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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **Why did Jesus curse a fig tree?**

During the last week of the Lord's life on earth, before He was crucified, the Lord cursed a fig tree. Listen to the story:

## **Matthew 21:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry.

<sup>19</sup> And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

This happened on a Monday. The Lord would be crucified the following Friday.

Why did this happen and why did the apostle Matthew record this in his gospel account? There was obviously some spiritual truth being taught by this cursing of the fig tree, but what was that truth?

In this particular case the fig tree symbolized the Nation of Israel:

- Israel should have been a fruitful nation to God after all that God had done for the nation ... just like the fig tree should have had some fruit growing on it.
- Israel had all the signs of being a spiritual nation in fellowship with God ... just like the fig tree with all its leaves had all the signs of being loaded with fruit.
- When Jesus came to the earth, grew up, and began preaching to Israel, He discovered the hearts of the people were hard and most did not want the truth and they were not bearing fruit toward God ... just like the fig tree had no fruit on it when the Lord approached it.
- When the Lord cursed the fig tree and said, "*Let no fruit grow on you ever again,*" this symbolized that the Nation of Israel was being disowned by the Lord and would eventually be destroyed.

In the year AD 70, the Roman army came, surrounded the city of Jerusalem, and by August of that summer, the army broke thru the walls of the city and completely destroyed it. From that time until now, the Nation of Israel has been disinherited and is no longer a special nation to God any more. "*Let no fruit grow on you ever again,*" was a curse upon the entire nation. No more would Israel be a special nation to God. Today, America, Australia, and Canada are just as important to God as the Jewish people who have been scattered across the globe and the few who have gathered together in Palestine. The present day Nation of Israel is nothing akin to the Israel in Bible days.

- There is no temple – for it was destroyed by the Roman army and has never been rebuilt.
- There are no animal sacrifices for sin.
- There are no Levites who could serve as priests to offer sacrifices.
- In fact, no Jew today can prove he is a true Jew because all the genealogical records that were kept in the temple were burned up when the Roman army destroyed the city in AD 70.

When the United Nations established and recognized the modern country of Israel on May 14, 1948, this was not a fulfillment of Bible prophecy for the simple reason that the Bible never prophesied of the reestablishment of the nation in 1948. If any temple is ever rebuilt in Jerusalem, it will not be the fulfillment of any Bible prophecy simply because there is no prophecy of the temple ever being rebuilt. "*Let no fruit grow on you ever again,*" Jesus said in cursing the fig tree – a symbol of the Nation of Israel.

This is not an anti-Semitic message. Jews today need to obey the gospel and be saved just like anyone else. Jews today are welcome to believe in Jesus and obey the gospel today just like anyone else. The point being made when the fig tree was cursed is that Israel would no longer be a special nation to God any more from that time forward. God's special chosen nation today is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ:

### **1 Peter 2:9**

<sup>9</sup> But you [Christians – members of the church] are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, **a holy nation, His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

In God's sight there is no longer a special place for Jews (Gal 3:28) for they are now on equal footing with all other nations. God's special people today are the members of the church (Gal 6:15-16) – the church which the Lord die for (Acts 20:28). On behalf of the church of Christ I

invite you to become a member of God's special people – the church of the Lord Jesus – the church of Christ.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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