

# Mark 13:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

## Analysis

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**Learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near**—Jesus shifts from apocalyptic vision to agricultural illustration. The Greek *mathete* (μάθετε, 'learn') commands active observation. The fig tree (*sykē*, συκῆ) was common in Palestine, losing leaves in winter and budding in spring—a reliable natural sign.

The parable (παραβολή, parable/comparison) functions as a prophetic wake-up call: just as seasonal signs are unmistakable, so the events Jesus described (vv. 5-23) will signal his coming. The tender branch (*hapalos*, ἀπαλός, soft/young) sprouting leaves inevitably leads to summer (*theros*, θέρος, harvest time). This creates tension with verse 32's 'no one knows the day or hour'—we can recognize the season without calculating the exact moment. The fig tree may also symbolize Israel (Jeremiah 24, Hosea 9:10), whose 'leafing' portends judgment-harvest.

## Historical Context

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Palestinian agriculture shaped Jesus's teaching vocabulary. Fig harvest (August-September) was economically vital, and observing the tree's spring budding (April-May) allowed farmers to plan. Rabbinic literature similarly used agricultural parables to teach Torah. The fig tree imagery would evoke Jesus's cursing of the barren fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20-21), symbolizing Israel's spiritual fruitlessness and impending judgment.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What are the spiritual 'signs of the times' you observe that point toward Christ's purposes unfolding in history?
2. How does this parable balance watchful awareness with the humility of not knowing exact timing?
3. In what ways might you be producing 'leaves' (religious appearance) without the fruit of genuine discipleship?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἄπο δὲ τῆς συκῆς μάθετε τὴν παραβολήν· ὅταν  
of Now G3588 the fig tree learn G3588 a parable When  
G575 G1161 G4808 G3129 G3850 G3752

αὐτῆς ἥδη ὁ κλάδος ἀπαλὸς γένηται καὶ ἔκφύῃ  
her yet G3588 branch tender is and putteth forth  
G846 G2235 G2798 G527 G1096 G2532 G1631

τὰ φύλλα γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἔστιν·  
G3588 leaves ye know that near G3588 summer is  
G5444 G1097 G3754 G1451 G2330 G2076

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