

--the need of preparing His disciples for the long period after His death and resurrection. He must give them some idea of the age that was ahead, and of its wonderful conclusion in His return to earth to set up His glorious Kingdom of righteousness and peace. In the course of chapters 24 and 25 our Lord gives a good many important glimpses of events in the future age, but His emphasis is very largely on keeping His disciples from setting dates. They are to witness to Him during the period between His first and second advent, and to be constantly faithful. The vital question is, what is their attitude to be during that time? It is not His purpose to inform them how long the period will be. He tells them that they are not to know that. In Mark 13:32 He even states that the Son of Man Himself does not know the time of His advent. The date is to be kept a secret; the vital thing is the attitude of the disciples during the time that He is gone. That is the subject which is discussed in today's lesson--the attitude which Christ desires His followers to have while He is in Heaven prior to His return to earth. This attitude is summed up in our Golden Text, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

OUTLINE

1. THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE, vv. 32-35.
2. THE UNEXPECTEDNESS OF THE END OF THE AGE, vv. 36-42.
3. THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE HOUSEHOLDER, vv. 43-44.
4. THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE GOOD AND EVIL SERVANTS, vv. 45-51.

EXPOSITION

1. The Parable of the Fig Tree, vv. 32-35.

Verse 32. "Learn a parable of the fig tree." Our usual idea of a parable is a little story in which each element illustrates some definite event or truth. The word "parable," however,