

Luke 21:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

Analysis

When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. Jesus elaborates the parable with agricultural detail—hotan probalosin ēdē (ὅταν προβάλωσιν ἥδη, "when they already put forth shoots/buds"). The verb proballō (προβάλλω) means to sprout, bud, push forward—the first visible sign of life after winter dormancy. The adverb ēdē (ἥδη, "already, now") emphasizes immediacy—the budding has begun, the process is underway.

The response is instinctive: blepontes aph' heautōn ginōskete (βλέποντες ἀφ' ἔαυτῶν γινώσκετε, "seeing, you know from yourselves"). The phrase aph' heautōn (ἀφ' ἔαυτῶν, "from yourselves") indicates intuitive knowledge—no expert is needed to interpret budding trees. The present participle blepontes (βλέποντες, "seeing") suggests simple observation; the verb ginōskete (γινώσκετε, "you know") indicates certain knowledge. The conclusion is obvious: hoti ēdē engys to theros estin (ὅτι ἥδη ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν, "that summer is now near").

The logic is straightforward: observable signs → certain knowledge → appropriate response. Just as budding trees require no complex interpretation, prophetic fulfillments should prompt obvious conclusions. The phrase "summer is now nigh" (engys, ἐγγύς, "near") indicates temporal proximity—not distant future but imminent arrival. This creates urgency—when you see the signs, recognize what follows immediately.

Historical Context

Palestinian agriculture operated on predictable seasonal cycles. Spring budding preceded summer harvest by mere weeks. Farmers who missed the signs faced economic loss—harvest preparations required advance planning. Jesus applies this practical wisdom to eschatology. When disciples saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies (v. 20), they should recognize imminent destruction and flee. When future generations see cosmic signs (vv. 25-26), they should recognize Christ's imminent return. Early church expected Christ's return within their lifetime based on this teaching, though Peter later explained that God's timing differs from human expectations (2 Peter 3:8-9). The principle remains: observable fulfillment of prophecy should prompt expectation of consummation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the intuitive nature of seasonal discernment teach about believers' responsibility to recognize prophetic fulfillment without requiring expert interpretation?
2. How should the transition from budding to summer's arrival (measured in weeks, not centuries) inform understanding of prophetic imminence?
3. What observable 'buds' in contemporary history might signal the approaching 'summer' of Christ's return?

Interlinear Text

ὅταν προβάλωσιν ἡδη βλέποντες ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν
When shoot forth now ye see of your own selves
G3752 G4261 G2235 G991 G575 G1438

γινώσκετε ὅτι ἡδη ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν·
and know that now nigh at hand G3588 summer is
G1097 G3754 G2235 G1451 G2330 G2076

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