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The Parables of Jesus Christ: The Fruitless Fig Tree

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

PARABLE FORTY-TWO: The Fruitless Fig Tree (Lk. 13:6-8)

SURVEY

A fig tree bore no fruit for three years, resulting in the owner's decision to cut it down. However, the gardener requested it be given another year.

SIGNIFICANCE

This is the first of two parables where Israel seems to be symbolized as a fig tree. For the other, see parable 43.

SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

- This forty-second parable may be directly associated with the thirty-third miracle, namely, the supernatural withering of a fig tree.

"Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. 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 . . . Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Mt. 21:18-19, 42-45).

- At any rate, the parable marks the tragic fulfillment of both Isaiah's and Hosea's sad predictions regarding Israel.

"Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (Isa. 5:1-2).

"Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images" (Hos. 10:1).