

The Second Coming

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[0 : 00] This evening, first of all, in the book of Zechariah, the second-last prophet of the Old Testament, you go to Malachi and the one before it, you're there. And it's in the last chapter, chapter 14.

Chapter 14, there at verse 1. Behold, a day of the Lord is coming, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in the midst of you.

For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives on the west.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount of Olives shall withdraw northward and the other southward.

[1 : 28] And the valley of my mountains shall be stopped up, for the valley of the mountains shall touch the side of it, and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah.

Then the Lord your God will come, and all his holy ones with him. On that day there shall be neither cold nor frost, there shall be continuous day, not day, not night, for at evening time there shall be light.

On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter.

And the Lord will become king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one, and his name one. And then into Mark chapter 13, just a few verses at verse 28.

Mark 13, 28. Mark 13, 28.

[3 : 13] But my words will not pass away. Amen. May the Lord bless us these two readings. To God be the praise and the glory. We sing again that soon and very soon we are going to see the king.

At times we've been looking at this concept of Christ in the Old Testament. And this concludes tonight by looking at the teaching relative to his second coming.

Mark 13. Mark 13 starts off. As he came out of the temple and one of his disciples said to him, Luke teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings.

And Jesus said, Do you see these great buildings? There will be not left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.

And that time the Jerusalem temple was the place of worship in the land of Judah. And Herod had spent 46 years building it.

[4 : 22] So when he makes this statement to the disciples, they are curious as to know when all of this is going to take place. Tell us, say Peter, James, John and Andrew, when will this be?

What will be the sign when these things are all to be accomplished? Now we take the chapter as a whole, and I'm only looking at a tiny little bit of it. It works out like this.

Verses 5 to 23, the end is not yet. 24 to 27, these are the signs of the end. And 28 to 37, the application is watch.

And so we come to this parable of the fig tree. From the fig tree, learn its lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

Now, the Bible's actually got quite a lot to say about fig trees. In relation to the nation of Israel. For example, under the idea of the prosperous reign of Solomon, we read in 1 Kings 4, And Judah and

Israel dwelt in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his own vine, and every man under his own fig tree, all the days of Solomon.

[6 : 00] So this is the fact that this fig tree is used in a parable by Jesus, shouldn't therefore surprise us. In the Gospel of Mark, there are in fact two occasions when Jesus mentions the fig tree.

The first of these in chapter 11. On the following day, when they came from Bethany, Jesus was hungry.

And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find something on it. When he came to it and found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season of figs.

He said to it, May no one ever eat fruit from you again. And his disciples heard it. This was a parable that Jesus was enacting to teach the disciples the importance of faith.

As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree wither away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, Master, look, the fig tree which you have cursed has withered.

[7 : 16] And Jesus answered, Have faith in God. And he goes on to say this, Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, whoever heard of a mountain being cast into the sea, except by great acts, what insurance companies would call great acts of God in the nature.

But Jesus is now saying this, you should learn this, because of prayer. Therefore I tell you, whatsoever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

So here's this great lesson that's being taught. First of all, with this fig tree, which he has cursed and has withered. And he's now saying to the disciples, if you have this kind of faith, you can do anything.

Now the second occurrence comes in chapter 13. From the fig tree you learn its lesson. As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

So in this second instance, another parable, Jesus is now talking about the fig tree in relation to his second coming.

[9 : 00] Fig trees are plentiful in the land of Israel. They are usually small stout trees, which have two trunks. Its leaves are leathery, and they are plentiful.

And the application that Jesus gives in verse 29, so also you, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, even at the gates.

Now what's he talking about? As I said in verses 5 to 23, what you get are the signs of the end. When you hear of wars and rumor of wars, be not alarmed.

This must take place. But the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places.

There will be famines. This is but the beginning of birth pains. From the fig tree, learn its lesson.

[10 : 13] As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. And so there's a sprouting going on in the events in the world.

You will hear of war. And we hear of it plenty in our newscasts today. I want to look at this, how it appeals to, or applies rather, to the nation of Israel.

Now, when we come to consider this idea that the fig tree represents Israel, which is what I'm saying, there's some scriptures I want you to draw your attention to.

First of all, in Jeremiah chapter 8 verse 13, When I would gather them, says the Lord, there are no grapes on the vine nor figs on the fig tree.

Even the leaves are withered and what I gave them has passed away from them. In other words, what's being said in that verse is that the nation Israel is represented by the symbols of vines and figs and they have not listened to the prophetic word and as a result, they have not produced the fruits of righteousness which God is calling for.

[11 : 40] The fig tree and its branches represent Israel. Turning again to the prophecy of Joel in chapter 1, we read this, A nation has come up against my land, powerful and without number.

Its teeth are lion's teeth and it has the fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vines and splintered my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it down.

Their branches are made white. So once again in that verse, the fig tree is representing the nation of Israel.

In that particular quotation, the invader has attacked Israel and robbed it of all its fruits. Israel is the fig tree.

When the fig tree, from the fig tree you learn its lesson, as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

[12 : 49] Now what Jesus is talking about here in this parable, undoubtedly, is the flourishing of Israel in the last days.

Now in the Mosaic law, in Deuteronomy chapter 30, we read this, When all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and return to the Lord your God, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.

not only there, also in Ezekiel 36, I will take you from the nations and gather you from the countries and bring you into your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols I will cleanse you. The Restoration of Israel in the Last Day.

On the 14th of May 1948, when Israel was constituted as a nation, the President of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, read out at the ceremony Ezekiel chapter 37, which deals with the vision of the valley of dry bones.

[14 : 30] And God is asking Ezekiel, can these bones live? And Ezekiel says, you know. So I prophesied as I was commanded and bone came together, each bone in its own place.

That is precisely what happened on the 14th of May 1948. So it has a lot to say about the future of Israel.

But going back, first of all, to the first fig tree, seeing in the distance this fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find something on it.

And when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season of figs. And he then said, may no one ever eat fruit from you again. And his disciples heard it.

Now I've already shown that the purpose of that particular fig tree in the very first instance was to teach the disciples the importance of faith.

[15 : 38] But if we think that the second fig tree speaks of the restoration of Israel, it's equally possible to see the first fig tree and its cursing as a symbol of judgment on the nation Israel who would be scattered because of their national reaction to his message and good news of salvation.

Because that is precisely what happened. The nation Israel was dead. The language of Hebrew was dead.

And if you ever compute how many, what the likelihood is of a nation such as Israel coming back to life and a dead language coming back into its own, it's many million to one against any such thing happening.

But what you have to consider is this is the power of God's word. When God says that he will restore the nation and bring them back to their own land, we have been privileged to see that. Let's think thirdly about the fulfillment. From the fig tree learn its lesson, as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

[17 : 09] The flourishing of Israel to be seen in this parable. This means as far as Israel is concerned, God has a future plan.

And in Romans 11, Paul tells us what that plan is. Verses 25, 26. Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers and sisters.

A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles come in and so all Israel will be saved. At the time of the Reformation, the Reformers looked at that scripture and assumed that what it was talking about was the fact that all the Israel of God would be saved.

But there is reason to believe that what's been spoken about is nothing less than a national conversion. conversion. He goes on in the same chapter and he says, the deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob, and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

That's Isaiah 59, verse 20. In the book of Isaiah, it states, he will come to Zion as redeemer.

[18 : 35] So the national conversion of Israel will take place when the Lord himself comes again in glory and in triumph.

Now that is the reason that we read Zechariah chapter 14. In verse 6 we read there, the Lord your God will come and all his holy ones with him.

So if we ask the question, where is this going to happen? It's going to happen on the Mount of Olives. Then the Lord will go forth, verse 4, and fight against those nations as when he fights on the day of battle.

On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which lies before Jerusalem on the east. So the Mount of Olives is pictured as the place where the Messiah will come yet future.

It is for that reason that every pious Jew wants to be buried at the very foot of the Mount of Olives. You may remember that people have been buried there.

[19 : 46] Robert Maxwell. I wouldn't have actually described him as a pious Jew but nevertheless that's where he's buried. Why? Because at the rock bottom of it he was a Jew and that's what he believed or at least that's what his family believed.

Not only that in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 1 verses 10 to 11 while the disciples are gazing into heaven as the ascension took place behold two men stood by them in white robes and said men of Galilee why do you stand looking into heaven?

This Jesus who was taken from you into heaven will come in the same way as you go saw him go into heaven and where they were was on the Mount of Olives.

So he will come in the same way and the same place. Now what will happen on that day? This is what will happen. Zechariah gives us the answer. Chapter 12.

I will pour out on the inhabitants of the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication. So when they look on him whom they have pierced they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him.

[21 : 07] So that on that day what is going to happen is that the nation of Israel will immediately recognize who this Messiah is.

Not only Jesus of Nazareth but Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This indeed is the hope that the Christian gospel gives to the world.

In 1962 Swiss theologian Karl Barth stood outside the United Nations building in New York and he said this real peace will not be made here though it might seem to be an approach.

Real peace will be made by God himself when he returns at the end of the age. This is the hope. This is the belief.

This is what Jesus said to the high priest. when asked are you the Messiah Jesus said I am and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.

[22 : 21] Jesus Christ is your hope. The hope of the world the hope of the church the hope of every believer.

what should you do if you believe in this hope? Jesus himself is very clear. Watch.

Watch in prayer. Watch in the task of evangelism. Watch in the task of encouraging God's people. Watch.

That is the application of this to us. To receive it to believe it and to announce it to the whosoever. Now he said look when these things begin to take place look up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing nigh.

[23 : 23] I don't know and neither do you when this event will take place but one thing is certain if we see Israel as a fulfillment of prophecy in the Old Testament and its flourishing has taken place because God said it would then the next bit is also true.

One day Jesus will come and be king of kings and lord of lords. We sing our communion song when I survey the wondrous cross verses 1, 2 and 3 only.

OK. Thank you. Thank you.