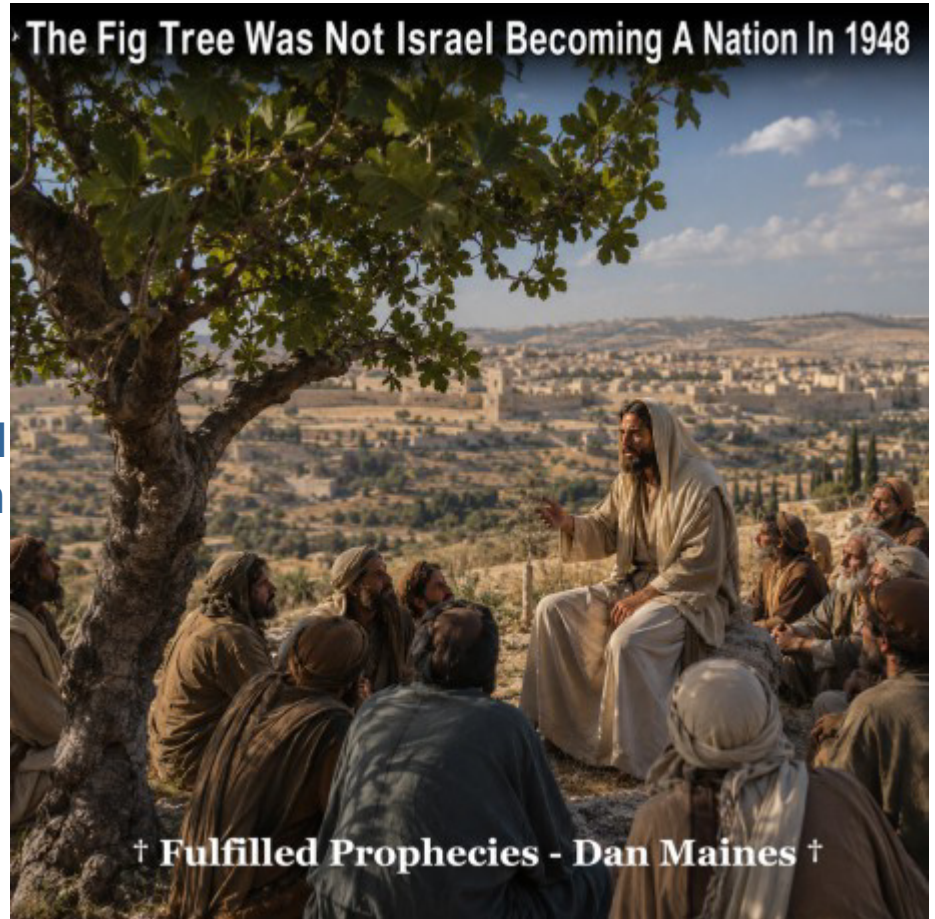


# Fulfilled Prophecies

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## Israel - The Fig Tree Was Not Israel Becoming A Nation In 1948



By Dan Maines

## The Fig Tree Was Not Israel Becoming A Nation In 1948

### Introduction

† One of the most repeated modern prophecy claims is that the fig tree in Matthew 24 represents national Israel becoming a nation again in 1948. But when we actually read the context, Jesus never said the fig tree was Israel reborn as a modern political nation. He used the fig tree as a simple illustration about recognizing nearness, just like seeing leaves tells you

summer is near. (Matthew 24:32-33)

† The entire context of Matthew 24 was directed to the disciples concerning the destruction of the temple that stood before them. Jesus placed the fulfillment within their generation, not thousands of years later. The fig tree parable doesn't override the timing statements already given in the chapter. (Matthew 24:1-3, 34)

† Scripture never says the establishment of a modern secular state in 1948 fulfilled Matthew 24. That idea came from modern dispensational teaching, not from the text itself. (Matthew 24:32-34)

### **Matthew 24:1-3**

1 Jesus left the temple area and was going on His way when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.  
2 But He responded and said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

3 And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

† Jesus directly connected the discussion to the temple standing before them. The disciples asked when THESE THINGS would happen, not events 2000 years later. The context never changes. (Matthew 24:1-3)

† The phrase end of the age refers to the end of the Old Covenant age centered around the temple system, sacrifices, priesthood, and Jerusalem. It wasn't speaking about the end of planet earth. (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 9:26)

† The destruction Jesus described happened exactly in AD 70 under the Roman armies led by Titus. The temple was destroyed just as Christ foretold. (Luke 21:20-22)

### **Matthew 24:32-34**

32 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: as soon as its branch has become tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34 Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† Jesus said the fig tree was a PARABLE. He wasn't giving a secret code about a future nation state in 1948. He used a normal agricultural example everyone understood. When trees bud, summer is near. (Matthew 24:32)

† Luke removes the possibility of making the fig tree equal national Israel because Luke says AND ALL THE TREES. That destroys the entire 1948 argument. (Luke 21:29-31)

† Jesus said WHEN YOU SEE THESE THINGS. The signs were for the people living then, not for people 2000 years later watching modern news headlines. (Matthew 24:33)

† The timing statement settles the matter. THIS GENERATION shall not pass away till ALL these things are accomplished. Jesus placed fulfillment within the lifetime of His audience. (Matthew 24:34; Matthew 16:27-28)

### **Luke 21:29-31**

29 And He told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees: 30 as soon as they put forth leaves, you see for

yourselves and know that summer is now near. 31 So you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

† If the fig tree must symbolize Israel in Matthew 24, then what do all the other trees symbolize in Luke 21? The answer is simple. They are not symbols of nations at all. Jesus was simply using seasonal signs everyone recognized. (Luke 21:29-31)

† Christ compared the budding trees to visible signs leading up to Jerusalem's destruction. Just as leaves show summer is near, the signs He listed showed judgment was near. (Matthew 24:15-21, 33)

† Nothing in the text mentions a rebirth of national Israel, a twentieth century nation, or events thousands of years later. Those ideas are imported into the passage from outside systems. (Matthew 24:32-34)

### **Matthew 21:18-19**

18 Now in the early morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. 19 And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves alone; and He said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.

† Here the fig tree represented fruitless first century Israel under judgment, not a future restoration in 1948. (Matthew 21:18-19)

† Jesus cursed the fig tree forever because it symbolized the coming judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple system.

(Matthew 23:37-38)

† If futurists claim the fig tree in Matthew 24 means Israel's rebirth, then Christ cursing the fig tree forever creates a major contradiction for their interpretation. (Matthew 21:19)

### **Matthew 16:27-28**

27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

28 "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

† Jesus repeatedly placed His coming within the lifetime of His first century audience. Some standing there would still be alive when it happened. That cannot refer to 1948 or events thousands of years later. (Matthew 16:27-28)

† The Bible interprets itself. Christ gave clear time statements over and over again. Modern systems try to override those statements by inserting a giant gap into the text that Jesus never mentioned. (Matthew 10:23; Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3)

† The burden of proof belongs on anyone claiming Jesus secretly skipped nearly 2000 years in the middle of His warning to the disciples. (Matthew 24:3, 34)

### **Luke 21:20-22**

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter

the city; 22 because these are days of punishment, so that all things which have been written will be fulfilled.

† Jesus identified the fulfillment event clearly, Jerusalem surrounded by armies. That happened in AD 70 exactly as recorded in history. (Luke 21:20-22)

† Jesus said ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN would be fulfilled in those days of vengeance. He didn't point to a future 1948 restoration. He pointed to judgment upon first century Jerusalem. (Luke 21:22; Matthew 23:35-36)

† The disciples could physically flee Judea because the warning applied to THEIR lifetime. That's why early Christians escaped Jerusalem before its destruction. (Luke 21:21; Matthew 24:15-18)

### **Romans 11:25-26**

25 For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be uninformed of this mystery-so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written:

"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,  
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

† Paul never said Israel would become a political nation again in the last days. He spoke about salvation through Christ, not a twentieth century government. (Romans 11:25-27)

† All Israel is fulfilled in the remnant joined together with believing Gentiles into one body in Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-16;

Galatians 3:28-29)

† Scripture defines God's people through covenant relationship in Christ, not through modern nationality or political borders. (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3)

## **Romans 2:28-29**

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.

† Paul destroyed the idea that covenant standing is based on outward national identity. True covenant identity is found in the heart through Christ. (Romans 2:28-29)

† The modern state formed in 1948 is a political nation, not a covenant nation under the Law of Moses, with Levitical priesthood, temple sacrifices, and covenant standing. (Hebrews 8:13)

† The New Covenant united Jew and Gentile into one new man. Scripture never teaches two separate covenant peoples with separate prophetic destinies. (Ephesians 2:14-16)

## **Historical References**

† Eusebius wrote that the believers in Jerusalem fled to Pella before the destruction of the city because they remembered the Lord's warning concerning Jerusalem being surrounded by armies. (Luke 21:20-21)

† Josephus recorded the horrific destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, including famine, fire, and the complete overthrow of the

temple, exactly matching Christ's prophecy. (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 21:20-24)

† Clement of Alexandria and other early writers consistently viewed the destruction of Jerusalem as a major fulfillment of Christ's warnings. (Matthew 24:34)

† No early Christian writer taught that the fig tree referred to a twentieth century political state called Israel. That interpretation appeared many centuries later. (Matthew 24:32-34)

### **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We should let Scripture define prophecy, not modern newspapers or political movements. (2 Peter 1:19-20)

† Jesus proved Himself to be a true prophet because everything He said concerning Jerusalem came to pass exactly within the generation He specified. (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22)

† The kingdom of God isn't tied to a modern earthly nation. Christ reigns now over His spiritual kingdom. (Colossians 1:13; John 18:36)

† Modern prophecy systems often create fear and confusion because they ignore audience relevance and timing statements. (Revelation 1:1-3)

† Our faith should rest in what Christ already fulfilled, not in endless speculation about current events. (John 19:30; Luke 21:22)

† If Matthew 24 depended on 1948, then Jesus' statement **THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS AWAY** failed for nearly 1900 years. (Matthew 24:34)

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q** Does the Bible ever say the fig tree is Israel in Matthew 24?

**A** No. Jesus simply called it a parable about recognizing nearness. Luke 21:29 adds and all the trees, proving it wasn't a secret code for modern Israel. (Luke 21:29-31)

**Q** Didn't Israel become a nation in 1948?

**A** Yes, a modern political state was formed in 1948, but Scripture never connects that event to Matthew 24 or the fig tree parable. (Matthew 24:32-34)

**Q** What was Jesus actually predicting in Matthew 24?

**A** Jesus was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in that generation. (Matthew 24:1-3, 34; Luke 21:20-22)

**Q** Why do many people connect the fig tree to 1948?

**A** That interpretation mainly came through modern dispensational theology, not from the text itself or early Christian teaching. (Matthew 24:32-34)

**Q** What destroys the 1948 fig tree theory completely?

**A** Luke 21:29 says the fig tree AND ALL THE TREES. If the fig tree represents modern Israel, then the other trees would also need to represent modern nations, which makes no sense in the context. (Luke 21:29-31)

**Q** Does Romans 11 teach modern Israel's prophetic restoration?

**A** No. Romans 11 speaks about salvation through Christ and the inclusion of the remnant together with believing Gentiles into

one body. (Romans 11:25-27; Ephesians 2:11-16)

**Q** Why is Matthew 24:34 so important?

**A** Because Jesus said ALL these things would happen before that generation passed away. Any interpretation pushing fulfillment thousands of years later makes Christ's timing statement meaningless. (Matthew 24:34)

**Q** If the fig tree represents Israel, why does Luke say and all the trees?

**A** Because the fig tree was never meant to symbolize modern Israel in the first place. Jesus used ordinary trees as a simple seasonal illustration showing that signs reveal nearness. (Luke 21:29-31)

**Q** Did any first century Christian teach that the fig tree referred to a future nation in 1948?

**A** No. Early Christians understood Matthew 24 as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in their generation. The 1948 interpretation is a modern invention. (Matthew 24:34; Luke 21:20-22)

**Q** Why did Jesus curse the fig tree if it represented a future restored Israel?

**A** He didn't. The cursed fig tree symbolized fruitless first century Israel under judgment. That actually works against the futurist interpretation. (Matthew 21:18-19; Matthew 23:37-38)

**Q** Does the modern nation of Israel today operate under the Old Covenant?

**A** No. There is no functioning Levitical priesthood, no temple sacrifices, and no covenant standing apart from Christ. The Old

Covenant vanished away. (Hebrews 8:13)

**Q** What did Jesus mean by summer is near?

**A** Just as leaves show summer is approaching, the signs Jesus gave showed Jerusalem's judgment was approaching in their lifetime. (Matthew 24:32-34)

**Q** Why is audience relevance important in prophecy?

**A** Because Jesus was speaking directly to His disciples about events THEY would see and experience. Ignoring audience relevance forces the passage thousands of years away from the people Christ addressed. (Matthew 24:15-16, 34)

**Q** Did Jesus ever tell His disciples to watch for a future twentieth century nation?

**A** No. He told them to watch for Jerusalem surrounded by armies, false christs, tribulation, and the temple's destruction within their generation. (Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:34)

**Q** What happens if Matthew 24 is pushed into the modern future?

**A** Christ's repeated timing statements become meaningless, including this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished. (Matthew 24:34)

**Q** Why do so many insist that Israel becoming a nation in 1948 is the fig tree prophecy, and what are they trying to prove?

**A** Because many modern prophecy systems depend on 1948 as the starting point for end times speculation. If the fig tree doesn't represent modern Israel, then entire futurist timelines begin collapsing. The doctrine is often used to keep Matthew 24, the tribulation, antichrist expectations, and Christ's coming

pushed into our future instead of recognizing that Jesus said these things would happen in THAT generation. (Matthew 24:32-34; Luke 21:20-22)

## † This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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### Source Index

† Matthew 10:23; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 21:18-19; Matthew 23:35-38; Matthew 24:1-3, 15-21, 32-34; Luke 21:20-24, 29-31; John 18:36; John 19:30; Romans 2:28-29; Romans 11:25-27; Colossians 1:13; Galatians 3:28-29; Ephesians 2:11-16; Philippians 3:3; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 9:26; 2 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 1:1-3

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book 6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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