



JESUS CLEANSSES HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

Matthew 21:12–16; Mark 11:15–18;
and Luke 19:45–48

¹²Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” ¹⁴Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant ¹⁶ and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?’”

—Matthew 21:12–16

¹⁵So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹⁶And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. ¹⁷Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations?’ But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” ¹⁸And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

—Mark 11:15–18

⁴⁵Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, ⁴⁶saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " ⁴⁷And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, ⁴⁸and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

—Luke 19:45–48

Read Matthew 21:12–16; Mark 11:15–18; and Luke 19:45–48

When we envision Jesus, our first thought is usually of His humility and love. We love to dwell on His invitation in Matthew 11:29: *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* This is the invitation that Jesus offers to anyone who sincerely comes to Him to be reconciled to God. There is only one place in all the Gospels where we see Jesus angry, and that is when He is in His Father's house in Jerusalem.

History and archeology have verified that the high priest Annas had booths in the Gentile court of the temple; this court was intended to be dedicated to foreigners who desired to come worship Yahweh. Annas had taken this court that was to be a place of prayer and connection to God and turned it into a money-making enterprise. As high priest, he made it mandatory for those who wanted to give an offering or sacrifice to use only temple shekels (forcing people to exchange their Roman coins at a high rate for acceptable coinage), and buy animals for sacrifice from one of his kiosks. He had raised the prices to such an exorbitant amount that the common people could not afford to worship Yahweh at the temple. The extortion of God's people, and the misrepresentation of God by the religious leaders, infuriated Jesus in the same way that it had infuriated His Father before the destruction of the first temple by Babylon (Jeremiah 7:11).

In our passages this week, we observe the righteousness of Jesus taking action against the misrepresentation of His Father

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Since Roman currency had idolatrous images stamped on it, the temple accepted only idol-free Tyrian currency. Money changers exchanged pagan coins for acceptable currency for a fee.²⁸

and the extortion of His people. He cleanses His Father's house by overturning the booths of Annas, driving out the animals, and dumping out the coffers of the money changers. This scene is both a warning and a promise to us. Judgment is sure and pending on those who misrepresent His Father and extort and oppress those who desire to serve Him. Jesus cleanses the house where His Father is resident, and He will not fail to cleanse our hearts. He will overthrow and drive out all that offends Him. He does this for us as a mercy: *My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him: for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives* (Hebrews 12:5–6). Jesus does not want anything lingering in our hearts that would pollute our pure worship of His Father. In cleansing us, He makes us more His own.

As you read over the events of Jesus in His Father's house, allow the Spirit to overturn and drive out of your own heart anything that would keep you from freely worshiping the Lord.

1. Use the following verses to describe Jesus' actions in His Father's house:
 - a. Matthew 21:12
 - b. Mark 11:15–16
 - c. Luke 19:45

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Barclay notes, "A pair of doves could cost as little as 4p outside the Temple and as much as 75p inside the Temple." This is almost 20 times more expensive.²⁹

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Doves were offered by women after childbirth (Lv. 12:6–8; Lk 2:22–24), by cleansed lepers (Lv. 14:22), by those healed of bodily discharges (15:14, 29), and by those who could not afford more expensive sacrifices (5:7, 11). Sheep and cattle were sold also (John 2:14). The Court of the Gentiles had become a virtual stockyard.³⁰

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

—Isaiah 56:7

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Thieves often used caves to hide their ill-gotten gains, and plot future crimes.³¹

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Usually the exchange rate involved a 4% to 8% commission. Because of the large number of half shekels, and the sacrifices involved, the money exchanged and the sale of sacrificial animals, was quite profitable. Jewish literature of the time was intensely critical of the priests for accumulating great wealth by robbing the poor of wealth through their extortion.³²

2. What reason did Jesus give for His actions? Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46

a. Comment on the meaning of what Jesus said.

3. Use Matthew 21:14–16 to answer the following questions:

a. Who came to Jesus in the temple?

b. What did Jesus do for them?

c. What did the children cry out?

d. What was the reaction of the chief priests and scribes to the wonderful things He did and the children's praise?

e. What was Jesus' response to the chief priests and scribes?

4. Use Mark 11:18 and Luke 19:47–48 to note the reactions of those who saw Jesus in His Father’s house:
 - a. The chief priests, scribes, and leaders of the people
 - b. The people
5. What is your greatest takeaway from Jesus cleansing His Father’s house?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” says the LORD.

—Jeremiah 7:11