

# Matthew 21:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

## Analysis

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**When the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!**—The Greek ἐθαύμασαν (ethaumasán, 'marveled') shows astonishment at the speed: **How soon** (πῶς παρὰ χρόνον, pōs parà chrónon)—immediately, not gradually. The disciples focused on the miracle's timing, missing Jesus's symbolic judgment on Israel's fruitless religion.

Their amazement prepared them for Jesus's teaching on faith (v.21-22). What stunned them—instantaneous withering—illustrates both faith's power and unbelief's consequence. The fig tree represented Israel's outward religion without righteousness (Luke 13:6-9), now judged in Jesus's prophetic act.

## Historical Context

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Fig trees symbolized Israel's covenant relationship with God (Jer 8:13, Hos 9:10). A leafy tree promised fruit even out of season—finding none demonstrated barrenness. Jesus cursed it Monday morning; by Tuesday morning it was completely dead, an impossible natural timeframe pointing to divine judgment.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

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

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. What 'leaves without fruit'—outward religious activity without genuine spiritual life—might Jesus identify in your walk?
2. When you witness God's power, do you marvel at the spectacle or learn the spiritual lesson?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	ιδόντες	οἱ	μαθηταὶ	ἐθαύμασαν	λέγοντες	Πῶς
<b>And</b>	<b>saw</b>	<sup>G3588</sup>	<b>when the disciples</b>	<b>it they marvelled</b>	<b>saying</b>	<b>How</b>
G2532	G1492		G3101	G2296	G3004	G4459
παραχρῆμα	ἐξηράνθη	ἡ	συκῇ			
<b>soon</b>	<b>withered away</b>	<sup>G3588</sup>	<b>is the fig tree</b>			
G3916	G3583		G4808			

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