

Day 3 in Jerusalem: Curse of the Fig Tree

In the morning, Jesus returned to the city from Bethany where He stayed overnight and became hungry. With no eating establishments in sight, He spotted a fig tree by the road.

But when He approached it, Jesus found nothing on the tree except for leaves. In late spring in this area, it is well known that most fig trees haven't developed mature fruit. But this particular tree drew Jesus' attention because it already had a full covering of leaves. It is an early bloomer, and its foliage signals that it should have early figs.

Once again, this Man who never ceases to amaze anyone said something astonishing. He said to the tree, "Let no fruit ever grow on you again."

What was even more astonishing was that the fig tree immediately withered away. If this Man could raise someone from the dead, heal the blind, the lame and the deaf, then why not make a fig tree wither with the words from His mouth? Or, on the contrary, why could He not just speak a word and have the tree produce fruit?

Such a feat should come as a surprise to no one, but then everything He does is amazing. Even His disciples, many of whom had been following Him for three years, asked, "How did the fig tree wither away instantly?"

This whole event seems greatly out of character for Jesus. But, maybe it's an object lesson on the power of faithful prayer. It could be a parable, something Jesus often used in His teaching.

Could it have possibly meant that fruitlessness leads to judgment? What about His followers? If they did not show fruit

from their ministry, would Jesus judge them?

But Jesus answered His disciples about the fig tree: “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed, and be thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. And whatever you ask in prayer, if you believe, you will receive” (Matt. 21:21-22).

When He returned to the city and entered the Temple, the chief priests once again confronted Jesus and asked Him by what authority He was doing these things. But Jesus outsmarted them once again by asking them a question.

“If you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. Where did the baptism of John come from, heaven or men?”

The Pharisees reasoned among themselves but could not come up with an answer. They said they didn’t know. And Jesus told them He would not answer their question, either.

Throughout the day, Jesus continued to confound and frustrate the chief priests as well as continued to teach those who would listen to Him. And that was a lot of people.

He taught in parables, and this confused many. He also told us that there would be many deceivers in the days ahead, but to make sure that we did not pay heed to them. He painted a very grim picture of the future, but He also told us not to be troubled, even though there would be wars and rumors of wars, that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. He said there would be famines, epidemics and earthquakes in various places. He also said they will hand you over to be persecuted and kill you and that we would be hated by all nations for His name’s sake.

 So, what would make someone like me want to follow Him? Because he also said, “He who endures to the end shall be

saved.”

I want to be saved in the end. Don't you? {eoa}

Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

Day 1 Day 2

Editor's Note: The preceding is an account of what one person could possibly have witnessed in Jerusalem on Tuesday. It is the third day of what happened, according to the Bible, during Holy Week. Some of the text is speculation.