

October 31 Answers

- 1) Jesus saw a fig tree in leaf and expected to find some **paggim** that would satisfy his hunger, but the tree had none. The tree looked like it was bearing fruit (it had leaves), but its appearance masked its **barrenness**. Jesus, led by the Spirit, cursed the tree, *not* because it had no fruit, but because it made a **show** of life that promised fruit, yet was bearing none. In this way the fig tree was a **symbol** of all who make a show of loving God but are spiritually barren. This is a stern reminder to us of the importance of **works**, for faith without works (without fruit) is dead (James 2:17). The disciples were amazed at how quickly the fig tree died (by the next **morning**). Jesus said, “Have **faith** in God...if you have faith and do not **doubt**...whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.” (Mark 11:22; Matt 21:21–22). Jesus was not saying that we can have **anything** we want as long as we really believe, nor did He mean that we will receive **immediate** answers to all our prayers. Rather, Jesus was calling us to believe and obey God’s Word. If we act and pray in accord with the **Spirit**, God will grant our request. We must not doubt, for when we ask something in Jesus’ name and in **harmony** with God’s will, God will accomplish His purpose (John 14:12–14). But we must also be patient and **wait** on God’s timing, for as Abraham discovered, the time between God’s promise and His answer may be long indeed (Gen 18:11–14). A study of the various Scriptures on prayer reveals that there are **conditions** to effective praying. We must **forgive** others (Mark 11:25), we must not pray with **selfish** motives (James 4:3), and we must ask only for those things that are in **harmony** with God’s will (1 John 5:14–15). To pray effectively, our faith should be in **God**, not in the object of our requests.