# “Jesus Explains Fruit, Faith, Facts & The Future!”C:\Users\DERALD\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\YHB6KB29\CCPH LogoFINALBlack.png

MATTHEW Chapter 21:18-46

***> (v18-19) Where’s the FRUIT?***

**(v18-20) We’re in Jerusalem during the last week of Jesus public ministry, whereas, the Jewish religious leaders have rejected Jesus as their Messiah and the Jews overall have rejected God from their lives. Jesus has ministered to them for over three years and they will not listen, nor respond, so when Jesus sees the *fig tree* without fruit he curses it, for the *fig tree* symbolized the nation of Israel throughout scripture (Jer. 8:13; Hosea 9:10, 16).**

**- The fig tree had leaves, but no fruit. Israel had religion, but no reality.**

**- Let’s look to Luke 13:6-9 as Jesus teaches the “*Parable of the Barren Fig Tree”* –  *He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"***

**- After three years the Jews rejected Jesus and crucified Him in 32 A.D., then in 70 A.D. the Temple was destroyed, Jerusalem decimated, and the Jews deported throughout the Roman Empire. The Jewish people would not to have their land and country back until May 14, 1948, amidst turmoil and wars; whereas, Jerusalem would be obtained in the six-day war in 1967; more on those events when we engage in Matthew Chapter 24.**

***> (v20-22) What about FAITH?***

***-* INSIGHT: True FAITH produces good FRUIT - Matthew 13:23 - *But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."***

**John 15:5-8 - *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.***

**(v20-22) The *cursing of the fig tree* was also an object lesson on FAITH & PRAYER**

**– ANSWERED PRAYER begins with:**

**(1) *FAITH IN GOD*- James 4:2 - *Yet you do not have because you do not ask.***

**(2) *THE RIGHT MOTIVATION* – James 4:3-4 - *You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.* James 5:16-18 - *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.***

**(3) *We must pray according to HIS WORD which reveals HIS WILL* - 1 John 5:14-15 - *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.***

**- *Mountain* moving was a metaphor commonly used in Jewish literature of a great teacher or spiritual leader. In the Babylonian Talmud, the rabbis were called “rooters of mountains.” Such people could solve great problems and seemingly do the impossible.**

**- Early on King Solomon was a man of FAITH, PRAYER and BLESSING, turn to 2 Chronicles 1:7-12 - *On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Now, O Lord God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?" Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life — but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king — wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like."***

**- What is your prayer today? Let’s have Jesus move your mountain!**

***> (v23-32) Here’s the FACTS of FAITH!***

**(v23-27) When we follow the teachings and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in God, studying the Word of God, desiring the will of God, then praying, we will be BLESSED! In the blessing comes the BATTLE, we must realize that the enemy will confront us, distract, discourage, and dissuade the us from the power of prayer.**

**- Listen to Peter’s exhortation to all faithful believers in 1 Peter 5:8-9 - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.***

**- *Jesus* confronts the faithless, factious, seditious religious leaders with the prophetic voice of *John the Baptist*, a prophet indeed, in which John proclaimed the authority of Jesus and rebuked the hypocrisy of the religious leaders.**

**- Let’s remember the word of *John the Baptist* in Matthew 3:4-12 - *Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."***

**(v28-32) Jesus gives the religious leaders the *parable of the two sons* to confront, convict, and correct the religious hypocrites.**

**- INSIGHT - Notice the sins of the people being saved (*tax collectors and harlots*), isn’t it glorious to know that all can be FORGIVEN and SAVED in Jesus Christ, no matter what you’ve done or have said. God loves you! Jesus died for you! God wants to save you today and change your life forever!**

***(v33-46) How about the FUTURE?***

**(v33-40) In these verses Jesus continues to unveil TRUTH through another parable known as *The Parable of the Landowner.* This story provides the facts of Israel’s religious leaders past, present and future. The landowner is God, the vinedressers are the rebellious religious leaders, the servants were God’s prophets, and the son represents Jesus. In verses 35 and 36 the servants are beaten and killed. According to Jewish tradition Isaiah was sawn in two; from Scripture we know that Jeremiah was thrown into a pit of slime and tradition held that he was eventually stoned to death. Ezekiel was rejected, Elijah and Amos had to run for their lives, Micah was smashed in the face by those who refused to hear his message (1 Kings 22:24), and Zechariah was actually murdered in God’s own Temple (2 Chronicles 24:20-22; cf. Matt. 23:35).**

**- We have a New Testament summary of persecuted saints in the Old Testament era according to Hebrews 11:35-38 - *Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.* Standing before the religious leaders is the Son of God, their MESSIAH, and they will crucify Him.**

**(v41) The hypocritical religious leaders’ statement is true; the vineyard will be given to others, that is to Christians (saved Jews and Gentiles), Christ followers! Jesus said, Matthew 16:24-27 - *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.***

**(v42-46) Jesus hammers home the reality of their rejection and coming judgment, which is prophesied in Psalm 118:22-23. In the Old Testament, God is referred to as a *rock or a stone* (Deut. 32:4, 18, 30-31; Ps. 18:2, 31 46). The STONE is also a MESSIANIC TITLE. To Israel, Jesus was a *stumbling stone* (Isa. 8:14-15; Rom. 9:32-33; 1 Cor. 1:23). Israel rejected the Messiah, but in His death and resurrection He created the church. To the church, Jesus is the *foundation stone*, the head of the corner (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5). At the end of the age, Jesus will come as the *smiting stone* (Dan. 2:34), destroying Gentile kingdoms, and establishing His own GLORIOUS KINGDOM!**

**- Peter proclaimed *CHRIST AS THE STONE* in Acts 4:8-12 - *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."***

**- Who is this other *NATION?* It’s YOU & ME, all who believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation! Peter explains in 1 Peter 2:9-10 - *But you 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; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.***