

Sermon Outline
“Lesson of the Fig Tree”
Matthew 21:18-22

- I.** Considering the facts of the narrative
- A.** The continuity of the story
1. He leaves the temple for Bethany v. 17
 2. He returns to the city (temple – see v. 23) vv. 18-22
 3. Disputation in the temple vv. 23ff
- B.** The fruitless tree
1. A tree “by the way” was available to feed the poor
Dt 23:24-25; 24:19-22; Lev 19:9-10
 2. This tree has leaves, but no fruit
 3. Unsatisfied expectations (no early figs, *cf.* Song 2:13; Mic 7:1)
- C.** Jesus’ words to the tree (and the tree’s rapid death)
1. Literally “No more shall fruit come from you in the future.”
 2. May be read as a strong prohibition (virtually a command)
 3. It is *at least* emphatically predictive
- II.** The implications of the narrative
- A.** Figs indicate abundance, prosperity and safety
Dt 8:8 (*cf.* Num 13:23); I Kg 4:25; Mic 4:4; Zech 3:10
- B.** Figs have healing power – II Kg 20:7 (*cf.* Is 38:21)
- C.** Destruction of figs signifies judgment
Amos 4:9; Joel 1:7, 12; Hos 2:12; **Jer 8:13**; Is 34:4
- D.** The establishment of the new order is very near
The use of the strong word “immediately” in v. 19
The disciples’ reaction in v. 20 (repeating the word)
- III.** The approaching end of the old temple worship is prefigured
Cf. the first cleansing in John 2:13-22 *esp* v. 19.
Contrast the lack of immediacy in the John 2 narrative.
Consider the parable in Lk 13:6-9 – Jesus has allowed time.
Jesus instructs his disciples concerning faithful, obedient prayer:
Note the plural “you pray.” The removal of “this mountain” into judgment (the sea), is further predictive of the Church (Christ’s body) replacing the Temple (*see* Rom 16:20; Rev 3:9).
- A** 21:12-17 The old temple shown to be defiled and unfruitful
B 21:18-22 The fruitless fig tree dies
A¹ 21:23-27; 42-44 The old unfruitful temple is cast off (*cf.* 24:1-2)
- The only hope for Israel is in Christ: the stone the builders rejected.