

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

Can we know . . . " *that day and hour* " !?!

For countless generations the words "***But of that day and hour knoweth no man***" have for *the faithful* been a continual guard rail against any temptation to presume we can 'know the time' of the Lord's glorious appearing. Coming directly from Jesus' lips, it has served as a constant and sober reminder that to know "*the day or hour*" is not a privilege to be aspired to by any ordinary man. As the gospel records of Matthew, Mark and Luke clearly tell us, not the angels - nor even the Son himself - are vested with the foreknowledge of "*the day or hour*". Only the Father.

Even if we '*did know*' the day or the hour of the Lord's return . . . Would this be his '*secret, stealthy return*' to collect his faithful servants (unknown to the world) - or - would it relate to His glorious appearing before all mankind, when "*every eye shall see Him*" ? We are never told.

Yet a closer examination of the '*Parable of the Fig Tree*' in the gospel records reveals '*startling truths*' that change the entire understanding of these passages. They *all* confirm the parable is NOT actually speaking of the Lord's appearing.

In the verses preceding the parable in Matthew, Jesus describes a *sequence of events* that will accompany His return:

- v29 Immediately after the 'tribulation' of those days, the political powers ('*heavenly bodies*') are eclipsed
- v30 Then shall appear '*the sign*' of the Son of Man in heaven
- v30 Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn
- v30 They shall '*see*' the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory
- v31 He shall send his angels with the sound of the trumpet to gather all '*his elect*'

In like manner to Mark's account, the terms "*immediately after / then*" clearly indicate these events happen in the 'same order' they are listed. All these events *come after* the conclusion of "*the tribulation*" (not before) and finally culminate in the Lord's glorious appearing in the sight of all the tribes of the earth. Critically, it is only at this moment (*post-tribulation & just before Armageddon*) He sends forth His angels to gather together His elect (*chosen ones / saints*). This means the "*clouds of heaven*" in the previous verse cannot in any way be referring to the saints (*as often claimed*).

All these details align perfectly with Daniel 12v1 . . . It is only "*at THAT time*": (1) the Lord Jesus Christ (*Michael*) returns and stands upon the Mount of Olives, (2) the dead *are raised* and (3) God's chosen people *are delivered* out of the Time of Trouble ('*tribulation*') which it is noted, has continued "*to THAT same time*" as Daniel states. This makes perfect sense, as all three events in Daniel 12v1 *only follow after* the completion of the Russian Gog's exploits (Daniel Ch. 8-11) when he is encamped in the Holy Land . . . immediately '*preceding*' the battle of Armageddon.

The details provided by Daniel and Jesus (in the gospel records) not only confirm the living saints will be required to *faithfully endure through* the final Time of Trouble ('*tribulation*') - but also - the saints will not fight at Armageddon, but instead will be '*secreted away*' in the wilderness for a period to await the judgment seat. Consistent with the divine pattern down through history, the faithful are invariably subject to trial and tribulation before being delivered. This means there will be NO secret return of Jesus "*at any moment*", nor any '*PRE-tribulation*' removal / calling away of the saints. Only when Daniel's prophetic image empire stands up and is victorious in the land . . . THEN we are taken.

We are here . . . UNTIL the end.

With a clear understanding of the verses and prophetic events preceding it, we then turn to the ***Parable of the Fig Tree***. In seeking to provide His disciples *of all ages*, with a deeper level of understanding of the words He had just spoken (vs. 29-31) Jesus then offers this parabolic vision of the future. It was a projection forward to the signs and conditions all His followers should look for in the latter days, which would precipitate His long-awaited return to the earth.

Matthew 24

- v32 *Now learn a parable of the fig tree ;*
*When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that **SUMMER** is nigh :*
- v33 *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that **IT** is near, even at the doors.*
- v34 *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till **all these things** be fulfilled.*
- v35 *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*
- v36 *But of ' **THAT DAY and HOUR** ' knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*

Firstly we note, while Matthew and Mark introduce it as the *Parable of the Fig Tree*, Luke's account provides a more accurate and detailed insight into the Lord's use of the parable: "*Behold, the fig tree, AND ALL THE TREES*" indicating that the focus of the parable is not just upon Israel, but rather it has application to all the nations ('*trees*').

We know the principle sign given by Jesus in the parable was the formative *budding forth* of the branches and leaves of the fig tree (*Israel*) which not only represented the restoration of the nation but was also a harbinger to a series of tumultuous events to come, ultimately bringing the return of the Lord himself. It is the '*unknown timing*' of this final momentous event that is widely considered to be the elusive question at the centre of the words "*But of THAT DAY and HOUR knoweth no man*". But is this actually the case? Does '*the day and the hour*' refer to the Lord's appearing?

As we consider the prophetic *budding forth* of the fig tree the reader is duly warned, when these things are seen then "*ye know that summer is nigh*". The Lord is very specific. He says "*summer*" is near, that is the *time of the harvest*. More precisely this is a synonym for '*judgment*' . . . divine judgment !! In this verse, Jesus never says *His return* or *His appearing* is near. This is of CRITICAL IMPORTANCE. There is a profound difference between *the Lord's appearing* and the *judgment of the world*. They are two entirely different events and should not be confused or conflated together. The Lord is warning the time of *the world's* judgment is near . . . not His own *appearing*, which comes later.

In verse 33, we have a further re-inforcement of this theme, as the Lord repeats "*So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that IT is near, even at the doors*". Once again, there is no mention of Christ's return or of his appearing, he simply repeats: "*IT*" is near ('*Summer*' ie. *harvest / judgment*). It is a theme Jesus had spoken of extensively in Matthew 13 (*Parable of Wheat / Tares*) concerning the harvest ('*judgment*') at the *end of the world*.

In verse 34, Jesus then provides additional information covering the parable's outworking, by informing his servants: the generation of people who witness these signs "*shall not pass (away), till all these things be fulfilled*". In other words, the completion of all these events will happen within the lifespan of those who witness its beginning (ie. 1948).

In verse 35, then follows an assurance, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*". It's a divine guarantee "*all these things*" will most certainly happen. More than this, it is also an *illustrative metaphor* prefiguring the actual fulfilment of this parable in the last days, as the '*judgment of the world*' will bring forth the destruction and overthrow ('*passing away*') of these '*heavenly and earthly*' political powers in the kingdoms of men.

Then in verse 36 is the key phrase: "*But of 'THAT DAY and HOUR' knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*". Just like all the previous verses, there is never any mention of Christ's return or appearing. Rather, it is once again a reference back to the central subject matter of the prior verses. It is the time of '*Summer*' or the harvest ('*judgment*' of the world) which is unknown. It is the '*very reason*' why so many verses speak of these final '*judgments of fire*' coming "*suddenly . . . as a snare*" !! By its very definition, the outbreak of this sudden destruction coming upon the whole earth has to be '*unknown*', otherwise it could be neither sudden nor unexpected.

By contrast '*the time*' of Christ's return (or *appearing*) is known. We are told in the most clear and unmistakable terms in Daniel 12v1: "*At THAT TIME shall Michael (Christ) stand up . . . AT THAT TIME thy people shall be delivered . . . and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*". If our names are written in the book, we will be '*called away*' to be with Christ immediately before Armageddon. It simply could not be clearer.

How is it then, the Parable of the Fig Tree and the question of '*the day and the hour*' have become so misconstrued? The problem arises from a fundamental '*misconception*' of bible verses that use the phrase "*as a thief*" in relation to the Lord's '*coming*' [Revelat'n 3:3, 16:15; 1Thess 5:2, 4; 2Peter 3:10] These few - but deeply misunderstood verses - have for centuries been believed to be speaking of Christ's personal appearing. They are not. Yet they constitute the entire evidentiary basis for the false and misguided doctrine of a *secret* '*PRE-tribulation*' return of Christ to call away his faithful. It is wrong.

"*Behold, I come as a thief*" Christ is not *a thief* . . . it is A METAPHOR. Yet confusion arises from a failure to realise "*I come*" is also A METAPHOR. His '*coming*' is not his visible and physical '*appearing*' it is his '*nearness*', that is the coming of '*his judgments*' in *the day of the LORD*. Just as it was in the judgments of AD70, he was neither visible nor His presence apparent. So also will it be in the coming day of the Son of man, as the invisible hand of Christ and his angels execute these final *judgments of fire*. This is the Lord's *coming* !! His judgments in the earth . . . in the form of plagues, chaos and fiery conflict.

There is a reason why the Parable of the Fig Tree is at the heart of the Olivet Prophecy. It represents the most crucial of insights the Lord gave concerning the end-times. When considered carefully and objectively, it reveals profound truths that open our understanding to the true events coming in the last days. NEVER does this parable say the Lord's return / appearing is near. Repeatedly it states that "*summer is near*" . . . that is *the harvest* or *judgment of the world*. We must be careful we do not read God's Word for '*what we desire to hear*' rather than '*what it is actually telling us*'.

It's of the utmost importance we understand the distinction between '*the coming*' of the Lord (*judgment of the world*) and of '*His appearing*'. If we are to be spiritually prepared and not '*caught unawares*' by the sudden destruction coming in the Day of the LORD - we need to give heed to the Lord's warning - so that we may escape "*all these things*".

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ('CLICK' on Blue Links)

' BIBLE EVIDENCE ONLY !! ' DOCUMENTS

- [TIME OF TROUBLE - or - CHRIST'S RETURN \(Which comes first ? \)](#)
- [SAINTS ENDURE ' THE FINAL TRIBULATION '](#)
- [DIVINE JUDGMENT ... THRO' MAN'S ' WICKED DEVICES '](#)
- [THE COMING ' END-TIMES ' PASSOVER](#)

FURTHER READING (STRONGLY RECOMMENDED)

1. [THE FINAL VISION ... Where there is NO VISION the people perish](#)
2. [EXPECTING THE LORD'S RETURN ... Why we are still here in 2022](#)
3. [REVELATION 12 \(Pt.1 \) ... The Great Red Dragon](#)
4. [REVELATION 12 \(Pt.2 \) ... The Dragon](#)
5. [THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD ... Cometh](#)
6. [CLIMATE CHANGE ... The ' Apocalyptic ' Bible Truth](#)
7. [THE DESTROYING ANGEL ... & The Coming ' End-Times ' Passover](#)
8. [THE COMING JUDGMENTS OF FIRE ... ' Pre-cursor ' to Armageddon](#)
9. [THE TIME OF TROUBLE ... We Are Here Until The End](#)
10. [THE RETURN OF CHRIST ... The Need For Bible Truth](#)
11. [THE END OF THE WORLD ... Parable Of The Wheat & Tares](#)
12. [THE BUYER & THE SELLER ... The Rod of Wickedness revealed](#)
13. [THE 2020 PROPHECY ... \(Job 20 \) A Warning For The Last Days](#)
14. [GLOBAL NUCLEAR WAR ... & The ' End-Times ' Passover](#)