

The Parable of the Fig Tree

(Matt. 24:32-35; Mark 13: 28-32; Luke 21: 29-33)

From the fig tree learn this lesson: as soon as its young shoots become soft and tender and it puts out its leaves, you know of a surety that summer is near. So also when you see these signs (24:1-31) all taken together coming to pass, you may know of surety that He is near, at the very doors. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away till all these things taken together take place. Sky and earth will pass away, but My word will not pass away (Matt. 24:32-35).

This parable of the fig tree representing the reestablishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the space of generation of forty years in its relationship has been miss- interpreted by many, with the belief that in that generation of forty years after the birth of Israel, the Second Coming can happen.

According to the book, In the footsteps of the Messiah by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, there are two errors in this belief: (1) the Bible does not limit the period of a generation to be forty years, for the term “generation” can be twenty, forty, seventy, eighty and one hundred years. The only place where the term generation is given a specific time is found in Genesis 15:13-16, which is one hundred years. It says: And [God] said to Abram, Know positively that your descendants will be strangers dwelling as temporary residents in a land that is not theirs, and they will be slaves there and will be afflicted and oppressed for **400** years. But I will bring judgment on that nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with great possessions... and in the **fourth** generation they shall come back here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full and complete. “And in the fourth generation” of one hundreds Israel shall come back to their land.

The second miss-understanding is the fig tree representing the re-birth of Israel. This is evident in the passage of Luke which reads, “Behold the fig tree and all the trees”. If the fig tree represents Israel, what do all the other trees represent? YASHUA uses the example of a fig tree as an illustration for their understanding of His teaching. His point of illustration here is: *when the fig tree and all the other trees begin to blossom, it is a sure sign that summer is on its way.* He then connects the facts of comparison by saying: Even so, when you see these things taking place, understand and know that the kingdom of God is at hand

(Luke 21:31). As the blossoming of the fig trees show that summer is near, so when the events He spoke of happen, they will know that His Second Coming is near.

What then signals the return of Christ? It is not the re-birth of Israel in 1948, since YAHSHUA never mentioned it in His Olivet discourse. He mentioned, however, the Abomination of Desolation. This was the clue given to the Jewish nation. When they see it happening they will know it to be the signal of the soon return of YAHSHUA for them or for the elect among them. From the prophet Daniel, who YAHSHUA referred to, they will know that it will be exactly 1,260 days from the event of the Abomination of Desolation until the Second Coming of YAHSHUA. The point of the verse 34 is not the generation that sees the re-birth of Israel will be still be here at His Second Coming, but the generation that sees the Abomination of Desolation, will be here at the Second Coming, which is when He will come to establish His kingdom and we His bride will come with Him.

The Rapture is not to be confused with the Second Coming, for there will be no signs before it happens; it can happen at any time before the tribulation. The Second Coming of Christ however follows the Abomination of Desolation. It is a period prophesized by Daniel: *And he (the antichrist) shall enter into a strong and firm covenant with the many for one week (seven years). **And in the midst of the week (three and a half years) he shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing or pinnacle of abominations [shall come] one who makes desolate, until the full determined end is poured out on the desolator** (9:27).* This Abomination Desolation *will* be a sign to the Jewish nation of the soon coming of the Kingdom of God to earth- the Millennial Kingdom. It will be a time when the worldwide persecution of the Jews will cease; the Abomination Desolation is in itself evil, but with good ending attached to it, for it points to Messiah's soon return and it signals the end of Satan's attempt to destroy the Jews. So the Jewish generation that sees the Abomination Desolation will see the return of Messiah. That should bring comfort to the Jews who are going through the tribulation to know that there will be an end to their suffering.

This miss-interpretation of the order and finality of events fulfilling God's plan for men has caused confusion and division among Christians. The Word of God needs to be searched and studied in the light of the truth from the Holy Spirit's revelations and not from men's. YAHSHUA said, So also when you see **these signs**

all taken together, coming to pass, you may know of a surety that He is near, at the very doors (Matt. 24:33). So what are the signs? Starting from the Abomination Desolation when they must flee, the events will develop to bring their true Messiah. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, the moon will not shed its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and beat their breasts and lament in anguish and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt. 24: 29-30). In nowhere in this passage do we read the inclusion of the re-birth of Israel as a factor as the sign for the return of the Messiah.

If the Rapture is to take place before the tribulation, the belief of the generation that sees the re-birth of Israel will see the Second Coming of Christ does not fit in the schemes of time it which it will happen. For the sign of the Second Coming follows the tribulation. YAHSHUA said that His Second Coming for His elect (the Jewish remnant) will follow the tribulation in which the sun, and the moon will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky. The manner in which His Second Coming will happen will be with power and great glory – in brilliancy and splendor and the entire world will see Him, for it will be in complete darkness at that time. YAHSHUA in His Olivet Discourse was directing the events of His Second Coming to the Jewish nation, in response to their three questions: When will this take place, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age? In verses 36-46, He addresses the rapture and warns us to be vigilant and ready, for His coming for the church will be without signs. He said, You also must be ready therefore, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him. Who then is the faithful thoughtful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others the food and supplies at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom when his master comes, he will find so doing (Matt. 24:44-46). This verse is in reference to the coming of YAHSHUA for His bride in the air (I Thess. 1:16-18). Let's not be lost and confused in the idea of signs for His return for the Bride, but let's be in the attitude of readiness. That's what He told us to do.