

THE BARREN FIG TREE
(Matthew 21:18-22)

I. ANTICIPATION (Matt. 21:18-19a)

A. The SETTING

1. It was MORNING
2. Jesus was RETURNING to JERUSALEM
3. He “became HUNGRY”

B. The FIG TREE

1. It was by ITSELF along the ROAD
2. It was “in LEAF” but had NO FIGS (Mk. 11:13)

II. DENUNCIATION (Matt. 21:19b)

A. Jesus REBUKED the TREE for having NO FRUIT

B. He announced it would NEVER AGAIN BEAR FRUIT

C. The tree WITHERED and DIED

III. APPLICATION (Matt. 21:20-22)

A. Explicit in the TEXT

1. The disciples were AMAZED that the tree had WITHERED so QUICKLY

2. Jesus explained the POWER of BELIEVING faith (cf. 17:20)
 - a. NOT faith in THEMSELVES
 - b. NOT faith in FAITH
 - c. NOT simply confidence that God will ANSWER
 - d. INCLUDES belief in God as the OMNIPOTENT CREATOR
 - e. INCLUDES belief in Christ as REDEEMING SAVIOR
 - f. INCLUDES belief in the Bible as God's REVEALED WORD

- B. Implicit in the CONTEXT (cf. Mk. 11:11-24)
 1. By cleansing the temple, Jesus denounced their WORSHIP (21:12-13)
 - a. They PERFORMED the RITUALS
 - b. They PERVERTED them for PROFIT

 2. By cursing the fig tree, Jesus denounced their NATION (cf. Hos. 9:10; Nah. 3:12; Zech. 3:10)
 - a. They put on a SHOW of PIETY
 - b. They produced no FRUIT of RIGHTEOUSNESS

 3. Jesus' DESTRUCTION of the tree symbolized His coming JUDGMENT for Israel's HYPOCRISY