

Why The Fig Tree ?

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May 11, 2019

Introduction

The Lord used the Fig Tree as a metaphor because of its unique fruiting pattern. In Israel, following its Winter dormancy, the fig tree produces fruit before leaves appear. The sign of Spring is fruit on the barren branches of the fig tree. Following fruit set, the leaf buds begin to grow. Later in the Spring, one can expect to find edible fruit on the fig tree. So, the fig tree has a "first ripe fruit at her first time".

Later in the Summer after the leaves and branches grow, it sets fruit again on the new growth branches for a later Summer harvest. Therefore, the fig tree has a "second ripe fruit at her second time."

The fig tree was used as a metaphorical expression of Israel, at Jesus' first advent ministry to Israel and this is demonstrated in Matthew 21:18-20. When Jesus hungered for breakfast and seeing a fig tree, he found it barren of fruit. This fruitlessness represented the nation of Israel's spiritual state, barren of fruit pleasing to the Lord God.

The Lord used the fig tree metaphor for Israel based on its horticultural fruit cycles. Israel's fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were viewed by God as "the first ripe in the fig tree and her first time". Following the second order of the resurrection/rapture, during Daniel's 70th week, a remnant of Israel, will produce fruit. This fruit will be "the remnant of Jacob's" acknowledgment and receipt of Yeshua/Jesus as Lord and Messiah. We know this with certainty based on the fig tree metaphors of the Gospels.

The Genesis Problem and the Fig Leaf

The Fig Tree represented "self righteousness". The first act of self-righteousness appears in Genesis 3. Eve disobeyed God's one and only statutory prohibition which stated,

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

This prohibition had been ordered prior to Eve's creation. (Genesis 2:17) Her knowledge of the prohibition must have come from Adam who would have instructed her to avoid eating of the tree.

In Genesis 3, Eve has a conversation with the serpent. (Genesis 3:1) The serpent knew Eve's weakness for food, particularly the forbidden fruit. The focus of the serpent's conversation was food and God's only commandment, a restrictive covenant about the forbidden fruit.

What is the biblical definition of self-righteousness? In this case, Eve asserted her will over God's will. So, self-righteousness manifests itself whenever man disobeys God's commandments and elevates his decisions and subsequent behavior over God's requisite behavioral standards for man. Thereby, man is right in his own eyes and God is wrong in man's eyes.

Paul, in Romans 10:3 says:

"For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

What was the cause of this first act of self-righteousness? Paul once again tells us in 1 Timothy 2:14 stating:

"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Deception was the first cause of self-righteousness. Additionally, we may discern between Genesis 2 and 3, that a lack of knowledge was a prerequisite to being deceived. We know this because God did not speak this restrictive commandment to Eve, but to Adam prior to her creation. Hosea confirms that a lack of knowledge is a deadly condition. Hosea 4:6-7 states:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

As they were increased, so they sinned against me: *therefore* will I change their glory into shame."

What actions did Adam and Eve take in response to rebelling against God's only commandment?

Genesis 3:7 states:

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." [Emphasis Added]

They died a spiritual death and the understanding of their eyes were changed in the "twinkling of an eye". They exchanged the glory of God for a lie. They exchanged their glorified bodies for bodies of corruption. (1 Corinthians 15:50) The glory of God became the shame of fallen humanity. They exchanged God's truth and God's righteousness for a lie. (Romans 1:16-32)

Therefore, the fig tree represents self-righteousness in opposition to the commandments of God, which includes the testimony of Jesus. (Revelation 12:17)

The Gospels

Each one of the thirteen (13) appearances of the "fig tree" in the Gospels speaks to the nation of Israel either directly or indirectly representing its national rebellion against God in the context of self-righteousness expressed in opposition and rejection of God's righteousness in Christ.

There is one parable which speaks so powerfully to the national image of Israel, as the fig tree, and the national rejection of her Messiah due to the absence of fruit. It is the parable of the "fig tree planted in a vineyard" which produced no fruit. It tells the story of Israel's Messiah's 3-year ministry tending to the fig tree with the hope of seeing it produce national fruit which was Israel's national recognition and receipt of her Messiah. (Luke 13:6-9)

The Fig Tree Parables

In the context of the Time of Jacob's Trouble or Daniel's 70th week, Jesus provided the Jews with a sign of "His second coming and the end of the world". (Matthew 24:3, Luke 21:7; Mark 13:4)

In two of the above Gospel accounts of the sign of the Fig Tree, we are instructed to "learn this parable". Jesus says that we can "know" the mysteries of the parables". (Mark 4:11)

The Fig Tree Shoots Forth

On May 14, 1948 the nation of Israel was born, at once, by Declaration of Independence. (Isaiah 66:8) However, national declaration of independence must have been followed by a war of possession proving sovereignty to the world. Four armistice agreements were executed between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon beginning January and ending in July 1949. Israel had prevailed at war against her Islamic aggressors proving sovereignty. On May 11, 1949, the world acknowledged the State of Israel as a sovereign nation by admission to the United Nations. Coincidentally, there were signs in the heavens in 1949. The speech of the host of heaven had spoken in signs with blood moons on Passover and Tabernacles in 1949 and 1950 heralding Israel's sovereignty from heaven. (Psalm 19:1-2; Genesis 1:14; Luke 21:29)

Luke tells us that we should watch for the "fig tree and all the trees". Israel, as "the fig tree", was admitted to the United Nations, as "all the trees", in 1949 most probably triggering a 70-year countdown to the end. (Zechariah 1:12-16)

This beckons us to consider this day, May 11, 2019, a Sabbath day in Israel. This day may be the terminal point of Zechariah's 70-years of indignation which precedes Temple Construction. It may be "the generation" discussed in the Fig Tree parables of Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13. According to Torah Calendar, the pilgrimage feast of Pentecost commences Saturday, at sunset May 11 and ends at sunset Sunday, May 12, 2019.

The Fig Tree Has a Genetic Problem

It is noteworthy that the three Gospel fig tree parables make a point to tell us that the first visible sign of growth is tender branches, leaf bud shoots and leaves. (Mark 13:28; 21:30; Matthew 24:32)

From a horticultural perspective, this fig tree has a big problem. It is genetically defective. The first signs of Spring time life of a fig tree in Israel is fruit set before its leaves appear. This fig tree is barren and failed to set fruit. This is just amazing because this is the problem Jesus found with Israel as metaphorically expressed the 13 gospel accounts of fig trees. Israel's leaders had professed the fruit of self-righteousness, rather than the possessing the fruit, the receipt of God's righteousness, in Christ Jesus. (Revelation 12:17, 14:12, 20:4-5) The fig tree parable has become true to the Gospel accounts. The nation of Israel, which was born at once on May 14, 1948 and admitted to the world commonwealth of nations in 1949 has produced no national fruit. Israel continues to reject Messiah Yeshua/Jesus.

The fig tree in Israel has two seasons of fruit production. As previously noted, it sets fruit as its winter dormancy ends and produces leaves which hide the Spring fruit and then on the new year's branches sets fruit again and in later Summer produces a second crop.

Hosea, prophetically looking forward to barren Israel draws us to consider the future. Hosea 9:10 states:

"I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved."
[Emphasis Added]

Here Hosea notes that "the fathers", metaphorically embodied by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", were the firstripe of the fig tree in the Spring at her first fruiting. Yet, he leaves open the question of the Summer fruiting season. What can we infer? Should we infer that there must be a Summer fruiting season of the fig tree during Daniel's last seven years, the Time of Jacob's Trouble? Our God of patterns surely invites us to complete the metaphorical story that the remnant will recognize their Messiah.

Paul and Isaiah tell us that "a remnant will be saved". (Romans 9:27; Isaiah 10:21-22; Revelation 12:17, 12:14, 20:4-5) Isaiah named his son *Shear-jashub* which means "a remnant would return to Jehovah". Isaiah has proclaimed that God will have recovered his people again from their second exile which is surely 70 A.D to 1949 A.D. (Isaiah 11:11; Ezekiel 20:34)

Amos 8:2 has an interesting view ancient Israel and its association to Summer fruit in a basket.

"And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more." [Emphasis Added]

If we mine for treasure in the Hebrew words for "summer" and "end" an amazing truth emerges. And this truth is applicable to the Gospel's fig tree parables. The ancient Hebrew letters, represented by pictographs, provide divine insight to a word's meaning. The Hebrew spelling of the word "summer" is Kaf, Yod, Tsade. The Hebrew spelling of the word "end" is Kaf, Tsade. The letter "Yod" is included in the middle of the word "summer" and omitted from the word "end". The letter "Yod" was drawn to represent the "anointing hand of God". Why has the end come upon God's people Israel? God's people Israel abandoned God. They rejected the "anointing hand of God". Summer fruit must include the "anointing hand of God" in order to be acceptable fruit. (James 3:17; Romans 6:22)

In the three Gospel accounts of this end times sign of the fruitless fig tree's appearance, we can know the fruitlessness represented the absence of the anointing hand of God, which is in Christ Jesus. The fig tree parables speak of the "end" which is described as Summer in agreement with Amos. The end is near. (Matthew 24:3, 33; Luke 21:7, 30; Mark 13:4, 28)

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

Let's embrace Hosea's prophecy and extend it to the Time of Jacob's Trouble and Second Advent of Christ:

Hosea 9:10:

¹⁰I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

Deuteronomy 4:29-31:

²⁹ But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

³⁰ When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

³¹ (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

Micah 7:18:

¹⁸ Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Ecclesiastes 12:13:

¹³Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

The Faith and Testimony of Jesus

If I were to offer a sequel to Hosea 9:10 metaphor based on my understanding of the horticulture of the fig tree parables, I would complete the interpretation of Hosea as follows:

"The Lord found Remnant Israel like grapes in the wilderness of Petra; the Lord saw the children of the fathers as the second ripe in the fig tree at her second time: and they endured the trial of faith in the time of trouble, a faith tried with fire being more precious than gold, to the glory, praise and honor of our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

As we see the day approaching, perhaps today May 11, 2019, may exhort one another to this hope of glory, in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps this Pentecost, Sunday May 11/12, 2019, we may join Jesus in the clouds as represented by the Pentecostal Temple Two Loaf Wave Offering symbolism: Loaf One: "and the dead in Christ shall rise first", then Loaf Two: "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: so shall we ever be with the Lord. (Leviticus 23:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) This follows the type of Christ's resurrection at First Fruits when the Temple offering raised up the Wave Sheaf Offering of Grain. Jesus represented the grain seed which had to die to produce much fruit. (John 12:24) We are His fruit. He is our Hope of Glory.

Come quickly Lord Jesus!