...

**Note:** All-encompassing prophecies—concerning still future events—are extremely difficult to put together: simply because snippets of prophecy are scattered throughout the Bible, like random pieces of jig saw puzzle spread over a very large table. Often, it is only **after the event has occurred** that we can identify and pick up the relevant (sometimes obscure) prophetic pieces that fill the gaps in the big picture (e.g., the hundreds of prophetic words in the **Old Testament** about Jesus' first coming as the **humble Lamb of God**, which could **only be recognised and applied to Him**, after the event)! Historically, many false dates have been set for Jesus' **Second Coming/parousia in power and glory**, either because people have miss-read the signs of His coming, or failed to interpret the scriptures correctly.

However, Jesus Himself has urged His followers to watch intently for **the signs** that precede His return, and although we are told—**only the Father knows the day and hour**—yet Paul says we *are not in darkness that **this day** should overtake us... (1 Thess. 5:4)*. So we depend on what is being revealed in the scriptures... and things that are occurring in the world... to disclose **the season** of His return! Presently however, there seems to be a consensus among end-time watchers that Hamas' **sudden and unexpected** invasion of Israel on Simchat Torah (October 7, 2023), has set a train of events in motion, which will eventually lead to the **consummation** and the end of this age. (Dan. 9:27b) See: [The King of the South 'pushes' at the King of the North \(Dan. 11:40\) \(fivedoves.com\)](http://fivedoves.com)

**Mark's (basic) narrative Mark 13:24–27, with inserts Matt/Luke records Jesus words:**

But in **those days**, immediately Matt. **after that tribulation**, **the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, And on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things coming on the earth Luke and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, Matt. **they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.** Luke **And He will send His angels, with a great sound of a trumpet** Matt. **and they will** Matt. **gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.****

Now learn this parable from the fig tree: and all the trees. When they are already budding Luke **When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you KNOW that summer is near.**

So **you also**, when you see **all** Matt. **these things happening, KNOW that it** the kingdom of God Luke **is near—at the doors!**

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

**NOTE:** A **generation** in scripture is attributed to the following verse... **The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.** (Psalm 90:10) Apparently, a **single generation** of people will live long enough to see of **all these things taking place**, which were referred to by Jesus.

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (Omitted by Matt).

[Then Matthew adds information about the days of Noah to Jesus' words, as if Jesus continued this dialogue.]

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and [they] DID NOT KNOW until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matt. 24:37–39)

**Luke adds his additional summary [of what Jesus said] on the same occasion:**

Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.' (Luke 21:10–11)

**Note:** Jesus called these events: **the beginning of sorrows!** (Matt. 24:7–14; Mark 13:7–8), cf. **Rev. 6:3–8**. These are the self-imposed horrors inflicted on the nations, via their wars and consequences, especially in the latter days with aerial warfare! (*fearful sights*, etc.) The great earthquakes in **various places** may refer to our modern knowledge of **where they occur on the globe!**

**N.B.** **Sword** (war), **famine** and **pestilence** are repeatedly referred to by Jeremiah as God's judgements on rebellious Israel. (cf. Jere. 27:13; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17; 44:12–13, 18, 27)

Jesus then described the long period of tribulation (persecution, trouble and death) that **His disciples and His followers would suffer during the whole Church age**, while the Gospel is being preached. (Cf. Luke 21:12–19, Matt. 24:9–14, Mark 13:9–13) This **period of tribulation**—that began with the stoning of Stephen and the death of fellow-Christian martyrs in AD 34—has sporadically persisted in the various nations of the world for almost two millennia! Jesus called the climax of that period, **the tribulation of those days!** (Matt. 21:29, above)

Simultaneously, during this long period of time, a disastrous **parallel tribulation—for the Jews and whole land of Judaea**—began with the Galilean uprising and rebellion against Rome and the First Jewish-Roman war (AD 66–74), which included the siege and sacking of Jerusalem by the Roman armies (Matt. 24:15–22, Mark 13:14–20; Luke 21:20–24), and the subsequent expulsion of Jews (the Diaspora) into the nations of the world for 19 centuries. This period is referred to as... **the days of vengeance**, by Isaiah and Jesus (Isaiah 61:2b, cf. Luke 21:22); the **abomination of desolation** [i.e., Roman army desecrating Jerusalem] (Matt. 24:14–21); **tribulation** (Mark 13:19–20); **armies surrounding Jerusalem; days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.** (Luke 21:20–22)

So, during these parallel and historic periods of tribulation... ***Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*** (Luke 21:24) This period will finish with a climactic crisis that Daniel calls... ***the consummation*** (Dan. 9:27b); ***the wrath/the indignation*** (Dan. 11:36), and ***the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation*** (Dan. 12:1). See end note <sup>2</sup> for expansion of these terms.

Although Luke 21 does not add details about either Noah or Lot directly to this scripture passage about Jesus' return, he attributes similar words to a separate teaching (contained in Luke 17), which refers to the social conditions that existed during the days of Noah and the days of Lot, which will recur on the earth, in ***the day when the Son of Man is revealed***...

*For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in ***His day***...* (Luke 17:24)

*And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in ***the days of the Son of Man***: ***They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.*** Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: ***They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;*** but on ***the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.*** Even so will it be in ***the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*** (Luke 17:26–30)*

Then, in the very next verse Luke adds a series of examples that Jesus provided, to show how unexpectedly—and without warning—some will be taken and others will be left—in ***the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*** (Cf. Luke 17:31–36, and Matt. 24:40–44)

So these verses show the combined and extended Gospel narratives—relating to the Second Coming of our Lord—on which my series of studies will be based.

~~~~~

The generation that sees...

The generation of people who have lived through the tumultuous times of WWII (1939–1945), ***who can remember*** the War, the Holocaust and its consequences, are now in their 80's and 90's! Those who were born with Israel in May 1948 will soon be 76, while those who were ***old enough to remember*** the '6-day war' in June 1967 are nearing 60!

Will the people who remember ***seeing all these things*** (about Israel) be ***the generation*** that will be alive at Christ's return? ***OR***, was Jesus referring to something else when He inserted this short parable about a fig tree into this dissertation? Nevertheless, the crucial question is whether ***we are the generation*** that lives to see ***all these things take place***, who will witness: the tribulation of those days... then the celestial events... view ***the Fig tree's development*** and ***know*** something about ***the approaching summer*** (which has not been disclosed)... watch ***society's moral deterioration***, as did Noah and Lot... hear ***the angels great sound of a trumpet***... see the ***sign of the Son of Man in the heavens***... and finally, watch ***Him coming in the clouds with great power and glory***?

Jesus was obviously referring to every one of these preceding topics, when He said... ***Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*** (Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32)

Note: If Jesus was referring to **the celestial events** that will follow **immediately** after the tribulation of **those days**, (cf. Matt. 24:29–31), i.e., celestial anomalies (different from the normal celestial cycle), which astronomers and sky-watchers have not seen yet, then it must also mean that **the tribulation of those days** hasn't ended yet!

So, why has this parable about the fig tree—whose branches, twigs and unfurling leaves indicate the approach of summer—been inserted right in the middle of the signs of Jesus' Second Coming and **notably**, written there **in all three Gospels**! The parable doesn't even need to be there to make sense of what Jesus was telling His disciples about the celestial signs and the disturbing events that will take place on earth preceding His return! But, what if there is a deeper meaning hidden in this brief parable? What did Jesus mean by saying **one particular generation will see all these things taking place**? And, what is the relationship between the buds and leaves on the fig tree... and the approaching summer?

Well, that is what we shall find out... in the next letter:

End Notes:

¹ [What is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

² **Note:** It appears that this long period of time called **the tribulation**, or **the times of the Gentiles** will end with the **consummation**... (it is translated variously in RSV, KJV and NKJV, below), as a **decreed end**, or **determined end**—i.e., the transition/inflexion point— that lies between **the tribulation** and the promised **Kingdom of God**.

... until the **decreed end** is poured out on **the desolator**. (RSV. Dan. 27b)

...until the **consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate**. (KJV. Dan. 9:27b)

...**even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate** (NKJV. Dan. 9:27b)

... till **the indignation** is accomplished; for what is determined **shall be done**. (RSV. Dan. 11:36)

...till **the wrath** has been accomplished; for what has been determined **shall be done**. (NKJV. Dan. 11:36)

...till **the indignation** be accomplished: for that that is determined **shall be done**. (KJV. Dan. 11:36).

And there shall be **a time of trouble** such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time **your people shall be delivered**, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. (RSV. Dan. 12:1)

And there shall be **a time of trouble** [for Daniel's people] such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time **your people shall be delivered**, every one who is found written in the book. (NKJV. Dan. 12:1b)