

“Now learn from the parable of the fig tree . . . when you see all these things recognize that He is near, right at the door.” (Matt. 24:32-34)

- The fig tree represents the nation of Israel (Hos. 9:10; Joel 1:7; Lk. 13:6). Jesus’ parable warning of judgment on Israel (Lk. 13:6-9).
- The fig tree in the last week before the cross. On Monday Jesus cursed the fig tree (Mk. 11:12-14). Actions of judgment in the temple (11:15-17).
- On Tuesday the fig tree is withered (Mk. 11:20-21). On the same day He spoke another parable indicating judgment on the Jews (Matt. 21:40-43). Later that day he spoke the parable of the fig tree (Matt. 24:32-34).
- The cursing of the fig tree was a sign that Jesus had judged the nation of Israel for its lack of fruit. Within 100 years the temple was destroyed and the Jews fled the land.
- “this generation will not pass away until all these things take place” (Matt. 24:34). The Greek word for “generation” here means race, a reference to the Jewish people. The Jews will not completely pass away. God still has promises and covenants with them (Gen. 15:18-20; 17:3-8; Jer. 30:11; Ez. 36:24-28; Rom. 11:1, 11-12, 15, 25-29).
- In May, 1948, the “fig tree” (Israel) comes to life again (Matt. 24:32). This is the greatest sign that Jesus’ Kingdom is near (Lk. 21:29-31). Orthodox Jews have been making preparations for a new temple since 1973 (note 2 Thess. 2:4). The “other trees” in Lk. 21:29-30 are the ancient Gentile kingdoms (Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-7, 15-17; Rev. 13:1-2). They also come back to life in some way, perhaps meaning their renewed animosity towards Israel, and maybe something else yet future.
- We should recognize the “signs of the times” (Matt. 16:1-4). Other signs of the approach of the end of the age: 1) The alignment of nations. A revived Roman Empire (Dan. 2:40-44) and nations coming together to attack Israel (Ez. 38, 39); 2) Moral degeneracy of society (2 Tim. 3:1-5) and the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:7-9); 3) Apostasy in the church – moving away from truth once held (2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:3-4); 4) Birth pains (Matt. 24:7-8; Mk. 13:8).