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The Fig Tree

By Elder Keith Ellis

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know it is near, even at the doors.

Matthew 24:32-33

Just because this is a parable is no reason to think the answer to it has to be grand or something complicated. Jesus used parables to hide His language from some. Yet He promised to give understanding to those within. When speaking His children among the Jews, Jesus likens His truths to something the people can identify with. In this case, as with other parables, Jesus refers to farming, or growing and caring for crops. Remember the parable of the sower, the tares among the wheat, and the vineyard and its husbandmen to name a few. Here our Lord takes advantage of another occasion to set forth a parable which His children could identify with. It is only when we can not identify with something that it becomes complicated if we try to discern it. This is what Hal Lindsey does. He is well known for quoting the above verse. He says it means that Israel would become a nation again in 1948. How convenient for him to say this years after 1948 has passed. The idea Mr. Lindsey propagates here is utter hogwash. The only way for him to come up with this is to confuse the facts and complicate what is really simple. There is no way to come up with his idea using sound Bible reasoning. Of course even if he understood what time context was I am positive he would find some way to mess it up.

What this verse is saying is actually quite simple and does not require the confusing mathematics which Mr Lindsey offers. If we keep in mind the subject context and the time context of this verse we can easily see it is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. Just as we can discern when a fruit tree is ready to bear fruit by looking at the buds on a tree, the disciples of the apostolic age would be able to discern the time when the certain doom of Jerusalem was at hand by seeing all the things which Jesus mentioned had come to pass. Nothing could be simpler.

It is like when we see storm clouds come on the horizon, we know it will rain.

Of course Mr. Lindsey thinks (or at least he teaches) the time context of Matthew chapter twenty-four is "**the end of time.**" Again be reminded of the great amount of money that is to be made from his doctrine. Any professing Christian who is ignorant of what the Bible has to say on these matters and refuses to find out the truth for himself becomes easy prey for gainsayers like Mr. Lindsey. His message is event

driven and changes every time some new event in the Middle East or Russia takes place. There is no Bible consistency in anything he has to say. Most recently I heard him again on this issue. It is evident he forgets what he says. I remember the wise preacher who preached Sam Rayburns funeral. He was asked by the news media why he used no notes when he spoke. He replied, "*If I speak the truth I do not have to remember what I said.*" There is no doubt Mr. Lindsey and others like him could learn a lesson from this wise old preacher. Mr Lindsey plays on the ignorance of the people. Fear is an important ingredient in the worldly success of his twisted ideas. And no doubt, the almighty dollar plays a big role in his scheme.

God would not have us to be ignorant. He has given us everything we need to deliver us from such hucksters. But we must press into God's word for ourselves and stop depending on others to do our study for us. We must return to a "**thus saith The Lord**" in all matters concerning faith. We should be prepared to lose our lives in service to Christ and the truth of his word. And we can no longer be concerned with what men will think or say. If we do and say what God says for us to do in His word, and we repent of the doctrines and commandments of men which have for so long prevailed in this land, we can once again be a nation under God in word and in deed.

. "**O consistency thou art a jewel.**"