

The Cursing Of The Fig Tree – Mark 11:14

Mark 11:12-14 [New King James] *“Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.’ And His disciples heard it.”*

Was it unreasonable to curse a fig tree for being fruitless when it was not the season for figs? [Mark 11:20-21].

When we understand the yearly growth of a fig tree this incident becomes clear.

Towards the end of March the leaves begin to appear, coincident with this there appears a crop of small knobs, called taqsh in Arabic. These are **not** real figs, but a kind of early forerunner. They grow to the size of green almonds and can be eaten by anyone who is hungry.

The appearance is the harbinger of the fully-formed true fig some six weeks later.

So, as Mark said, the time for figs had not yet come. **But if the leaves appear without any taqsh, that is a sign that there will be no figs later in the year.**

Jesus Christ found “nothing but leaves.”

Why then did Mark take the trouble to record this incident?

This incident had the same lesson as the spoken parable of Jesus Christ in Luke.

Luke 13:6-9 [New King James] *“He also spoke this parable: ‘A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, “Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?” But he answered and said to him, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilise it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.”’”*

In the Old Testament a fruitful tree was often used as a symbol of Godly living, [Psalms 1:3; Jeremiah 17:7-8].

Jesus Christ pointed out what would happen to a tree that produced no fruit.

This is one way Jesus Christ warned His listeners that God the Father would not tolerate for ever their lack of productivity.

Luke 3:9 [New King James] *“And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

John the Baptist gave the same message to all who came to him.

All who have been called at this time to be disciples of Jesus Christ, [John 6:44] and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, [John 14:15-18] are expected to develop the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the very characteristic of the Eternal God, by following His lead, [Galatians 5:22-25].

In both the incident of the cursing of the fig tree and the parable of fig tree owned by the landowner non-production of fruits meant a tragic end to their existence.

A very powerful warning to every Christian.

Matthew 21:18-22 [New King James] *“Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, ‘Let no fruit grow on you ever again.’ Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, ‘How did the fig tree wither away so soon?’ So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.’”*

Jesus Christ in this act was showing His anger at religion without substance. Just as the fig tree looked good from a distance but was fruitless on close examination, so worship activities in the temple, or any church building today, are worthless when they are not bearing “fruit” of the Holy Spirit. One of those “fruits” is “faith” in what God can and will do through us, the result of our trust and commitment to Him.