

ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him the plan for the fullness of the times

**TO HEAD UP THE ALL THINGS IN THE CHRIST,
the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, in Him...**

(Ephesians 1:8b-10)

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Fig Tree in Scripture

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The Word of God uses many agricultural and horticultural metaphors. In particular, the tree is often used as a metaphor for people or nations or kingdoms or national powers. Several trees stand out, one of which is the fig tree, which is most notably associated with the ancient nation of Judah, especially during the first advent of Christ.

However, before looking at the fig tree in this light, we need to start with the book of beginnings, Genesis, and the first mention of a fig leaf (fig-apron). Obviously, if there is a fig leaf there is also a fig tree.

Symbol of Covering for Sin

Based on the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we know that the fig tree was there among the many trees. When Adam and Eve sinned and discovered they were naked after eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they made a fig-apron to cover their nakedness.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. (Genesis 3:7 NASB)

Thus, **the fig tree**, in the guise of the fig-apron, became a **symbol of covering** or, more specifically, **covering of nakedness**, which signifies **mortality**, which, in turn, signifies **sin**, for sin reigns (exists) in mortal bodies (Romans 5:12; 6:12).

Paul makes the point: **For indeed in this house** (mortal body) **we groan, longing to be clothed** (immortality) **with our dwelling from heaven** (spiritual, celestial, glorified body in the image of the Son of God), **inasmuch as we, having put it on** (in resurrection and transfiguration), **will not be found naked** (mortal) (2 Corinthians 5:2-3 NASB).

These few facts explain why the fig tree became a symbol of Judah. The many animal sacrifices offered by the Aaronic-Levitical priests only covered sin; they were not intended to remove sin. In fact, ancient Israel lived under this covering for their entire history of offering sacrifices. Their sins were never taken away, just covered, as a symbol of a greater sacrifice that would come and actually remove sin. It took the perfect sacrifice of God's Son to remove sin completely.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4 NASB)

Clearly, starting with Adam and moving on to the nation of Judah, the fig tree became a symbol of man's weakness and inability to take away sin. The best that could be done was the covering of sin. Only in the Son of God is sin taken away.

Good Figs and Bad Figs

Next, we need to turn to Jeremiah, the prophet who was raised up to speak to Judah in their apostate condition.

(2) One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten due to rottenness. (3) Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad figs, very bad, which cannot be eaten due to rottenness." (Jeremiah 24:2-3 NASB)

Jeremiah was shown two types of figs, very good figs and very bad figs, so bad that they were rotten and inedible. The Lord continued by explaining this vision to Jeremiah.

(4) Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (5) "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans. (6) 'For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. (7) 'I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.

(8) 'But like the bad figs which cannot be eaten due to rottenness--indeed, thus says the LORD--so I will abandon Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials, and the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land and the ones who dwell in the land of Egypt. (9) 'I will make them a terror and an evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I will scatter them. (10) 'I will send the sword, the famine and the pestilence upon them until they are destroyed from the land which I gave to them and their forefathers.'" (Jeremiah 24:4-10 NASB)

The very good figs were the ones who obediently went into captivity, which is called an iron-yoke judgment. In other words, they accepted the Lord's judgment to remove them from the land because of their falling away from the Lord.

The very bad figs were the ones who disobediently refused to go into captivity. They chose to remain either on the land or to dwell in Egypt. In either case, this was not the Lord's judgment for them. Since they refused to receive His judgment, the Judahites that remained became very bad or rotten figs.

So, during Jeremiah's day, as far as the Lord was concerned, the Judahites were divided into two classes of figs.

Good Trees and Bad Trees

Now, when Jesus appeared in Judah, He picked up the same theme that He had previously given to His servant Jeremiah.

Jesus said: **"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"** (Matthew 7:17-19 NASB).

Many people use these verses to refer to the lost or to Christians that they believe are not fruit bearers, for whatever reason. However, Jesus obviously had in mind the words that He spoke to Jeremiah some 600 years earlier about the good figs and the bad figs (Jeremiah 24).

The good figs of Judah accepted the Lord's judgment of them and willingly went into Babylonian captivity. In other words, they did not fight His judgment of them. Because of their obedience, the Lord promised to return them to their land and give them a heart to know Him. **"They will return to Me with their whole heart"** (Jeremiah 24:7). Indeed, a remnant returned to rebuild Jerusalem and this formed the heart of the good fig nation of Judah that followed Jesus and accepted Him as the King of Judah.

The bad figs of Judah refused to accept the Lord's judgment of them and instead obstinately remained in the land. In other words, they fought the Lord's judgment of them. Because of their disobedience, the Lord indicted them as rotten fruit that could not be eaten and pronounced a further judgment on them.

"I will send the sword, the famine and the pestilence upon them until they are destroyed from the land." (Jeremiah 24:10)

This was a prophetic indictment of the bad fig nation of Judah that later refused to follow Jesus and demanded His death, even though they knew He was the King of Judah. Jesus stated so through a parable using the metaphor of a vineyard to refer to the Judahites.

(38) "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' (39) "They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him." (Matthew 21:38-39 NASB)

As we know, the religious elite of Judah did in fact throw God's Son out of Judah and kill Him. In a sense, they had no choice for only the priests could kill the Passover lambs.

Fig Tree of Judah

Jesus gave another parable about a vineyard, but this time the fig tree was in its midst.

(6) And He began telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. (7) And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without

finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' (8) "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; (9) and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'" (Luke 13:6-9 NASB)

Judah's King had walked publicly in their midst for three years, but He found no fruit of the Kingdom. The nation was worthy to be cut down and burned; however, a plea was made for one more year. Within that year, this fig tree demanded the death of the very Trunk of the tree and sealed their destiny. So, when Jesus saw the lone fig tree, He cursed it as a sign of what was to come of the bad fig tree of Judah.

Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered. (Matthew 21:19 NASB)

(13) Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. (14) He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening. (Mark 11:13-14 NASB)

We need to be clear that this lone fig tree was the nation of Judah that was about to reject their Messiah. The religious elite or, as Jesus called them, the hypocrites were the source of the rot. Have you ever noticed that one rotten piece of fruit in a basket of fruit will lead to others becoming rotten? The scribes and Pharisees did just that to many of the figs in that day through their hypocritical hearts that did not love the Lord and were bolstered by their traditions and doctrines. Like their forefathers, they too fought the judgment of the Lord. They were under Roman rule by the hand of God but rather than submit to His judgment and wait for God to deliver them out of it, they wanted **a political solution**. They wanted to remove the yoke through the sword, not by the Spirit, and, for this, they did not inherit the Kingdom that they sought.

Is it any different in our day as many Christians are so willing to take up the physical sword to fight battles in the name of Christ?

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." (Matthew 23:13 NASB)

(6) He said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, hypocrites...: "This people honors Me with the lips, but their heart is far away from Me; (7) and in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Isa. 29:13 (8) for forsaking the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men.... (Mark 7:6-8 LITV)

Jesus declared: **The kingdom of God will be taken from you [cursed fig tree], and it will be given to a nation [blessed fig tree] producing the fruits of it (Matthew 21:43 LITV).**

In other words, the cursed fig tree would not inherit the Kingdom of God but instead be cast out of it as if it were rotten fruit. In fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah (29:9-10) and the following one from Jesus, God sent His Roman army to destroy the great city Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD.

"But the king [God the Father] was enraged, and he sent his [God's Roman] armies and destroyed those murderers [bad figs] and set their city [Jerusalem] on fire." (Matthew 22:7 NASB)

As Jesus approached the cross, He gave His disciples another parable about the fig tree.

(29) And He spoke a parable to them: You see the fig tree [cursed fig nation] and all the trees [all the nations]. (30) Now when they sprout leaves, seeing it, you will know from yourselves that now the summer is near. (Luke 21:29-30 LITV)

On the one hand, Jesus prophesied of the destruction of the cursed fig tree, and on the other hand, He prophesied of its rebirth. What does this mean? The key is in the fig tree having leaves (rebirth) but no fruit (barren). Jesus prophesied that a day would come when the cursed fig tree would reappear, not to bear fruit but to be judged, when God will once again send His army against this apostate nation.

The cursed fig tree of Judah disappeared as a nation with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. However, on May 15, 1948, the Jewish state of Israel came into being, and, on May 19, 1949, it joined the United Nations (UN) as a full member. Following Israel's national appearance, many nations (all the trees) came forth, for during the next three decades, the UN saw its membership grow by 92 nations. It is quite interesting that in the same decade that the *apparent* Jews captured Jerusalem (1967), the world saw the greatest increase of nations (42) since the inception of the UN in 1945. Over two-thirds of the current UN membership came about after Israel joined the UN in fulfillment of the Lord's prophetic word. Thus, all the trees refer to all the nations of the world that will be judged along with the fig tree nation. Why? Because they reject Jesus, the King of the nations, not just the King of Judah!

It is vital to understand that modern Israel is not the true Israel of God but an imposter that usurped the birthright name *Israel* from the house of Israel that lost its national identity when it was taken captive by the Assyrians from 745-721 BC. The nation of Israel was dispersed among the nations and lost its national identity; something that has continued to this day.

If we want to seek for the lost house of Israel, we must look to the Christianized nations of the west that were formed in Europe and the British Isles and spread from there to North America and elsewhere.

If the Zionists had taken the name *Judah* for their nation, they would have been closer to the truth, but even then it would not have been the truth, for the revived nation has more to do with the birthright claims of Esau and Ishmael than with the scepter of Judah.

Is the present-day Israel that rejects Christ producing the fruit of the Kingdom? No! Why? Because Jesus' judgment still stands: **May no one ever eat fruit from you again!"**

Pay close attention to Jesus' word. Many today believe that the modern-day Israel will bear fruit simply because they have the correct genes that make them God's chosen people. Genes do not make one God's chosen, faith does, regardless of one's genes.

Jesus indicted this fruitless fig tree over 2,000 years ago; no one will ever eat fruit from you again. Why? Because they are barren and will remain barren!

The King of Judah has already taken His scepter, and He is not returning to the present Jerusalem to sit on a throne. The present Jerusalem must be cast out, never to be repaired again.

(10) "Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you (11) and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial. (12) "This is how I will treat this place and its inhabitants," declares the LORD, "so as to make this city like Topheth. (Jeremiah 19:10-12 NASB)

By the way, *Topheth* is the *gehenna of fire* (the so-called fiery *hell*) that Jesus warned the Judahites they were in danger of going into. He did not warn of an eternal torture chamber of fire and worms; He warned of capital punishment, meaning destruction of Jerusalem and literal death of all who rejected Him and demanded His crucifixion.

Jeremiah prophesied of a day when Jerusalem will be destroyed and never again repaired. This day is coming.

For Christians today, Paul exhorts us to cast out the bondwoman and her son.

Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. (26) But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (Galatians 4:25-26 NASB)

But what says the Scripture? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for in no way shall the son of the slave woman inherit with the son of the free woman." Gen. 21:10 (Galatians 4:30 LITV)

Could Paul have been any clearer in his message? Keep in mind that Paul had been a Pharisee. He knew the law, and he undoubtedly had loved Jerusalem as so many did in his day. But take note that he aligned the present Jerusalem with Hagar and Mount Sinai in Arabia and told the Galatians that were reverting to the law to cast out Hagar and all associated with her, which includes the present Jerusalem. If Paul saw the earthly Jerusalem as the apple of God's eye, don't you think he would have taught on it someplace in his epistles? Even the writer of Hebrews, who could have been Paul himself, exhorted the Hebrews, who were in danger of

going back to the Old Covenant, they had **come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem** (Hebrews 12:22).

(9) He said, "Lo, I come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first in order that He may set up the second; (10) by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:9-10 LITV)

If God took away the first, which includes the first Jerusalem as well, then why do Christians believe the present Jerusalem is the chosen city of God based on a gene pool? If Paul, the apostle of the nations, never encourages the nations to embrace the present Jerusalem, then on what basis do so many in our day embrace it.

It is time to wake up and cast out the slave woman and her son and her city.

Finally, the good fig nation of Judah is the ecclesia of Christ, for this body of believers has joined themselves with the Lion of the tribe of Judah. However, even though the argument could be made and is made that this is the good fig tree, we must keep in mind that the symbolism of covering for sin is not entirely accurate for believers today, for Jesus has taken away sin, not just covered it. The New Covenant offers a much better and more complete and perfect salvation.

So, although we conclude with the good fig tree of Judah, we need to understand that we are joined with this tree because we are joined with the King who was prophesied to take the scepter of Judah and rule over the nations.

There are three other trees that speak more accurately to the ecclesia of Christ, and they are the oak tree, the olive tree, and the Tree of Life.