

Jesus Clears the Temple

The Temple: God inspired King David with the pattern for the temple, which he passed on to his son Solomon. Solomon organized the building of the first temple which was to be a permanent house of worship and a dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant which was the container for the Ten Commandments and a symbol of God's presence with the people of Israel.

Three temples have stood successively on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem. The first temple was built by Solomon, the son of King David. The second temple by Zerubbabel and the Jews who returned from Babylonian exile. The third temple, which was Herod's Temple, was really a massive rebuilding of the Zerubbabel Temple. Herod added magnificent stone work, porches and arches. He greatly enlarged the temple platform and built a monumental staircase ascending into the Temple from the main street below. This Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. The Dome of the Rock stands on this site today and Islam says this site is where Mohammad ascended to heaven and the Jews say this site is the original location of the Holy of Holies.

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." (John 2:13-19)

Are we doing the will of the Father or are we acting as "free agents" apart from God's Word?

1. Christ found the court of the Gentiles a terrible scene. Christ makes a whip and drives out both the animals and the wicked merchants. He overturns the tables and scatters the coins across the floor. Christ then justifies his actions by saying: "How dare you turn my Father's house into a market." Remember Jesus is conscious of doing the will of His Father, but the Jews are not conscious of God's written Word. The failure of Judaism is emphasized and the disciples recall that this is the fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 69:9)
2. Now the Jews (in particular the Pharisees and Sadducees), who have been shocked by the action of Christ demand a sign to substantiate His authority and conduct. However, this was a ridiculous request since the cleansing itself was a sign as seen in Malachi 3:1-3 which said that the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders (from then tribe of Levi) was antagonistic right from the beginning, exactly as messianic prophecy said it would be.

How does God regard many of our churches today?

We see the escalation of the revelation of Jesus' glory and we are seeing how mankind is responding. In this lesson the miserable state of Judaism is made known in plain terms. Jesus was in the midst of them but they did not know Him. Israel gloried in the temple, for it was one of the main things which separated them from all other nations, as a favored people of God. But this holy place of worship had become a market. The temple was originally given as an annual reminder of sins but had been turned into a badge of righteousness.

