

THE BRAMBLE AND THE TREES

A. JESUS USES PARABLES To Teach About Kingdom Principles And Prophetic Truth

1. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning
2. The “chief parable” of the Sower is a key to understanding other parables; Mark 4:13
3. Jesus instructed us to learn the Parable of the Fig Tree and ALL TREES; Luke 21:29
4. Jesus cursed the fig tree (the Jewish nation) because it had leaves but no fruit; Matt. 21:19
5. Throughout the scriptures, “trees” are symbolic of kingdoms, nations and people; Gen. 2:9; 16-17; Psalm 96:12; Isaiah 41:19-20; 61; Matt. 7:17-20; Mark 8:24; Luke 21:29
6. The Tree of Life is described in Eden; Gen. 2:9, and in the New Jerusalem; Rev. 22:1-2
7. In the New Testament, the olive tree is more associated with Israel; Romans 11:16-25
8. In the New Testament, the “vine” is symbolic of God’s Kingdom; Matt. 20:1-16; John 15:1-11
9. “For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush”; Luke 6:44; “fruit” indicates what type it is
10. In scripture, trees can represent the qualities and characteristics of the righteous; Psalm 1:1-3; 92:12-14; Proverbs 11:30; Isaiah 61:3; Romans 11:24; Rev. 22:14

B. The PARABLE Of The BRAMBLE And The TREES

1. Jotham presented this parable (in the character of the good and faithful servant in the Olivet Discourse), by giving the “proper food at the proper time”; Matthew 24:45-46
2. Jotham, a son of Gideon (Jerubbaal), attempted to warn the others because he understood the nature of Abimelech’s betrayal which he related by a “parable of the Fig Tree and the other trees”; Judges 9:7-16; Matthew 24:32-34
3. Jotham’s parable reveals the evil and the worthlessness of the “bramble”; Micah 7:4
4. In this parable, the “trees” went forth to anoint a king over them:
 - a. The olive tree, which produces “oil”, didn’t want to leave its “fatness” to wave over (exercise authority over) the trees; Judges 9:8-9 (oil is symbolic of the anointing)
 - b. The fig tree, which produces “figs”, didn’t want to leave its “sweetness” and its good fruit to wave over the trees; Judg. 9:10-11; Luke 13:6-9; (figurative of the fathers of Israel); Hos. 9:10
 - c. The vine, which produces “wine”, didn’t want to leave the new wine and its “cheerfulness” to wave over the trees; Judges 9:12-13 (the new wine of the Holy Spirit manifested in worship)
5. Finally, the position was offered to the “bramble” (which is only good for burning); Eccl.7:6
6. The ascension to power of the bramble was due to the self-serving reluctance of the people associated with the olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine to assume responsibility, so by default, the bramble was able to lure the others into accepting its reign over them; Judges 9:1
7. The key to this parable is the unfaithfulness of God’s people both in Israel and in the Church
8. The door was opened for the bramble to position itself and manipulate others into its snare
9. In another parable, Jesus told about the “nobleman” who went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return, He said that the citizens hated him saying “We do not want this man (Jesus) to reign over us”; Luke 19:14, and “we have no king but Caesar”; John 19:15
10. In John 5:43, Jesus (the true Christ) said “I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him (antichrist)”

C. ABIMELECH WAS THE “BRAMBLE KING” (a shrub with sharp thorns and runners); he reveals the spirit and person of antichrist; a bramble is the emblem of a tyrant; Judges 9:8-15:

1. He was the product of a “Canannite union”; he reveals the evil of compromise and disobedience to the Word of God; Judges 8:31
2. Abimelech was rebuked by Jotham, who saw his prophecy fulfilled; Judges 9:22-57
3. Abimelech conspired to become king and operated by the spirit of violence; Judges 9:1-4
4. This “bramble” rules by intimidation: “if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour (eat up, consume) the “cedars of Lebanon”; he wanted others to trust in “his shadow”; Judg. 9:15, 20
5. Abimelech was an outlaw; he was given pieces of silver from the temple of “Baal-Berith” (means covenant with Baal) to hire assassins; Judges 9:4-5
6. Abimelech betrayed and murdered his half-brothers; Judges 9:5, “70 brothers” (#70 = appointed elders; Ex. 24:1, 9, and disciples sent forth by Jesus; Luke 10:1)
7. Jotham the only surviving brother “hid himself and escaped” to Beer (the well); Judg. 9:5, 21
8. During Abimelech’s three year reign there was a quarrel between himself and the men of Shechem, which had become a center of idol worship; Judges 9:1, 4-7
9. His rule over Israel was during a time of apostasy, and it reveals a power struggle during a time of anarchy; Judg. 9:22
10. Shechem was destroyed; Abimelech killed the people who were “in the fields”, he demolished the city and sowed it with salt; Judges 9:45
11. When the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith (Baal-Berith); (there is no safety in a covenant with the god of this world)
12. Abimelech and those with him each cut down a “branch” with an ax (Jesus is called the righteous Branch; Is. 11:1) put them against the stronghold, set it on fire and all of the people in the tower of Shechem died; Judg. 9:48-49
13. The SURVIVORS FLED TO A STRONG TOWER in “the midst of the City” (Jesus is that Strong Tower) and shut themselves in; Judges 9:51; Proverbs 18:10; Matthew 18:20
14. Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it; HE DREW NEAR TO THE DOOR of this tower to burn it with fire, but a “woman” dropped a millstone on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull; Gen. 3:15, then his armor bearer killed him with the sword; Judges 9:52-54

D. The Hebrew word “bramble” means “to pierce; a THORN TREE”

1. It is used for fuel, kindling and burning; Ps. 58:9 and is a symbol of destruction; Is. 34:13
2. Thorns are figurative of: curses, a land under judgment; Is. 32:13; Hos. 2:6; false prophets; Matt. 7:15-16; spiritual afflictions, messengers of Satan; 2 Cor. 12:7; wicked nations Num. 33:55
3. “Thorny soil” is symbolic of that which “chokes the seed”; Mark 4:7
4. The “thistles and thorns” of “Edom” are described in Isaiah 34:13: they “climb up” and come into the palaces, the fortified towers and fortresses
5. Isaiah chapter 34 points to Isaiah’s time as well as the time of the end of the age
6. Edom (symbolic of cursed people, adversaries) includes “dragons, owls and wild beasts”; it is the place where these meet together; Is. 34:13-15; Babylon’s creatures: Is. 13:19-22; Rev. 18:2
7. We see the strategy of Satan (THE TREE SNAKE) building his counterfeit “ministry” within the habitation of Edom; Isaiah 34:15:
 - a. it makes its nest
 - b. it lays its eggs there
 - c. it hatches them
 - d. it gathers them under its protection

Jesus said that the one He loves is like “A LILY AMONG THE THORNS”; Song of Sol. 2:2

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