

Prayer House Matt 21:12-13

Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

(Isa 56:6-7) ... "Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath And holds fast My covenant; Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

Den of robbers (Jer. 7:10-11) ... then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered!'-- that you may do all these abominations? "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD.

1. The Prayer House Footprint Enlarged.

Court of Gentiles/Women, Altars, Holy Place, The Holy of Holies

Temple courts (picture of temple area)

2. The Prayer House Purpose Examined (Isa 56:6-8)

1. God's house is to be a gathering place of **all kinds of people**. (the foreigners, all peoples, those brought to God's Holy Mountain), Isa 56

2. God's house is to be a place of spiritual intention, Isa 56: 6, 'who join themselves to the Lord'

3. God's house is to be a place of intentional ministry to God Himself. Isa 56:6 'to minister to Him, and to love the name of the Lord.'

4. God's house is to be a place of personal identification. Isa 56:6 'To be His servants

5. God's house is to be a place of obedience. Isa 56:6, 'who keeps from profaning the Sabbath.'

6. God's house is to be a place of remembrance. Isa 56:6 'and holds fast My covenant.'

7. God's house is to be a place of divine invitation. Isa 56:7 'even those I will bring to My holy mountain.'

8. God's house is to be a place of divinely given joy. Isa 56:7 'and make them joyful.'

9. God's house is to be a place of prayer. Isa 56:7 'in My house of prayer'

10. God's house is to be a place of sacrificial giving. Isa 56:7 'Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar'

11. God's house is to be a place of notoriety. Isa 56:7 "For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

12. God's house is to be a place of diversity. Isa 56:8 "The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.""

3. The Prayer House Perversion Exposed.

Matt 21:12-13, "Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

(Jer. 7:10-11) ...then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered!'-- that you may do all these abominations? "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD.

1. God sees when we have taken His house and used it for another purpose.

2. God will not let His house continue to be used for purposes which are not of His initiation and design.

3. God's people, if not corrected, move from left of center and out of focus.

4. God's people, when they are missing the original mark, can quickly turn into a **den of robbers** instead of a **retreat for redemption**.

Cultural issues and atmosphere to be remembered:

1. Money changers used Roman coins which had the image of Caesar on them. Caesar was promoted as 'god' throughout the countries they controlled. For Jews to barter with Roman coins with which to purchase goods to be sacrificed in the Temple was a huge issue. There is one God for Jews, yet the tension was that the goods for temple sacrifice were being bought by coins with a 'god' figure on it. The money lenders were doing their job and more interested in the financial implications of doing business near the Temple, irrespective of what coins were being used. This was a very sensitive issue. It would be like distributing coins with Hitler's image on it to survivors of the Holocaust.

2. Greed: there was a fair bit of greed going on with the money changers. They could charge what they liked to their captive audience without having anyone regulate the prices. People who had travelled far and needed to purchase an animal for sacrifice were being charged ridiculous prices. The Jews who were in the city were manipulated by the greed of the money changers. Those Jews were in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice as it was written in the law of Moses, yet they were being taken advantage of by the money lenders.

3. Barnyard: the animals in the waiting bays to be bought were soiling the holy ground with their droppings. Imagine how soiled the Temple was getting with droppings under people's sandals and walking into the Temple. It would be the equivalent of walking into a special and revered place with animal droppings on the soles of your shoes. The smell would have been overwhelming!

4. Market: is that as it was a 'market' atmosphere just outside the Temple, it would have been noisy with people yelling and shouting. Not conducive for prayer at all! Jesus was all about stillness and quiet when praying.

4. The Prayer House Dangers to Escape.

When are we personally in danger of turning God's house into a den of robbers?

1. When we place our **agenda** of what we want God to do for us instead of asking ‘Oh, Lord what do you want to do with me, in me and through me?’

2. When our **desires for ministry to me** takes priority over **others** coming to the Lord...i.e. loss of passion of personal evangelism vs deeper discipleship for me.

3. When we begin to believe God’s house is to operate solely like a **business**, and profit is what we are about.

Watched over the years in ministry, committees get more upset with ‘not having enough money’ instead of being broken over ‘not seeing more souls won to Christ.’

4. When we get so **familiar** with the things of God, we don’t even stop to consider our **attitudes and actions**. (how and why we are doing ministry...may be actually repulsive to the Lord.)

5. When we confuse **busyness** with real worship.

6. When we are more **concerned** about what people **think of us** in what they are **thinking about Him**...i.e. marketing the church. How does God want to be represented?

7. When we would rather do something for God instead of seeking Him in prayer.