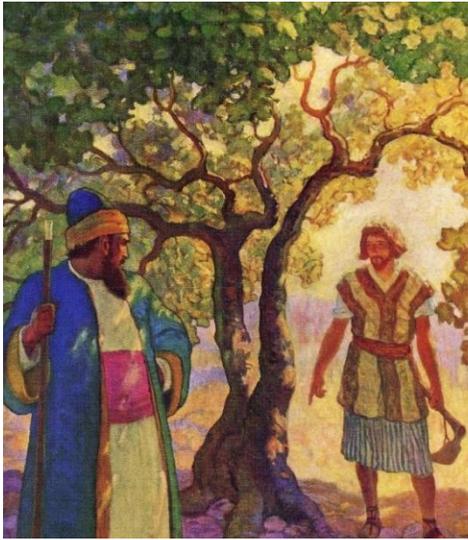


## PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

Luke 13:6-9

This parable describes our Lord's ministry to intercede for the lost sheep of Israel. The chapter opens as Jesus answers questions as to why God permitted different men to die under tragic and violent circumstances. Our Lord's response reveals that bad things can happen to good people, but the far greater danger to any man is spiritual death.



*The Parables of Jesus by S. Parkes Cadman*

The vineyard owner is God, who planted Israel in the Promised Land. Hosea writes, *"When I saw your ancestors, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree."* [Hos. 9:10] Giving it a place of honor in the vineyard, the Lord expected good fruit from the tree. But it failed to produce fruit worthy of repentance. Disappointed, the Almighty tells the vinedresser to remove the worthless tree. Paul says, *"Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."* [Rom. 2:5] John the Baptist warned, *"Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* [Mat. 3:10]

The vinedresser who cares for the fig tree is Jesus. As Isaiah foretold, Jesus came to make intercession for transgressors. He taught, healed the sick and performed signs of the Kingdom. But the Jews rejected and crucified him. They did not repent even after he rose from the dead and appeared to many before ascending to Heaven. A few years later, the Romans destroyed the Temple, massacred Jews and scattered survivors far and wide.

Did Christ's ministry of intercession fail? Certainly not! The author of Hebrews writes, *"He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."* [Heb. 7:25] So, as Kingdom disciples, how then should we live?

*"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one."* [Ez. 22:30] To follow his will, we must not forget to pray for our friends and neighbors: *"First of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks [should] be made for all men."* [1 Tim. 2:6] A true disciple of the Kingdom honors his commands!

