

~FIG (395)

[Hebrew, *te 'e-nah'*, Greek, *sy-ke'*, *sy'kon*]

- Early And Late Crops
- Food And Medicinal Use
- Figurative And Prophetic Use

- Along with the olive and the vine, the **fig** tree, *Ficus carica*, is one of the most prominent plants of the Bible, receiving mention in more than 50 texts.
- Once upon a time the trees went to anoint a king over them. So they said to the olive tree; Do be king over us. (**Judges 9:8**)
- But the olive tree said to them; Must I give up my fatness with which they glorify God and men, and must I go to wave over the other trees? (**Judges 9:9**)
- Then the trees said to the **fig** tree; You come, be queen over us. (**Judges 9:10**)
- But the **fig** tree said to them; Must I give up my sweetness and my good produce, and must I go to wave over the other trees? (**Judges 9:11**)
- Next the trees said to the vine; You come, be queen over us. (**Judges 9:12**)
- In turn the vine said to them; Must I give up my new wine that makes God and men rejoice, and must I go to wave over the trees? (**Judges 9:13**)
- Although the **fig** tree itself may not blossom, and there may be no yield on the vines, the work of the olive tree may actually turn out a failure, and the terraces themselves may actually produce no food, the flock may actually be severed from the pen, and there may be no herd in the enclosures. (**Habakkuk 3:17**)
- The **fig** is native to Southwest Asia, Israel, Syria, and Egypt and is noted for its remarkable longevity. While the tree will grow wild, to produce good fruitage it needs cultivation.
- Then he went on to tell this illustration; A certain man had a **fig**

- tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. (Luke 13:6)
- Then he said to the vinedresser; Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this **fig** tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why really should it keep the ground useless? (Luke 13:7)
 - In reply he said to him; Master, let it alone also this year, until I dig around it and put on manure. (Luke 13:8)
 - And if then it produces fruit in the future, well and good, but if not, you shall cut it down. (Luke 13:9)
 - It is quite adaptable to various kinds of soil, even doing well in rocky soil. It may reach a height of about 9 meters (30 feet), with a trunk diameter of about 0.6 meter (2 feet), and it has wide-spreading branches. While it is primarily appreciated for its fruit, it is also highly valued for its good shade.
 - Nathanael said to him; How does it come that you know me? Jesus in answer said to him; Before Philip called you, while you were under the **fig** tree, I saw you. (John 1:48)
 - Nathanael answered him; Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are King of Israel. (John 1:49)
 - Jesus in answer said to him; Because I told you I saw you underneath the **fig** tree do you believe? You will see things greater than these. (John 1:50)
 - The leaves are large, measuring as much as 20 centimeters (8 inches) or more in width. The first mention of the **fig** is in regard to the sewing together of its leaves for use as loin coverings by Adam and Eve.
 - Then the eyes of both of them became opened and they began to realize that they were naked. Hence they sewed **fig** leaves together and made loin coverings for themselves. (Genesis 3:7)
 - In some parts of the Middle East, **fig** leaves are still sewed together and used for wrapping fruit and for other purposes.

See Also SYCAMORE

· Early And Late Crops

- There are, basically, two crops of **figs** produced annually by the trees, **the first ripe figs**, or **early figs** Hebrew, *bik-ku-rah'*, which mature in June or early July.
- And the fading flower of its decoration of beauty that is upon the head of the fertile valley must become like the early **fig** before summer, that, when the seer sees it, while it is yet in his palm, he swallows it down. (**Isaiah 28:4**)
- As for the one basket, the **figs** were very good, like early figs, and as for the other basket, the figs were very bad, so that they could not be eaten for badness. (**Jeremiah 24:2**)
- Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel. Like the early **fig** on a fig tree in its beginning I saw the forefathers of you people. They themselves went in to Baal of Peor, and they proceeded to dedicate themselves to the shameful thing, and they came to be disgusting like the thing of their love. (**Hosea 9:10**)
- And the later **figs**, which grow on the new wood and make up the main crop, generally maturing from August onward. The early **figs** may be easily shaken from the tree when ripe, and they are prized for their delicate flavor.
- All your fortified places are as **fig** trees with the first ripe fruits, which, if they get wiggled, will certainly fall into the mouth of an eater. (**Nahum 3:12**)
- About February, the first fruit buds appear on the branches from the previous season, and these precede the leaves by about two months, since the leaves do not usually appear until the final part of April or in May.
- Now learn from the **fig** tree as an illustration this point. Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (**Matthew 24:32**)
- As for the **fig** tree, it has gained a mature color for its early figs, and the vines are abloom, they have given their fragrance. Rise up, come, O girl companion of mine, my beautiful one, and come away. (**Song of Solomon 2:13**)

- The first signs of maturity in the new green **figs**, Hebrew *pagh*, are mentioned in connection with the flowering of the grapevines, which flowering begins about April. Hence, by the time the tree is in full leaf it should also be bearing fruit.

- The **fig** tree that Jesus Christ cursed seems to have been abnormally early with its leaves, inasmuch as it was then Nisan 10 of the year **33 C.E.** Its appearance gave basis for hoping it might also be unseasonably early in producing fruit suitable for eating, and the record at;

- The next day, when they had come out from Bethany, he became hungry. (**Mark 11:12**)

- And from a distance he caught sight of a **fig** tree that had leaves, and he went to see whether he would perhaps find something on it. But, on coming to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season of figs. (**Mark 11:13**)

- So, in response, he said to it; Let no one eat fruit from you anymore forever. And his disciples were listening. (**Mark 11:14**)

- Indicates that Jesus approached the tree with that thought in mind even though it was not the season of **figs**, that is, the time for the fruit to be gathered. The trees having nothing but leaves showed it was not going to produce any crop and was, therefore, deceptive in its appearance. Jesus cursed it as unproductive, causing it to wither.

- Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire. (**Matthew 7:19**)

- This is why I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits. (**Matthew 21:43**)

- Then he went on to tell this illustration; A certain man had a **fig** tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. (**Luke 13:6**)

- Then he said to the vinedresser, Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this **fig** tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why really should it keep the ground useless? (**Luke 13:7**)

- In reply he said to him; Master, let it alone also this year, until I dig around it and put on manure. (Luke 13:8)
- And if then it produces fruit in the future, well and good, but if not, you shall cut it down. (Luke 13:9)

•• Food And Medicinal Use

- **Figs** were a staple source of food in Bible times and continue to be such in several Middle Eastern countries. They were formed into cakes of pressed **figs** *Hebrew, deve-lim'*, which were convenient for carrying.
- At once Abigail hastened and took two hundred loaves of bread and two large jars of wine and five sheep dressed and five seah measures of roasted grain and a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed **figs** and put them upon the asses. (1 Samuel 25:18)
- Further, they gave him a slice of a cake of pressed **figs** and two cakes of raisins. Then he ate and his spirit returned to him, for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. (1 Samuel 30:12)
- And also those near to them, as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food upon asses and upon camels and upon mules and upon cattle, eatables of flour, cakes of pressed **figs** and cakes of raisins and wine and oil and cattle and sheep in great quantity, for there was rejoicing in Israel. (1 Chronicles 12:40)
- Such a cake was used as a medicinal poultice for King Hezekiah's boil, and cakes of this type are still employed in this manner today in the Middle East.
- And Isaiah went on to say; You men, take a cake of pressed dried **figs**. So they took and put it upon the boil, after which he gradually revived. (2 Kings 20:7)

•• Figurative And Prophetic Use

- The **fig** and the vine are mentioned jointly in many texts, and Jesus words at;

- Then he went on to tell this illustration; A certain man had a **fig** tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. (**Luke 13:6**)
- Show that **fig** trees were often planted in vineyards.
- Do not listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria has said; Make a capitulation to me, and come out to me, and eat each one from his own vine and each one from his own **fig** tree and drink each one the water of his own cistern. (**2 Kings 18:31**)
- Do not be fearful, you beasts of the open field, for the pasture grounds of the wilderness will certainly grow green. For the tree will actually give its fruitage. The **fig** tree and the vine must give their vital energy. (**Joel 2:22**)
- The expression sitting under one's own vine and **fig** tree symbolized peaceful, prosperous, secure conditions.
- And Judah and Israel continued to dwell in security, everyone under his own vine and under his own **fig** tree, from Dan to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. (**1 Kings 4:25**)
- And they will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his **fig** tree, and there will be no one making them tremble, for the very mouth of Yehowah of armies has spoken it. (**Micah 4:4**)
- In that day, is the utterance of Yehowah of armies, you will call, each one to the other, while under the vine and while under the **fig** tree. (**Zechariah 3:10**)
- In view of this prominence of the **fig** tree in the life of the people, it is understandable why it was so frequently used in prophecy.
- Because of its importance to the nation's food supply the utter failure of the fig crop would be calamitous. Thus, the **fig** tree received special mention when destruction, or ruination, was foretold for the land.
- They will also certainly eat up your harvest and your bread. The men will eat up your sons and your daughters. They will eat up your flocks and your herds. They will eat up your vine and your **fig** tree. They will shatter with the sword your fortified cities in

which you are trusting. (**Jeremiah 5:17**)

- When doing the gathering, I shall bring them to their finish, is the utterance of Yehowah. There will be no grapes on the vine, and there will be no **figs** on the **fig** tree, and the foliage itself will certainly wither. And things that I give to them will pass by them. (**Jeremiah 8:13**)
- And I will lay desolate her vine and her **fig** tree, of which she has said; They are a gift to me, which my passionate lovers have given to me, and I will set them as a forest, and the wild beast of the field will certainly devour them. (**Hosea 2:12**)
- It has set my vine as an object of astonishment, and my **fig** tree as a stump. It has positively stripped it bare and thrown it away. The twigs of it have become white. (**Joel 1:7**)
- The vine itself has shown dryness, and even the **fig** tree has faded away. As for the pomegranate tree, also the palm tree and the apple tree, all the trees of the field, they have dried up, for exultation has gone ashamed away from the sons of mankind. (**Joel 1:12**)
- I struck you people with scorching and mildew. There was a multiplying of your gardens and of your vineyards, but your **fig** trees and your olive trees the caterpillar would devour, yet you did not come back to me, is the utterance of Yehowah. (**Amos 4:9**)
- Although the **fig** tree itself may not blossom, and there may be no yield on the vines, the work of the olive tree may actually turn out a failure, and the terraces themselves may actually produce no food, the flock may actually be severed from the pen, and there may be no herd in the enclosures. (**Habakkuk 3:17**)
- The nation of Israel itself was likened by Yehowah to two kinds of **figs**.
- And Yehowah showed me, and, look! Two baskets of **figs** set before the temple of Yehowah, after Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and the princes of Judah and the craftsmen and the builders of bulwarks, from Jerusalem that he might bring them to Babylon. (**Jeremiah 24:1**)

- As for the one basket, the **figs** were very good, like early figs, and as for the other basket, the **figs** were very bad, so that they could not be eaten for badness. (**Jeremiah 24:2**)
- And Yehowah proceeded to say to me; What are you seeing, Jeremiah? So I said; **Figs**, the good **figs** being very good, and the bad ones being very bad, so that they cannot be eaten for badness. (**Jeremiah 24:3**)
- Then the word of Yehowah occurred to me, saying; (**Jeremiah 24:4**)
- This is what Yehowah the God of Israel has said; Like these good **figs**, so I shall regard the exiles of Judah, whom I will send away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans, in a good way. (**Jeremiah 24:5**)
- And I will set my eye upon them in a good way, and I shall certainly cause them to return to this land. And I will build them up, and I shall not tear down, and I will plant them, and I shall not uproot. (**Jeremiah 24:6**)
- And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Yehowah, and they must become my people, and I myself shall become their God, for they will return to me with all their heart. (**Jeremiah 24:7**)
- And like the bad **figs** that cannot be eaten for badness, this in fact is what Yehowah has said; So I shall give Zedekiah the king of Judah and his princes and the remnant of Jerusalem who are remaining over in this land and those who are dwelling in the land of Egypt. (**Jeremiah 24:8**)
- I will also give them over for quaking, for calamity, in all the kingdoms of the earth, for reproach and for a proverbial saying; for a taunt and for a malediction, in all the places to which I shall disperse them. (**Jeremiah 24:9**)
- And I will send against them the sword, the famine and the pestilence, until they come to their finish off the ground that I gave to them and to their forefathers. (**Jeremiah 24:10**)

- To illustrate how false prophets could be recognized by their bad fruits, Jesus cited the impossibility of getting **figs** from thistles.
- Be on the watch for the false prophets that come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. (**Matthew 7:15**)
- By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from thorns or **figs** from thistles, do they? (**Matthew 7:16**)
- My brothers, a **fig** tree cannot produce olives or a vine figs, can it? Neither can salt water produce sweet water. (**James 3:12**)
- The **fig** trees putting forth its leaves toward the middle of the spring season was used by Jesus as a well-known time indicator.
- Now learn from the **fig** tree as an illustration this point. Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (**Matthew 24:32**)
- Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. (**Matthew 24:33**)
- Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur. (**Matthew 24:34**)
- Finally, the ease with which the **unripe fig** Greek, *o'lyn-thos* is shaken to the ground by high winds is used as a simile by the writer of Revelation.
- And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as when a **fig** tree shaken by a high wind casts its unripe figs. (**Revelation 6:13**)