

The Withered Fig Tree Series Summary

Part 1: The Purpose of the Series

I started making YouTube Livestreams in February of last year (i.e. 2024). I started them in part because I had left my church of 33 years in December of 2023, and I wanted to document my beliefs at the present time. The first two series, “The Era of the Spirit” and “The Pharisaical Lens”, fit this purpose. The other six, however, don’t. With these I really did, “just go with the flow”.

Bible passages that exemplify the series:

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord.

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Hebrews 10:23-25

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Preface for the series:

The Withered Fig Tree is an 8-series exploration of Christian theology, history, and spiritual practice, built to challenge assumptions and ignite personal transformation. Each series functions as a chapter in a broader theological journey rooted in Scripture, shaped by historical awareness and driven by a call to Spirit-led living.

It begins with *The Era of the Spirit*, establishing that God’s ultimate goal is not religious observance but the indwelling of His Spirit inside each of us. “The Pharisaical Lens” then equips viewers with a way to correctly interpret Jesus’ teachings by seeing how Jesus used the culture’s

own legalism and adherence to its own rules against it. *The Church* continues the critique by tracing how the early Spirit-led gatherings slowly morphed into institutionalized, legalistic forms. In *The Kingdom*, this vision traces through prophecy and history, demonstrating how the Kingdom arrived at Pentecost and was never meant to be a worldly empire but a spiritual revolution. *The Nature of Sin* offers deep comfort and clarity by redefining sin as rejection of the Spirit, not moral imperfection. *The Dates of Christianity* roots Jesus' life in actual historical and astronomical events, affirming that theology does not need to ignore reason or evidence. *The Christian Assembly* confronts the legacy of Constantinian Christianity and makes a case for returning to house-based, participatory gatherings. Finally, *How to Worship God* closes the loop, showing that true worship is not what happens in a building, but the daily offering of one's Spirit-led life.

Together, these series dismantle hollow tradition and reconstruct a Gospel built on the Spirit, love, and spiritual independence. They invite Christians to leave behind spectator faith and become temples of the living God walking in the freedom and power of the New Covenant.

Purpose of each individual series:

- 1) **The Era of the Spirit** – To trace the biblical narrative across three major “eras” distinguished by how God related with mankind: The Garden, Sin, and The Spirit. The series shows how God's intent has always been to dwell *within* His people through the Holy Spirit. The series aims to correct misunderstandings about the Spirit's role and to re-center Christianity on the indwelling Spirit rather than external things like religion, law, or tradition.
- 2) **The Pharisaical Lens** – To equip readers to interpret the Gospels more accurately by understanding the culture and worldview of the first-century Pharisees. The series introduces a simplified framework for decoding the motives, expectations, and errors of the Pharisees and uses it to challenge modern Christian interpretations of Jesus' words.
- 3) **The Church** – To examine what the Bible says about the church, how believers across history have interpreted and implemented that vision, and to rethink what the modern church should encompass in terms of theology, structure, unity, and purpose.
- 4) **The Kingdom** – To demonstrate that the Kingdom of God is the prophesied, spiritual, corporeal realm initiated through Christ and fulfilled in the New Covenant. This series defends the claim that the Kingdom began at Pentecost and explores prophetic texts, especially Daniel, to support this conclusion.
- 5) **The Nature of Sin** – This series explores the essence, definitions, and spiritual consequences of sin across Scripture. It challenges conventional 'fire and brimstone' preaching by focusing instead on the relational and covenantal dimensions of sin. With a deep dive into Romans, Hebrews, and other key passages, the series argues that the only unforgivable sin is the

rejection of God's Spirit, and that Jesus death removed the source of condemnation, opening the door for universal reconciliation.

6) The Dates and Times of Christianity – This 5-part series challenges traditional assumptions about when Jesus was born and crucified. It walks through the evolution of the calendar, the Anno Domini system, pagan influences on December 25th, and key astronomical, historical, and scriptural data points. Using sources like the Gospel of Luke, Josephus, and the Talmud, the series poses late September of 5 or 4 BC as my best guess of the birth of Jesus, Thursday, April 6th of 30 AD for the crucifixion, and Sunday, April 9th for the resurrection. The message reinforces that, regardless of the exact date, God's plan was fulfilled precisely.

7) The Christian Assembly – This series chronicles how early Christian assemblies, rooted in shared meals and fellowship within members' homes, slowly evolved into formalized rituals performed in ornate buildings complete with altars, clergy, and liturgy. Then, in early 4th century, the doctrine of the Real Presence set the stage for full-on temple worship when riches and power came from Constantine's embrace of Christianity. The series also critiques modern worship practices for maintaining vertical, passive engagement and calls for return to participatory, Spirit-led gatherings modeled after early house churches.

8) How to Worship God – This series argues that worship in the New Covenant is not about rituals, music, or church buildings but about *living by the Spirit*. Drawing heavily on Romans, Hebrews, and Jeremiah 31, the series contends that true worship is the offering of one's life in service to others. Church gatherings should be participatory and Spirit-led, designed to help believers love one another and grow in spiritual independence, not dependence on leaders or programs.

Next week I want to explore how I believe the Spirit led me through each series, and what He revealed to me that I don't believe I could ever have come up with on my own.