

THE BARREN FIG TREE PARABLE

Request: “Could you explain the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree and what is meant by the phrase, cut it down?”

Simply stated a parable is a common earthly story with a special heavenly meaning. There is usually some specific point of likeness between the activity and the doctrinal point.

A parable contains its own interpretation of a doctrinal point to those with Positive Volition (Matt.13:10-17).

We will examine our lesson text by the following five homiletical points. This parable is not about a barren vineyard, but a fig tree in a vineyard.

- Fig tree (Lk.13:6) Planted in vineyard
- Fruit (Lk.13:7a) Purpose of creative order of fig tree
- Failure (Lk.13:7b) Problem – no fruit after 3 years
- Fertilize (Lk.13:8) Preparation – cultivate 1 more year
- Future (Lk.13:9) Plan – remove or remain

What is the activity of the earthly story? _____

What stands in its way? _____

What options are offered? _____

This lesson will study four aspects about the parable of The Barren fig Tree with emphasis on the meaning of the phrase, “cut it down!”

1. In our lesson text, Jesus Christ taught that a barren fig tree could be cut down if it didn’t produce fruit.

But Jesus taught that a tree that does not produce ‘good fruit’ could also be cut down:
(Matt.7:19) “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

This is a reference to false prophets in Matt.7:15-23
(Matt.7:20) “So then, you will know them by their fruits.”
(Matt.7:23) “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (te anomia).” (1 John 3:4)

It is NOT about works from the law, but about fruit or divine production from the gospel of Jesus Christ.
(Luke 3:8) “Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance.” (Gal.2:16; Rom.3:20-22)

Jesus taught that just as good trees produced good fruit, so good men produce good treasures out of good hearts
(Luke 6:45).

In Luke 6:43-45, Jesus taught that “each tree is known by its fruit.”

2. Our lesson parable was taught to people of the dispensation of Israel during the time of the historical coming of Jesus Christ (Isagogic).

For example: During the age of Israel, the Mosaic Law forbids planting grain in a vineyard, but not fruit trees.

(Deut.22:9) “You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard become defiled.”

The history of the fig tree fruit is related to creation (Gen.1:11-13) [day 3 with the Hebrew word ‘min’]
The biblical history of the leaves of the fig tree is related to the fall of Adam (Gen.3:6-7; Matt.13:34-35).

Question: What is the main doctrinal point for Israel’s existence in the world?
_____ (Gal.3:16-18; Rom.9:4-8, 24-26 and Heb.3:3).

Answer: Therefore the fruit is related to Jesus Christ (John 15:1-8, 16; Col.1:9-10).

This is important because the earthly story is related to the dispensation of Israel and the specific heavenly meaning is related to the coming of Jesus Christ.

3. Another dispensational factor that is related to our parable is the productive stage of the fig.

ML (Lev.19:23-25) [3rd yr. minus produce]; [4th yr. produce for Lord]; [5th yr. produce for you].

(Luke 13:7-8) “Behold, for 3 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? And he answered and said to him, ‘Let it alone sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.’” (2 Pet.3:9)

- Can you see how important dispensational thinking is in this parable?
- Can you see the effort to get this fig tree to produce fruit?
- Can you see the two doctrinal viewpoints in conflict?

4. Two Greek imperatives offer two different viewpoints to the problem of the unfruitful fig tree.

Cultivate it (Lk.13:8) **Let it alone** (aphiemi / a.a.impv.2ps) [allow it to remain]

Question: Why let it alone? (Lk.13: 9)

Answer: _____ (Rom.10:1-21; 11:1-2, 11, 15, 17-20)

Cut it down (Lk.13:7) **cut it down** (ekkopto / a.a.impv.2ps) [remove it now]

Question: Why cut it down? (Luke 13:7b)

Answer: _____ (Matt.21:43; Rom.9:30-33; Joel 1:6-7)
(Joel 12 and Hos.10:1-2, 13)

Message to the Church age:

(Rom.11:21-22) “For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness; if you continue in His kindness; **otherwise you also will be cut off.**”

Cut off or removed from a productive place in the plan of God.

(Rev.2:5) “Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lamp stand out of its place – unless you repent.”

[**The Church of Ephesus**] (Rev.1:12, 20; 2:1, 4)