

On the Corner Fringe: Tu B'shvat February 2, 2018

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/4fjs7h6/otcf-tu-b-shvat>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is **not verbatim**. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

The Fig Tree: Lessons from Tu B'shvat on Watchful Faith

This transcript of a message delivered by **Pastor Daniel Joseph** of **Corner Fringe Ministries** explores the **spiritual significance of Tu B'shvat**, a Jewish holiday honoring the New Year for trees. Daniel connects the agricultural tradition of **cultivating fruit trees** to the biblical imperative for believers to remain spiritually vigilant. By examining **Proverbs 27:18**, the message likens the diligent care of a fig tree to a faithful servant who **attentively waits for their master**. This imagery is further tied to the teachings of **Yeshua in Matthew 24**, emphasizing the necessity of watching for the Messiah's return. Daniel concludes that a **disciplined prayer life** is the essential measure of this readiness, protecting individuals from the distractions and **temptations of the world**. Ultimately, he uses the metaphor of the fig tree to call for a **renewed devotion to God**.



[Introduction]

Insightful—Challenging—Cutting Edge—
Biblical

[Daniel Joseph]

Shalom, everyone. Welcome to *On the Fringe*. I'm Daniel Joseph, and this week we celebrated, at least on the Jewish calendar, Tu B'shvat. And Tu B'shvat is the celebration of trees. It's the New Year. It's one of the,

well, one of the four New Years in the Jewish calendar. It's at this time that we really think about the trees that the Lord has given us, specifically the trees that bear fruit. And we see that imagery very heavily within Scripture, especially within the teachings of Yeshua Himself, where He likens man to trees, where some bear good fruit and some bear bad fruit. Those that bear good fruit are going to be rewarded, but the ones that bear bad fruit are going to be destroyed ultimately.

Well, at this time of Tu B'shvat, I want to focus on one particular tree that bears fruit, and that is the fig tree. Again, something that we read about in Scripture quite often, not just in the New Testament but in the Old as well, and this is a passage I read last week to my kids as we were going through and doing some Bible study. It really jumped out at me, and I want to share it with you. Proverbs 27:18—**Whoever**

keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; so he who waits on his master will be honored. Now this is highly prophetic in and of itself.

The first thing I want to point out here is “whoever keeps the fig tree”—in other words, whoever is protecting it, whoever is paying attention to the fig tree; they're cultivating it. Their attention is totally on this fig tree, alright? And then we're told, well, if they do so, if they keep it, they protect it, they spend time, and they're devoted and dedicated, it's going to bear fruit. You're going to get figs off of it. And you know the trees; we're told from Scripture that the trees of the field are for man's food. Okay, so this is life. This is sustenance, which is really amazing.

This is one of the reasons why, when you read Deuteronomy 20 at the end of the chapter, we're forbidden, according to the Torah—according to the mind of the Lord—from cutting down trees that bear fruit. You're not to do that, even in times of war. You're not to chop down trees that bear fruit because those trees are to be spared because they're for man's food, and it's just interesting and fascinating that it kind of goes back to Matthew 7:19 and Yeshua talking about how “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down,” which is very, very Torah-like. This would have certainly resonated with His disciples on multiple levels for Him to bring this reality out and show that Torah, the spirit of Torah, is so much deeper than just physically dealing with trees that bear fruit. There's a spiritual implication behind all of the commandments that we find in the Torah.

But be that as it may, getting back to Proverbs 27:18, whoever keeps, who's dedicated, who's focused on this fig tree, they are going to eat its fruit, but listen to what it goes on and says, “So he who waits on his master will be honored.” Okay, so did you just get what happened? Solomon comes out and says the one who tends to the fig tree, who is focused on it, is cultivating; he's paying attention to this fig tree. He is literally likened to an individual, a servant, not just any individual but a servant who waits for his master. And the servant who waits for his master is going to be honored.

Now that's really powerful when you consider what Yeshua says in Matthew 24:32-33—“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. And so obviously, it's this moment when you see that it's budding leaves; well, you know summer's near.”³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

And obviously, Matthew 24 is all about the end of the age, the coming of the Messiah, and what we need to be looking for that is going to be leading up to this event, the event of the resurrection of the dead. But He goes on, and listen to what He says in conjunction with this fig tree, this parable of the fig tree. Matthew 24:42-44—Watch, it's the very thing that was said in Proverbs 27. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

And so, as we are in this celebration of Tu B'shvat and this Jewish New Year of celebrating the trees and the fruit of the trees and the reality, I want you to think about the fig tree. The fig tree that produces fruit, that produces figs, and how that symbolizes the heart of a servant who is dedicated and who is waiting for his master. He is watching for him. He is not out watching the world. He is not getting sucked into the things of the world. He is not out seeking all that the world has to offer in seeking to build his kingdom here, but he is waiting for his master. Nothing else matters when a servant is anticipating that coming; that's all he is focused on. He is very focused. He's dedicated. This is the mindset. This is where we need to be because Yeshua alludes to the fact that if we are not there, we are going to miss it.

You know the Apostle Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, talks about how “... the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.” Yeshua talks about this as well as you look in Matthew 24 elsewhere and even moving forward into chapter 25. Alluding to this fact, you have the parable of the ten virgins, right? Five are wise; they were prepared. The five foolish ones were not ready. See, they were not looking at the fig tree. They were not keeping the fig tree. They were not tending to it. They were not focused and devoted to it. No, they were not waiting for their master. They were in the world, and this is the reality.

Now, there is something Yeshua goes on to say as we continue in Matthew, in Chapter 26, that coincides with watching. So, there's one particular thing that Yeshua brings out of the mix that indicates proper watching. And what do I mean by that?

This is what He says in Matthew 26:41: “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And now Yeshua is in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He is praying to His Father—Matthew 26:39—“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

He's going for this. He's asking his disciples to stay up with Him, and what He says in Matthew 26:41 is “Watch and pray.” Now see, every time you see that word “watch,” this is prophetic. This isn't just talking about this instant here; that's why these words were recorded. This goes back to what He was talking about in Matthew 24:42, of watching. This goes back to Proverbs 27:18 and watching or keeping the fig tree. We need to watch, to be watching for the Master. But Yeshua is specific: “Watch and pray.”

In other words, where I'm going with this, if you want to measure your ability and where you really are in asking yourself and being honest with yourself whether or not you're watching for the Messiah, you could go to prayer. Go to your prayer life, and that will give you a direct correlation, a direct indication of whether or not you are watching. If your prayer life is not intensive, if you're not in the life of meditation, if you're not meditating on the Lord and crying out to Him on your bed—(Deuteronomy 6:7) when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up; if He's not the Lord of your life and He's not the purpose behind every decision, if He's not the one you're praising, and if He's not the one you're praying to and petitioning, you've got a serious problem. It's watch and pray.

So, prayer is a significant aspect of this watching. And then He says in Matthew 26:41, “Lest you enter into temptation.” In the absence of having this heart, of literally wanting to watch for the coming and praying to Him diligently, Yeshua reveals what will happen. You will fall into all sorts of temptation, the temptation of covetousness. All these things that you are coveting because, see, you're not watching; you're meditating on the things of the world.

You're watching the world and those temptations as idolatries and covetousness and all of those things; they will take hold of you, and then on that day when the Lord comes, what you're going to find is you're not going to be ready, and it's going to be terrifying. You're going to be like the five foolish virgins running around terrified out of their minds, saying, “Lord, let us in, let us in.” And He's going to say, “I do not know you.” I do not know you, and that's because you did not know Him in this life.

And so, as we celebrate this festival of Tu B'shvat, the celebration of the trees, think of the fig tree, think of the implications, the biblical implications, and the biblical teachings of the fig tree, and what that really means as a reminder we need to get back to our first love. Amen? Well, that's all for today. Be blessed. Shalom.

The Fig Tree: A Symbol of Spiritual Readiness

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE FIG TREE



Tu B'shvat: The New Year for Trees

A celebration of fruit-bearing trees that provide life, sustenance, and spiritual imagery.



The Tended Tree vs. The Faithful Servant

Proverbs 27:18 likens one who "keeps" a fig tree to a servant waiting for their master.



A Prophetic Signal

Just as budding leaves signal summer, spiritual alertness signals the approaching "end of the age."

THE PRACTICE OF READINESS



The "Watch and Pray" Mandate

Prayer is the primary metric for determining if a believer is truly watching for the Messiah.



Protection Against Temptation

Diligent prayer prevents the heart from being consumed by worldly covetousness and idolatry.



The Wise vs. The Foolish

Like the ten virgins, only those focused on the "master" rather than the world will be ready.