



The Withered Fig Tree

Interpreting Symbolism

- * In Mat 13 we find the parable of the Sower. How do we interpret this?
- * Luckily Jesus does it for us.
- * We see that all the details specified in the parable are important.
- * We see that an understanding of the culture and knowledge of the time are necessary.
- * What if Jesus hadn't interpreted this for us?
 - * What would it look like to “under interpret” it?
 - * What would it look like to “over interpret” it?

Interpreting the Fig Tree

- * The story is found in *Mat 21:18-22* and *Mark 11:12-14*
- * What are the elements? A fig tree, leaves but no fruit, not the right season, the curse: “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”
- * Here’s what I think it means: *Jesus was symbolically condemning mankind’s decision to have the knowledge of good and evil instead of trusting God and relying on His grace.*
- * Wow, what a stretch!

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- * The Symbolism of the Withered Fig Tree
- * Fig Tree → Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (TKGE) → Getting knowledge God did not want them to have → Dying spiritually → Relating to God through obedience
- * What other things can from this?
 - ◆ Why did God change from the OT to the NT? ◆ Why did Jesus come when He did? ◆ What is the Gospel? ◆ What is Salvation?
 - ◆ What does Jesus mean about “throwing a mountain into the sea?”

Go throw a mountain into the sea

- * Let's look at this as a “case in point”. Mat 21:21-22
- * Does anyone know of this ever happening from this point until now?
- * Has there not been at least one person in humanity who had the faith to do this? (Did Jesus even do it?)
- * Elements: Mountain, sea, thrown into the sea, prayer.
- * Mountain is another symbol of Jerusalem and Israel, who were the only nation to which God had given the Law and who had developed this “approach” to following it; it is this that is being done away with by Christ's death and resurrection

Summary

- * This is another example of how knowing some Jewish cultural background can aid in the interpretation of the Bible.
- * Without this knowledge passages like these are confusing and typically just “not factored in” when in fact they play huge roles in unifying the Bible.
- * Cultural knowledge acts as framework or a lens or a key to interpreting passages and getting the most out of them!