

## PARABLE OF THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

## PARABLES OF THE FIG TREE AND BARREN FIG TREE

## INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **John 15:1-11.**

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. **2** Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. **3** You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. **5** I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **6** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. **7** If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples. **9** Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

## B. Parables?

1. Some scholars do not consider these two passages of scripture to be parables due to the fact that Jesus did not use the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto...."
2. These two accounts are not even about the kingdom, but are Jesus' teachings about Himself and our relationship to Him.

## JESUS CHRIST THE TRUE VINE.

## A. Jesus choice as to this metaphor has been attributed to:

1. Jeremiah's words as God spoke to Israel about being a vine (Jer. 2:21).

"Yet I planted you a choice vine,

A completely faithful seed.

How then have you turned yourself before Me

Into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?"

2. To the institution of the Lord's Supper which occurred during the last supper just concluded.

## B. The husbandman, God, will reject and destroy the degenerate vine, and the spiritual seed will be continued in the true vine, that is, "in Christ."

## C. There are two kinds of branches:

1. Those which bear fruit but need pruning (example of Peter).
2. Those which do not bear fruit and need to be removed (example of Judas).

## D. This story teaches two things about salvation:

1. One must be part of the true vine to be saved.
2. One must remain in the vine to be saved eternally.

## E. Christians are to bear fruit in their lives in three ways:

1. Showing forth the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

2. The doing of good deeds to meet needs (Titus 3:14).

Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

3. Producing more Christians by preaching the word (Mt. 28:19).

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

## PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (Mt. 24:32-35)

### INTRODUCTION.

Scripture text: Matthew 24:32-35.

“Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; **33** so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, *right* at the door. **34** Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. **35** Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

### COMMENTS.

- A. There is a season for spiritual things and for moral development, no less than for summers and fig trees. A discerning person can sense the onset of summer by the behavior of the natural creation around him; and a spiritually perceptive person can also ascertain the approaching judgment of God, whether upon an apostate city like Jerusalem or upon an evil and reprobate world.
- B. One significant departure of some of the versions from the Greek text should be noted. Instead of "HE is nigh" in Mt. 24:33, the Greek has "IT is nigh," thus being a plain reference to the judgment. The ability to predict the visitation of God's wrath extended to the destruction of Jerusalem, but not to the coming of the final judgment. The disciples predicted with great accuracy the fall of Jerusalem, and most of them fled to Pella during the siege and were spared, but no such ability pertains to the knowledge of the end of the world and the second coming.
- C. This verse (24:34) is the grounds for construing the whole discourse as a prophet of the destruction of Jerusalem and referring it exclusively to that event; but careful attention to the exact words Christ used removes the problem. Jesus used "these things" to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and "that day" to designate the judgment. Thus, this verse cannot apply to the second coming and final judgment but to the destruction of the Holy City, for he said that that generation would not pass away until all "these things" be accomplished. Furthermore, "this generation" has a much broader meaning than the lifetime of those who heard him. If Christ had intended that kind of meaning, he would have used words similar to those of Mk. 9:1. Therefore, we look for some special meaning of the term GENERATION. As regarded the destruction of Jerusalem, "generation" had a limitation to the lives of persons then living; but, as regards the final judgment, "generation" referred to the descendants of Abraham, meaning the race of the Jews and that they would not cease as a separate people until the end of time. If such an explanation appears ingenious, it should be remembered that in describing two events, plainly separated by centuries of time, some expressions would of necessity have double meanings; and it is the view here that such an understanding of the word "generation" is positively required and that such does no violence whatever to the text.
- D. This verse (24:35) affirms two propositions:
  1. That heaven and earth shall pass away.
  2. That Christ's words shall not pass away.The reference to the first of these grew out of the fact that he had just described the passing away of the heavens and the earth, and he made his word to be more permanent and abiding than any material substance. Christ's word shall judge men at the last day (see Jn. 12:48). Long afterwards, Peter was to remember these words of Jesus and write, "The word of the Lord endures forever" (1Pet. 1:25).

## PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

### OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL REJECTED THE MESSIAH.

- A. The Jews were God's chosen people. They had the oracles of God.
- B. The gospel went to the Jews first, and then to the Gentile.
- C. Yet, Israel rejected Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, Savior, and King.

### PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE (Lk. 13:6-9).

The text:

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.'"

- A. This also speaks of Israel's rejection of Christ. The three years is Jesus' earthly ministry.
- B. Note the following analogies:

1. Owner of the vineyard	the heavenly Father.
2. The vinedresser	the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The vineyard	the world.
4. The fig tree	the Jewish nation.
5. The three years	the first three years of Jesus' ministry.
6. Fruitlessness	Israel's rejection of Jesus.
7. This year also	Jesus' final year of preaching.
8. Thou shall cut it down	God's judgment against Israel.