

Parable of fig tree

The Advocate confesses total ignorance of the coming of that day, but the Word of God says that sudden destruction shall come upon those who say, "Peace and safety," and adds, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:3, 4. Those who know nothing about it will be destroyed because they don't want to know and willfully turn away from the truth. **The Lord says of the signs of the second coming of Christ: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.** So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Matt. 24:32-34. And yet the Advocate says it may be a thousand years distant, and that we can know nothing about it! {July 19, 1894 ATJ, AMS 232.11}

PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE

Verses 32, 33: "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it ["He," margin] is near, even at the doors." The parable of the fig-tree is probably the most forcible figure that could be used by our Lord to illustrate this subject. When the trees of the field begin to put forth their leaves, and the tender grass springs up, and the ground is being covered with its green velvet carpet, we know that summer is nigh. It is a certainty with us that summer is coming when we see these signs in nature.

We know that summer is nigh. "So, likewise," or with the same certainty, we may know that Christ's coming is at the doors when the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, are fulfilled. {March 14, 1890 ATJ, EMTF 57.1}

Our Lord has stated the object of these signs, which is that we may know when his coming is at the doors. But we are told by some that the church is not to know anything of the period of Christ's second advent. Then we inquire, **Why did our Lord give signs of the event?** Are they given to deceive us, to lead the honest Christian to look for Christ's coming when, in fact, nothing is to be known of the time of the event?—Certainly not. The fact that Christ foretells signs of his coming, and then states the object of those signs, that the church may know when the event is near, even at the doors, is sufficient proof that it is the will of Heaven that the church should understand the period of the second advent. {March 14, 1890 ATJ, EMTF 58.1}

Our Lord says (Luke 21:28), "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." The signs began to come to pass with the dark day of 1780. Then it could be said that redemption draweth nigh, and from that time the humble follower of Jesus might look up in expectation of witnessing his glorious appearing. But (verse 31) when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." {March 14, 1890 ATJ, EMTF 58.2} **The signs in the sun, moon, and stars are all that were given to base faith upon. All the other events mentioned in connection with these, have their fulfillment after the faith of God's people is perfected, and the doom of all sinners is fixed; therefore their cannot be embraced in the phrase, "all these things," of Matt. 24:33. The three signs having come to pass, we may now learn the parable of the fig-tree, and know that Christ's coming is near, even at the doors.** The phrase, "all these things," does not embrace the mourning of the tribes of the earth, and the sign of the Son of man. Neither does it embrace the shaking of the powers of the heavens; for that does not take place until the seven last plagues are poured out. But **the faith of God's people is perfected, and the doom of all sinners is forever fixed, before the pouring out of the first plague. The parable of the fig tree was given to inspire faith in the minds of those who hear the reasons of Christ's soon coming.** But it is most absurd

Parable of fig tree

to suppose that this parable is to be learned after it is said, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; . . . and he that is holy, let him be holy still." No! **The phrase, "all these things," in verse 33, embraces the three great signs in the sun, moon, and stars, given to strengthen the faith of God's people while merciful warnings are being given to the world. Here, then, since the falling stars of 1833, the parable of the fig-tree has force, and we may know that Christ's coming is near, even at the doors, with all the certainty that we know that summer is, nigh when the trees put forth their tender buds and leaves.**
{March 14, 1890 ATJ, EMTF 58.3}

EVENTS OF THE SIXTH SEAL

THE sixth seal was opened in 1775. All students of prophecy admit that we are living in a solemn time. Events of the most grand and thrilling importance are transpiring daily within our own observation. Signs as precursors of the day of the Lord, are every where looming up before us. To these the faithful saint can look as to so many witnesses, unitedly testifying that the last day is near, that the end of all things is at hand. And seeing them, he can lift up his head and rejoice in anticipation of the great blessings just before him, which he will receive when his Lord shall come. The way is truly plain, the light is clear, and the testimony sure. **We can know that the time is near, that the day is at hand. In the book of Revelation the Christian dispensation is divided into seven different periods. These are represented by seven churches, seven seals, and seven trumpets.** We call especial attention to **the sixth seal**, it being under this that the signs are manifested and the great day of wrath appears. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood." Rev.vi,12. Three important events mark very clearly the date of this seal.
{December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.17}

1. The great earthquake. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.18}
2. The darkening of the sun. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.19}
3. The darkening of the moon. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.20}

These events must appear in the order stated. An earthquake after the darkening of the sun and moon will not answer the specifications of the prophecy. Neither will any darkening of the sun and moon before the occurrence of the earthquake fulfill the prophecy. In order therefore that we arrive at the true data of this seal, we must learn definitely when this great earthquake occurred, for that is the great event designating the time when the seal was opened. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.21}

1. The great earthquake. When did it occur? {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.22}

1st. It could not have occurred during the great Papal persecution against the saints. When the fifth seal was opened, those who had been slain under the fourth seal were seen, and told that they should rest for a little season until their fellow-servants and their brethren should be killed as they were. Verse 11. This great tribulation was gradually slackened from A. D. 1700 till we come down to the latter half of the eighteenth century. We have no record of any general persecution against the saints by the pope since that time. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.23}

2nd. The great earthquake occurred Nov. 1, 1775. "Lisbon was destroyed by the most terrible earthquake that has ever occurred. Sixty thousand persons perished in six minutes. The sea first retired, then rolled in rising fifty feet above its usual bed. The largest mountain in Portugal rocked and split asunder, and sent forth flames and clouds of dust. The shock was felt nearly all over Europe, in the north part of Africa, in the Atlantic, and even in the West Indies. A vast wave swept over the coast of Spain, and in some places

Parable of fig tree

sixty feet in height. Near Morocco the earth swallowed up about ten thousand persons with their herds, and then closed over them." Cyclopedia Hist. p.639. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.24}

This was the greatest earthquake known to historians. It occurred at the right time - soon after the tribulation of the 1260 years, but in the years, as they extended to 1798. We have now located beyond doubt the beginning of the sixth seal. It began in A. D. 1775. We may from that date forward begin to look for those signs to appear which precede and point to the coming of the Lord. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.25}

2. The darkening of the sun. This is the second and next event that marks the time when the sixth seal was opened. We understand this to be an unnatural darkness, a darkness caused directly by God himself, as an unmistakable sign of the approaching dawn of the last day. When did this event occur? {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.26}

1st. It must occur before the 1260 years run out. "In those days after that tribulation the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." Mark xiii,24. This testimony shows very clearly that this sign should appear within the 1260 years. Now as the 1260 years ran out in A. D. 1798, this sign must appear prior to that date. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 21.27}

2nd. It is the first sign following the great earthquake, and as that occurred in A. D. 1775, the sun must be darkened this side of that date. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.1}

3rd. Therefore we are now shut up to this conclusion, that this sign must occur between 1775 and 1798. Here therefore, is the time in which it must appear. Did it appear in that time? If so, in what year? It did appear in that time, and in the year 1780. We refer to the testimony of many living witnesses. We will also give one historical testimony out of many that we might give: {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.2}

"In the dark day of May 19, 1780, the heavens were covered with a dense cloud for three or four hours. During this time the clouds were tinged with a yellowish or faint red for hours, for which no satisfactory cause has been assigned." Noah Webster, LL. D., New Haven Daily Herald. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.3}

We give this testimony more for the purpose of proving the nature than the reality of the event. No man of literature will call in question the ability of this witness to decide a case of this kind. This sign makes its appearance at the right time and in the right manner, and is therefore a fulfillment of the prophecy. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.4}

3. The darkening of the moon. This is the next sign following in consecutive order, and occurred on the night of the 19th of May, 1780, the night following the dark day. The points above which locate the time when the sun was darkened will also apply here, and prove the time for the moon to cease to shine to be the same. Our Saviour has carefully pointed out these signs in other places. Matt.xxiv,29. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.5}

4. The next sign spoken of in this prophecy is the falling of the stars. "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Verse 13. This wonderful sign appeared Nov. 13, 1833. And what an awe-inspiring sight to those who witnessed it! They witnessed the greatest display of celestial fireworks that ever occurred. They saw the heavens rain fire. How highly favored were they! The wise men who saw one star point to the first advent were truly favored by heaven. Matt.ii,7,10. But pre-eminently honored were they who saw millions and millions of bright and shining stars point to the second advent. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.6}

Parable of fig tree

5. The parable of Matt.xxiv,32. "Now **learn a parable of the fig-tree**. When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." This is a natural and very apt illustration. When we walk forth into the grove in early spring, and behold the trees **budding and putting forth leaves** and blossoms, we know that the summer is coming - is at hand. But suppose on our return we meet a man who says, Well, sirs, don't you think we are going to have a long time of cold weather? we answer, Why, no, my dear sir, the warm season is at hand; for see these buds and blossoms. O, says he, I don't see any difference between the trees now and the trees in the dead of winter; they all look alike to me. What would you think of such a man, reader? I should consider him a blind man. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.7}

So likewise when we see the foregoing signs, we may as certainly know that the end is nigh, even at the doors. Verse 33. The man who does not see it must be blind: is either in nature's darkness, or bound with the heavy chains of unbelief. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.8}

6. The next event brought to light in the prophecy before us is **the "great day."** "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every island and mountain were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said unto the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Verses 14,17. Grand and sublime are the scenes here depicted! Awful indeed is the event here spoken of. And O, what an important question here follows: Who shall be able to stand? We answer, 1st. It will not be the great men of earth. Kings with their wicked counselors will perish with all their greatness. The rich, proud, and haughty, will all be destroyed. God will receive no excuse from the willful sinner. 2nd. Those who love God and do his will shall be able to stand. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all heed to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall." 2Pet.i,10. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev.xxii,14. These are blessed promises, and surely belong to the remnant who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Chap.xiv,12. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.9}

That awful day will soon appear. The storm is already gathering. The dark and heavy clouds appear in the distance. The heavy rolling of the thunders may be distinctly heard, and the red flashes of glaring lightning play furiously upon the angry heavens. Sinners begin to tremble, and men's hearts to fail them for fear of the things coming upon the earth. The sea and the waves roar, while distress and fearful perplexity characterize the angry nations. But in this time the saint looks up, and by faith looks beyond the distress, fear, and perplexity that surround him, to the happy morn that is beginning to dawn, when he will see his Lord coming in great power and glory, when he will be redeemed from all that is mortal, and delivered into the bright joys of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Yea, while here, he groans and prays for the time to hasten when he will part from the wicked, and the persecutors of God's dear children, and meet with the immortal saints on the sunny shores of perpetual joy. There with all the saints he hopes to dwell amid the resplendent and unfading beauties of the world to come. May the Lord help us to be faithful and diligent. Mercy yet lingers, and Jesus yet intercedes. But soon he will leave the sanctuary, and mercy's sweet voice will be heard no more in behalf of the sinner forever. While, therefore, there is time and opportunity, let us prepare to stand in the great day of his wrath.

B. F. SNOOK. {December 17, 1861 JWe, ARSH 22.10}

Parable of fig tree

It thus appears that the admonition of Isa. 8:19, 20, belongs to the New-Testament dispensation. A further study of the connection will establish the fact that it was designed especially for the last days of this dispensation, when the disciples of Christ are waiting upon the Lord and looking for him. For the prophet, who personates in this chapter, sometimes the Lord and sometimes his people, says in verse 17, "I will wait upon the Lord [Douay Bible, 'for the Lord'] that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." The new -Testament church was commanded not to look for that event till the Roman antichrist should have his predicted period of exaltation. 2 Thess. 2. But when the tribulation of those days should expire, the Saviour promised that the signs of his second advent should begin to be seen, and the saints were then to look and wait for their returning Lord. {1871 JNA, SWE 3.1}

Thus we are instructed:- {1871 JNA, SWE 3.2}

Matt. 24:32, 33: "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." {1871 JNA, SWE 3.3}

Luke 21:25-31: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, THEN look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." {1871 JNA, SWE 3.4}

Luke 12:35, 36: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." {1871 JNA, SWE 4.1}

Zeph. 3:8: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." {1871 JNA, SWE 4.2}

Heb. 9:28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." {1871 JNA, SWE 4.3}

Isa. 25:9: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." {1871 JNA, SWE 4.4}

The prophecy of Isa. 8:17-22, in which the waiting position of the church is designated, has reference, therefore, to that period immediately preceding the advent of the Saviour. He has proved a stone of stumbling to worldly professors, whether his first or second advent be considered. And it is from this class that he hides his face. {1871 JNA, SWE 4.5}

Another clue to the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy is found in the work which it assigns the church: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Verse 16. We know that the man of sin was to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, and to thing to change times and laws. Dan. 7:25; 2 Thess. 2. And we know that the law of God and the precepts of Christ have been wickedly mangled by the great antichristian power. We know also that it is the work of the third angel of Rev. 14, in the period of the saints' patience, to raise up a people that shall keep all the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And we know also that the remnant of the church in the end of this dispensation

Parable of fig tree

is to be warred upon by the dragon because they keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Rev. 12:17. This work of binding up the testimony and sealing the law among the disciples of Christ is the very work of the third angel. This law and testimony thus restored to the people of God is that to which they are to appeal in their final conflict with the familiar spirits. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Verse 20. {1871 JNA, SWE 4.6}