



REPLENISHED – Discernment Matters 20th June 2021 Brian Greenaway

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

Connect:

1. Do you spend regular time before the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to examine you?
2. Read [Matthew 24:32-35](#)
3. Read [Luke 21:29-33](#)

Engage:

4. Read [Mark 13:28-33](#)
 - Context of this parable: It appears in 3 Gospels and is located in what is called the 'Olivet discourse', because it was spoken on the Mount of Olives.
5. What is the fig tree analogy?
 - The "Fig-tree" is an emblem of Israel. If we look in the books of Joel, Habakkuk, Haggai, Hosea and others, we see the fruitful fig tree as a symbol of fruitfulness and blessing on Israel.
 - The fig tree is the first tree mentioned in the Bible after the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. It is the only tree in the garden identified as a type tree that we would recognise.
6. Read [Genesis 3:7](#)
 - In Revelation 6, we also see an outline for the opening of the seven seals as the final days of this current time come to an end; the fig tree is again mentioned.
 - It is unusual in that the blossoms of the fruit appear before the leaves. So, there should be fruit on a tree in full leaf.
7. With these facts in mind, we can explain several of Jesus actions and words:
 - In [Matthew 21:18-20](#) Jesus cursed the Fig-tree that had on it nothing but leaves. The leaves led Him to expect fruit, and when there were none. He cursed the tree for its fruitlessness. The unripe fruit of the autumn often survives the winter and ripens when plants come alive in spring; Jesus seeing leaves on the tree expected fruit. If we think of Israel as the Fig Tree, Jesus was expecting to find fruit because of their "leafy profession", but He found none.
 - In [Luke 13:6-9](#), the Parable of the "Barren Fig-tree", we have another picture of Israel. The "Fig-tree" is the Jewish nation. The "Fig-tree" was planted in a "Vineyard," which stands for the land of Israel. The owner of the Vineyard was God. Jesus came and for three years had a public ministry, and expected fruit from the Jewish nation. *[But while the "Fig-tree" (people of Israel) was cut down and cast out of the*

"Vineyard" (Land of Israel), its root was not destroyed. The root itself was not killed or removed from the soil.]

Framework:

8. What is 'eschatology'?
9. Important points to consider with the End Times teaching of Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, of which this parable forms a central aspect - Some key words:

Location	Jesus spoke these words in Jerusalem, Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple. (Mark 13:2)
Audience	The disciples – specifically Peter, James, John and Andrew
Warning	Deception, false Messiahs and prophets
Signs	Wars, rumours of wars, nations (ethnos) and kingdoms rising against each other, famines, pestilences (pandemics), earthquakes
Persecution	Of believers – even families betraying one another
Falling Away	Of believers – due to lawlessness and materialism
Endurance of Believers	Will see them through
The Gospel will be preached	!!!

There are also specific signs that Jesus speaks about, such as the Abomination of Desolation appearing in the Holy Place. Jesus is referring to what Daniel spoke about. The antichrist.

10. After Jesus spoke these words there were a number of contemporary signs:
 - Roman persecution of the Jews in the late 30's (50k Jews killed in Alexandria)
 - Threats of invasion by three emperors: Caligula, Claudius and Nero
 - Earthquakes in Crete, Rome, Apamia and Campania
 - 3 famines – as we know from the account in the Book of Acts
 - Another Jewish rebellion in AD132-135 called after its leader (the false Messiah Jesus had warned against) Shimon Bar Kochba
11. In all this chaos people thought Jesus would return soon; Peter had to address this in his letter, as some were laughing at the promise, mocking 'where is He?' (See 2 Peter 3: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.")
12. However, the course of events showed us that Jesus could not return after all these things for one reason in particular – which brings us full circle back to our parable. And the key indicator – the Fig Tree.
13. What is the relevance for us today?

14. What should our response be?
15. Read [Mark 13:37](#)
16. We too have to take heed of what will happen to us as believers and what conditions we are likely to face and the intensity of the times ahead. We have the key terms that Pastor Brian shared before, which remain the same with the exception of number 1 and 2:
 - Location: The world but with a specific eye on Jerusalem
 - Audience: The disciples – that's us
17. Referring to [Luke 21:29-33](#), what are the two things Jesus gave us to help us navigate this time?
18. How can we find hope amongst all that is happening around us?
19. Where do you find your 'truth'?
20. Where do you find your foundations?
21. How do you deal with fear?
 - It can only be in the Bible and that's not just finding texts that you like but actually immersing yourself in His word; it is the only place you will find absolute truth. You can only make sense of what is happening in this world if you are centred on the Word of God.

Prayer:

Lord help not to be distracted by the things of this world and not to become discouraged by what is happening around me. Help me to watch and look to God's Word as the only source of truth. In Jesus Name Amen.