



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- **Matthew 21:18**

**Now in the morning
as he returned into the city,
he hungered.**

- **21:19 And when he saw a fig tree
in the way, he came to it,
and found nothing thereon,
but leaves only, and said unto it,
Let no fruit grow on thee
henceforward for ever.
And presently the fig tree
withered away.**

- The fig tree was the favorite of all trees.
- The picture of the Promised Land was the picture of "a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees" (Deuteronomy 8:8).
- Pomegranates and figs were part of the treasures which the spies brought back to show the rich fertility of the land (Numbers 13:23).

- The picture of peace and prosperity which is common to every part of the old Testament is the picture of a time when every man will sit under his own vine and his own fig tree (1Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10).

- The tree itself can be three feet thick in its trunk.
- It grows to a height of from fifteen to twenty feet;
- Its thick branches can spread to twenty-five to thirty feet.
- It was, therefore, much valued for its shade.

- The humble cottage often had a fig trees at the door to provide coolness on hot days.
- Often a fig tree grew next to the well so there would be shade and water in the one place.

- The fig tree is unique in that it bears two full crops in the year.
- First in June and second in September.

- Often it was the shade of the fig tree which was a man's private room for meditation and prayer.
- And that is why Nathanael was amazed that Jesus had seen him under the fig tree (John 1:48).

- The fig tree is the very symbol of fertility and peace and prosperity.

- And it is also the symbol of Divine judgment.

- The picture of the wrath of God is the picture of a day when he would smite and destroy "the fig trees"

(Psalms 105:33; Jeremiah 8:13; Hosea 2:12).

- It was absolutely necessary that Christ's miracles should attest not only to the mercy of God

- But also to the ultimate judgment of God upon evil works.

- The Gospel of Mark tells us,
"For it was not the season for figs"
(Mark 11:13).

- So why did Jesus
"curse"
the fig tree?

- Many years ago
a young student of mine
rushed up to me
and asked

"If I cursed when I preached?"

- Did Christ,
in a burst of temper,
actually curse?
- Did He use profanity?
- That cannot be the case
since the New Testament
repeatedly affirms
the absolute perfection
of the Savior
(**Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22**).

- **Hebrews 4:15** (KJV)

- **For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**

- 1 Peter 2:22 (KJV)
- Who did no sin,
neither was guile
found in his mouth:

- **“Curse,”**
as that term
is used in the Scriptures,
does not carry
the same meaning
as the modern
English word connotes.

- Jesus **NEVER** actually used words anywhere close to our present day cursing.
- His **actual words** were as follow:
 - **Mark 11:14**
Jesus said to the fig tree,
"No one shall ever eat figs from you again!"
And his disciples heard him.
(GNB)

- Let us note that it was Peter who used the so-called "bad word".

- Mark 11:20 Now as they passed in the morning they noticed the fig tree had withered to the root.

- 11:21 Then Peter remembered. "Rabbi," he said, "there is the fig tree you cursed, all withered!"

- In ancient times,
to “curse”
a person or object
was equivalent to
pronouncing doom
or destruction upon
that person or thing.

- Under the law of Moses,
one sentenced to death
for a capital crime
was said to be
“*accursed of God*”
(**Deuteronomy 21:22-23**).

- The writer of Hebrews speaks of land that brings forth nothing but thorns and thistles as being worthy of a “curse,” whose “end is to be burned” (**Hebrews 6:8**).

- Some find a moral difficulty in this event.

- 1st we see Jesus “Cursing”
a fig tree

- for not doing what
it was not able to do.

- It was too early
in the season
to bear fruit,
and yet we see Jesus
destroying it.

- **2nd** we see Jesus seemingly using his miraculous powers for his own ends.
- That is precisely what in the temptations in the wilderness he refused to do.

- He refused to turn stones into bread to satisfy his own hunger. (Matthew 4:3)
- Therefore there must be some explanation.
 - What is it?

- **Prophets of the Old Testament**
often made use of
symbolic actions;
 - When they felt
that words would not
penetrate the human heart.
- They did something dramatic
to drive a lesson home.
 - Jesus did that
very same thing
in our lesson for today.

- **Symbolic action**

is meant to teach a lesson.

- And Jesus is teaching **two things** about the Jewish nation.

- # 1 It taught that uselessness invites disaster.
 - That is the law of life.
- The fig tree was useless; therefore it was doomed.

- The nation of Israel had been brought into existence for one reason and one reason only.
 - That from it there might come God's Anointed One.

- When the Anointed One came; the nation failed to recognize him;
- Not only that, they were about to crucify him.

- **Israel had failed**
in its function
which was to
welcome God's Son
- Therefore the nation
was doomed.

- Romans 10:1

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

- 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

- **Romans 10:3**

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness,

have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

- Failure to realize the purpose of God brings necessary disaster.
- Everyone in this world is judged in terms of usefulness.
- And he who is useless is heading for disaster.

- **# 2** It taught **that profession** without practice is condemned.
- The tree had **leaves**;
 - The leaves were a **claim** to have figs;
- The tree had **no** figs.

- Christ,
seeing the tree
decked out in full foliage,
recognized it instantly
as a perfect example
applicable to
the Jewish nation.

- And to us!

- The Jewish nation professed faith in God;
- But in practice they were the enemy of the Anointed One.
- Therefore they stood condemned by God.

- Now, let's bring this lesson close to home.
- Profession without practice was not only the curse of the Jews;
 - It has been throughout the ages the curse,
of the Church.

- During his early days in South Africa Gandhi inquired into Christianity.
- For several Sundays he attended a Christian Church, but, he says,...

- "The congregation did not strike me as being particularly religious;

- They were not an assembly of devout souls,

- But appeared rather to be worldly-minded people

going to Church

for recreation

and in conformity to custom."

- He, therefore, concluded that there was nothing in Christianity which he did not already possess

- And so Christianity was lost to Gandhi

with immeasurable consequences to India and to the world.

- **Profession** without **practice** is something of which **we are all more or less guilty.**
- **It does incalculable harm** to the Lord's Church;
- And it **dooms us** to disaster,
 - For it produces a faith which cannot do anything else **but wither away.**

- Of all Jesus' miracles, only this one was a curse.
- It was absolutely necessary that Christ's miracles should attest the ultimate judgment of God upon evil works.

- How might man reject God's son and expect no judgment?
- Divine power not only heals and blesses
- But it also brings judgment!

- The lesson of the
 ”fig tree”
 proves that God
 will eventually
 judge mankind
 and
 punish wickedness.

- Since the time had not yet come for the pouring out of the wrath of God upon the ungodly,
- Jesus made the curse to rest upon a tree and not a person.
- Thereby, giving warning to ALL mankind.

- **This same example**
is recorded in
God' s judgment
in the slaughter
of the 450 false
prophets of Baal
(1 Kings 18:22-40)

- Let us take note,
that when Jesus
cursed the “fig tree”
it was an act of mercy,
not of wrath,

- For ALL mankind
to heed the warning
that judgment is coming.

- Hebrews 9:27

**It is appointed unto men once to die,
but after this the judgment:**

- This incident was and is a warning of the true anger that will eventually fall upon the disobedient.
- Men who teach that God will save all mankind are grossly ignorant of the word of God.

- There are some **69 Bible verses** dealing with final judgment.

- **Critics** who would make something evil out of Christ's curse of the fig tree are exhibiting gross ignorance.

- In stead of being an act of anger

Christ's action serves as an example of

His patience.

- Psalm 103:8

The LORD is
compassionate and gracious,
Slow to anger and
abounding in loving kindness.

- The curse of the fig tree was a true prophecy of God's rejection of Israel *until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in* (Romans 15:29).
- Not long after the apostles began to preach the kingdom of heaven following the resurrection, the mainstream of Christianity bypassed Israel altogether.

- Mark 11:20 (KJV)
- **And in the morning,
as they passed by,
they saw the fig tree
dried up from
the roots.**

- The Jews believed that their king would come and would be a military leader,
- Saving the state of Israel from Roman bondage,
- Bring about a prosperity that was promised in the Old Testament.
- However, failing that that prosperity was spiritual and not material.

- He would not only be a military leader but He would be an economically successful leader.
- He would create utopia, to borrow a more modern term.

- But instead of attacking Rome,
He attacked Judaism.
- Instead of becoming a conqueror,
He was a **confronter.**
- Instead of talking about revolution,
He talked about righteousness.
- And instead of cleaning out the enemy,
He cleaned out His own house.

- And this was not consistent with what they expected.
- This was not the kind of King they were looking for.
- And still isn't.
- They are still not interested in the Jesus of the Bible.

- They are still looking for **a military leader.**
- They are still looking for an **economic deliverer.**
- They are still looking for **the wrong thing.**
 - Not only the Jew **but many Christians** are on the wrong trail.

- And Israel is not interested in that kind of Messiah.
- They are not interested in one who will confront them about their sins.
 - So nothing has really changed.

- They misunderstand the Kingdom of God today, as much as they did in the past.

- And so, when He enters Jerusalem, He does two things immediately.

- First,
cleanse the temple;

- Second,
curse the tree.

- And both are **monumentally significant things.**
- And the Jewish leaders understanding what He was getting at **wanted Him dead.**

- The first thing,
cleansing the temple,
was a denunciation
of their religion.

- It was a
denunciation
of their worship.

- The second thing,
cursing the tree,
was a denunciation
of them
as a nation.

- And while this lesson was given to the Jewish nation,
- Let us not forget that it is a lesson for us Gentiles as well.

- Romans 15:4

**Everything written
in the Scriptures
was written
to teach us,
(GNB)**

• Are
you
listening?

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



