

Contrary to what some may teach, parables do not contain some hidden spiritual meaning. They are earthly stories conveying a clear spiritual lesson. Jesus used parables to teach the Jews kingdom lessons.

1. KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND KINGS

The Apostle Peter writing to Hebrew believers reminded them of Exodus 19:6 and declared in 1 Peter 2:9:

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous

Israel was to be a nation of Kings and Priests. Jesus preached that the Kingdom (earthly kingdom from heaven) was at hand (near), and that the primary target was lost Israel.

But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **Matthew 10:6**

2. PARABLES DESIGNED FOR BELIEVING ISRAEL

As the gospels are meant to awaken Israel to the promised Kingdom, so we conclude that the parables are designed to teach the Kingdom. Those who were disinterested in the kingdom and chose to resist the Messianic message, failed to understand the purpose of Jesus' ministry and the lesson of the parables to them (unbelieving Israel) was futile.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear! **Matthew 11:15**

3. MIRACLES A MESSAGE TO ISRAEL

As the parables taught Israel of their need to be ready for the Kingdom, so the miracles of Jesus gave testimony to the fact that the Kingdom was close at hand. The Kingdom would usher in prosperity, health and wealth for Israel. Disease and demon activity would not survive in the Kingdom. Signs and wonders validated Jesus claim to Messiahship. His ministry was a foretaste of the Kingdoms norm.

And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'
Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. **Matthew 10:7-8**

4. PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So, you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. **Matthew 24:32-34**

To understand this parable one needs to consider the preceding verses and their relation to Christ's second coming.

There are two schools of thought.

a) Some believe that Matthew 24:32-34 relates to Israel (the Fig Tree) becoming a nation again. In 1948 Israel was restored as a nation in the Holy land and this school of thought believed that Christ would return within a generation of Israel obtaining nationhood. They believe that a generation could be 40 years and if this time is added to 1948 it would take the year to 1988. So many incorrectly taught that Jesus would come back in 1988. When this didn't happen, they said a generation could be 50 years taking the year to 1998. Some now claim that a generation is 70 years (three score and ten). So 2018 was set as the new date by those who believe that the parable refers to Israel's rebirth as the Fig Tree.



b) The other school of thought is the more plausible explanation. The parable simply teaches that observers of a fig tree's nature know that when the leaves begin to grow, summer is fast approaching, so Jesus illustrated that the sign of His return could be anticipated when the events of Matthew 24 occur. Consider Matthew 24:3 and the purpose of the parable becomes clear.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Matthew 24:3

5. AN APPLICATION OF TRUTH

As Israel awaits the return of Christ to establish His Kingdom, so we await the return of the Lord in the clouds. There are several signs that indicate that the time is drawing closer and we can be comforted in knowing that our hope extends way beyond anything this world has to offer. No generation is exempt from calamities, but no Christian ought to be dismayed or disheartened by this reality. Christians must observe the signs of the times carefully as they become more and more aware of current events, natural disasters, new philosophies, deception and world economic realignment. These signs confirm the Christian's hope and as we see Israel re-gathering her people and preparing for attacks from various enemies, we know that we need to persevere in watchfulness and diligence. We do not know the day or time that the Rapture will occur, but we can see the stage being set and therefore we should comfort one another and not be afraid (1 Thess 4:18).

