

THE FIG TREE.

And seeing a single fig tree by the road he went to it but finding nothing on it except leaves, he said, "May no fruit grow on thee to the age," and the fig tree instantly withered. (E.D.) Matt. 21:19. That Christ used the fig tree to represent the destruction of the Jewish nation seems evident. This event occurred about the time Christ rode into Jerusalem (verses 2,5) at which time he pronounced the curse (Luke 19:30,41). This is further evident when we notice the parable given in Luke 13:6,9. The three years he came seeking fruit, likely refers to the time of Christ's ministry during which time he confined himself almost entirely to the Jewish people (Matt. 10:5,6). Some may say however that Christ's ministry was 3½ years and this would not apply, but while it was 3½ years from the baptism of Christ until His crucifixion it seems there was no special work done until about the passover, which was about six months after his baptism, and so commencing in A.D. 30 would end in A.D. 33, time parable was given according to the year in the margin of your Bible. The dresser of the vineyard says let it alone this year, which of course would make it four and extend favor one year beyond the crucifixion, but I do not think it was allowed to remain another year, for the latter part of the chapter shows that Jerusalem was left desolate and as he came searching fruit and found none we know from the connection in Matt. 21:19, it was at that point it withered. Some however have thought it unreasonable to suppose that the fig tree represents the Jews, for Mark 11:13 informs us, that the time of figs was not yet, which of course implies that the time for the Jews to bear fruit was not then, and if so why should Christ curse them?

But I think the objection vanishes when we remember that they were only a typical people and that the time they will bear fruit is after the fullness of the Gentiles have come in. [Rom. 11:25-27].

It is also necessary to bear in mind that the curse did not seal their eternal doom, for blindness only happened to them for a time, says Paul, and the same thought is intimated by Christ when he left their house desolate, (Luke 13:35) for they are yet to say: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This being true we find how appropriate is the rendering given in the Emphatic Diaglott, viz.: "Cursed to the age." And 'tis true that during the Gospel age, as a nation, they have borne no fruit, but when the bride is taken out from the Gentiles they will receive favor. [Acts 15:14,16.] We find that the cursed fig tree is to bud again according to Christ's own words in a parable given in connection with the signs of His coming in Matt. 24:32,33, and if the curse pronounced on it at the first advent shows us the blinding of the Jews, does not its putting forth leaves reveal to us the fact that they are in a fair way to bear fruit? So we understand it at least, and as there are unmistakable signs among the Jews to-day as a people, we recognize Christ's words and know "that summer is nigh." And not only do we recognize that the restoration of the Jews is at hand but also that the kingdom of God is nigh. [Luke 21:29,31]. And as the kingdom of God is due at some time to be set up, we rejoice and lift up our heads because our redemption is nigh. [verse 28]. For the setting up of the kingdom implies nothing less than the resurrection of the dead in Christ and change of the living, and knowing that the restoration **[R127 : page 5]** of the Jews takes place in the midst of great trouble and during the pruning out of the seven last plagues according to the type, [Micah 7:14 to end], and having the promise that we are to be counted worthy to escape all these things, [Luke 21:34,36,] we patiently wait for our gathering together unto Christ.

The redemption we understand to be the redemption of the body, [Rom. 8:23,] being caught away to meet Christ, and so to be forever with Him. This same idea seems to be brought out in Cant. 2:10,13, when Christ addresses the Church, saying: "Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away...the fig tree putteth forth the green figs;...Arise my love, my fair one, and come away."

We here find the fig tree maintained again and like Christ's words it is connected with our redemption. Surely we who recognize the signs of the times in connection with the prophetic measures, have great reason for rejoicing in hope of our speedy deliverance, and may we also give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the light shining on our path. May the truth have the designed effect, viz.: to sanctify us, separate us from the world, make us holy, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," [Heb. 12:14]. While in the presence of Christ we wait for our gathering together unto Him, and may the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, be found to the praise of His glory, whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice...receiving the end of our faith, won the salvation of our souls, (1 Pet. 1:7,9). So here we find that we are not to see Christ until our salvation, when we shall be like Him and see Him as He is, (1 John 3:2), and then and not until then will faith end, and we will not longer need signs, not even that of the fig tree, but until then we expect to watch by faith.

A. D. J.
