

A little review before we begin with our Scripture reference for today. Last week we talked about what is described at Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. There has been about a nine month procession from Caesarea Philippi down to Jerusalem as Jesus is coming to the point of his betrayal, arrest, death by crucifixion and in three days rise again.



As you look at this picture we see that as Jesus is coming into Jerusalem many of the people are shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! As they lay their cloaks and palm branches on the road as well as wave the branches from the trees. When he entered the whole city was stirred up! Many of them saying, "What is all this commotion about?" "Who is this?" And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

And as Jesus comes into Jerusalem we will now see in our Scripture for today he makes his way to the Temple. Let's read Matthew 21 verses 12-17.

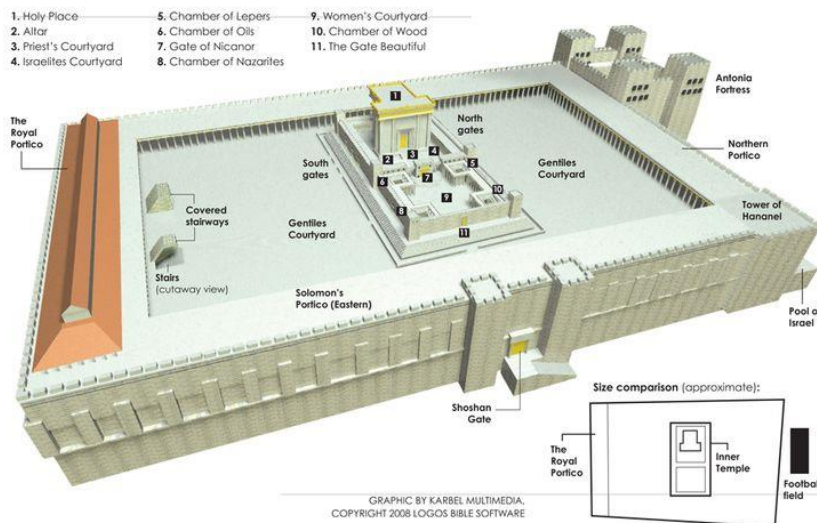
Matthew 21:12-17 –

¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers." ¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, ¹⁶ and they 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 infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" ¹⁷ And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there.

Jesus enters the temple and I want to show you where what happened next took place.

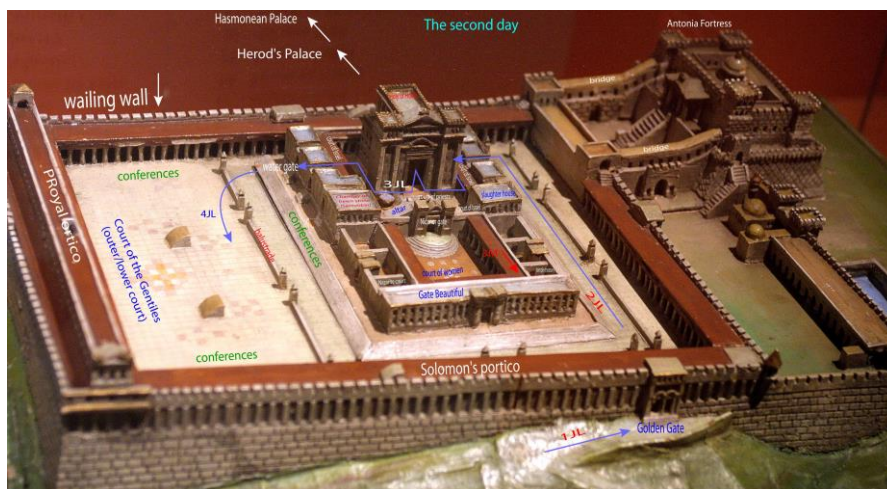
Herod's Temple

King Herod the Great began renovations on the Second Temple approximately 20-19 BC. The entire temple wasn't completed until approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.



Now, Herod did a very extensive renovation of the Temple. From the past invasions of other nations, the Temple had extreme damage done to it each time. So, Herod rebuilt the temple and in his renovation practically doubled in size what we could call the worship area. You see the "Court of Gentiles" depicted on each side of the Temple. This is where the non-Jews who had converted to Judaism could come and offer their sacrifices and worship to God but could not come into any of the inner courtyards. If they did it was punishable by death.

You see the left the area with the kind of reddish roof. This is called the Royal Portico or Royal Stoa. This area has 162 columns that hold up this roof that is made of cedar and this is where the Sanhedrin would meet at times and where Herod would come once in a while also.



This picture shows quite a bit more detail and as you can see the grounds were covered with marble and stone. I wanted to show this because that comes into play as we look at what Jesus does.

But with its spacious area in the Royal Stoa and the “Court of Gentiles”, this where scholars say that the money-changers along with those that sold, salt, oil, flour and the animals that were used in the sacrifices for Passover were stationed.

As I studied this I had never thought of the salt, oil and flour before. But if you have studied the feasts of the Jews. Not only do they celebrate Passover at this time but they also celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of First Fruits.

Now on the surface to have these things available doesn't seem like a bad idea. Remember thousands of people travel many, many miles to get to Jerusalem. And for many it is probably just not practical to bring the sheep or the doves or the pigeons that they may need for their sacrifice. Also, many live in areas that have their own currency and it has to be changed to the accepted currency for the temple tax and to be able to purchase the items each family needs. What was the temple tax? It was a half shekel for any man over the age of 20?

So, what is it that sets Jesus off to disrupt the happenings of this day? We also must remember this is not the first time that Jesus has done this in the temple. Turn to John Chapter 2 beginning with verse 13.

John 2:13-17

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. ¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

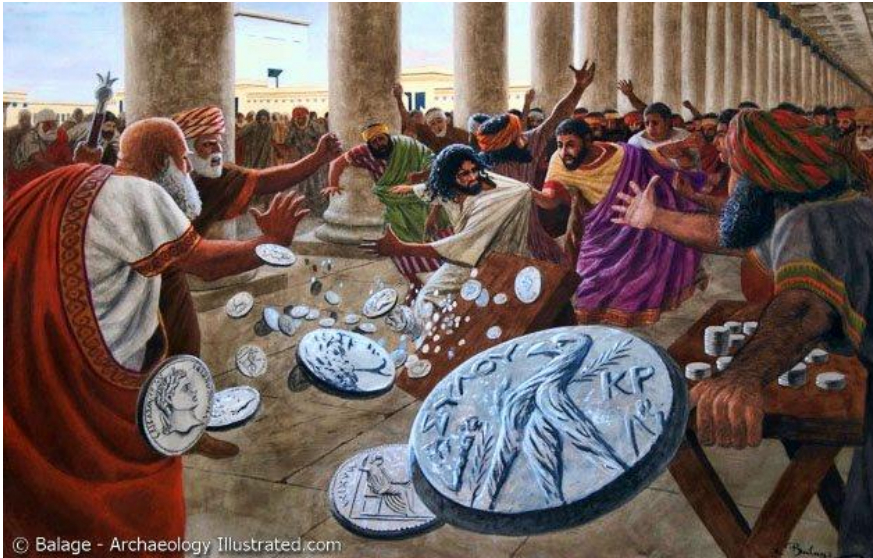
Do you not think that as Jesus was growing up and his family would come to Jerusalem Jesus saw this? All this was already going on! And we see here that this it is continuing at the beginning of Jesus' ministry because this is shortly of Jesus turned water into wine after the wedding in Cana. Here we are three years later and the same thing is still happening that has set Jesus off again. What is it? Well let's put it this way! Do you complain when gas prices seem to go up when it is vacation time or around holiday's when there is heavy travel? Do you look at the cost of things and say how can they continue to gouge us with these prices?

That is what is going on here! The Pharisees had a racket going on with these merchants and money changers. In fact, some of the priests were set up to do some of the money changing. They were charging exorbitant prices and interest on the exchange of currency. History tells us that Annas the Chief Priest and his sons were the orchestrators of this perversion.

But not only that! Where were they doing this? In the Temple! Though Herod had added on these large areas it is what this represented. Remember where we are at in Jesus' life. We are just a few days before his death. Jesus is going to show his Kingship, his Lordship.

What did the Temple represent? Within the temple is the Holy of Holies and this represented God's presence with the Jewish nation. This is the place where they came to bring sacrifices of worship, praise and of repentance for their sin. The temple is a place of worship! This is considered the most Holy place and most Holy time and Jesus walks in and sees all the perversion that is taking place.

As this picture depicts Jesus starts turning over the tables and what a scene that must have been.



Sheep jumping around and running across that courtyard. Pigeons and Doves flying everywhere as the cages they were in were probably broken. Let the Pigeons loose! Remember me telling you the floors were made of marble and stone. Can you imagine the noise all those coins were making as they were hitting the floor and rolling across them?

What a scene! You know that the Pharisees, the priests and the temple guards were all there. Look at verse 12! Did you notice who it says Jesus drove out of the temple?

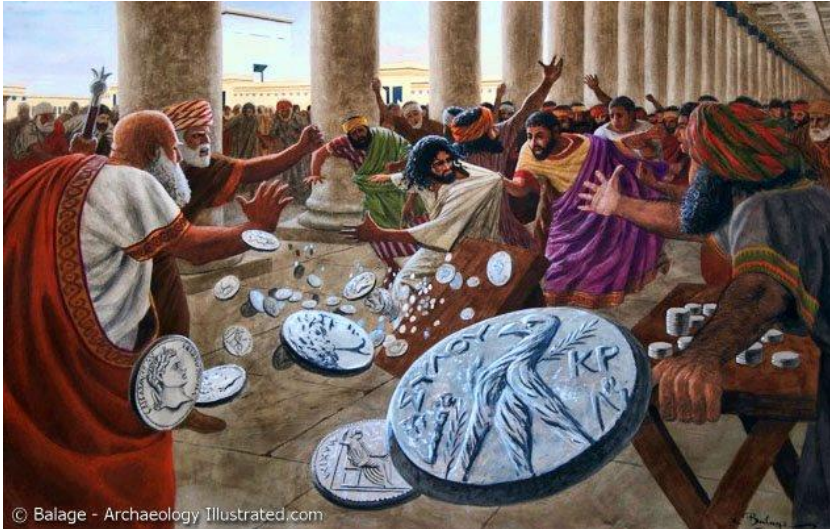
Matthew 21:12

And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

Why did he drive out those that bought also? Isn't this the only way they could have gotten their items for worship? I don't believe so. I believe it is because they knew better. Now, that's just me. But it is just like us! We know better! We know better before we slander that person, before we watch that show or listen to that type of music! We know better than to belittle people! We know better than to wear that! We know better than to do that with your boyfriend and girlfriend!

We bring that stuff in here and instead of repenting off it and turning from it we hold on to it and we want Jesus to condone it! But this is a place of worship and we are to bring sacrifices of praise and of worship and to repent of our sins! Just as Jesus is showing this to everyone in the temple I believe he wants us to be reminded that is why we are coming together today.

Look at the picture again!



Why didn't anyone stop him? There had to be more of them. Even if his disciples were helping him. Because Jesus was showing his righteous indignation and with that comes his power and no one could lay a hand on Jesus unless he willed it to happen. In Mark 11:16 it is recorded not only did he drive them out but he did not let anyone else come in. Oh! But Jesus you are getting yourself into trouble. What happens next really gets in him trouble! As he is driving out all these people and turning over the tables, Jesus says something. Look at verse 13.

Matthew 21:13

He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers.'"

Wait a minute! What did he say? My house! This quotation comes from the prophet Isaiah as he wrote these words in Isaiah 56:7.

Look at the screens:

Isaiah 56:7

These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

Question! Who is talking to Isaiah? God! So, Jesus says what again? "My House"! What is Jesus saying? That he is God! And to show this once again. After he drives everyone out look what happens next. See it was the belief set forth by the Pharisees that if you had an illness it was because of your sin. Outside the Temple people who were blind and crippled would sit outside the gates and ask for alms.

See Jesus drives out the self-righteous in the Pharisees and then brings in those who they deemed unclean. Jesus began healing them. Look at verse 14 and 15:

Matthew 21:14-15

¹⁴ And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant.

Evidently the Pharisees and the scribes did not go to far. Remember from last week and Pastor Kevin spoke that as Jesus was making his entry that there were a few people going, "Who is this?" Jesus was showing who he is through the throwing out those that were perverting the temple, to healing the people and now acknowledging what these young children are saying.

And the Pharisees and scribes here this and they come up to Jesus and they were indignant. They were furious, they were filled with hate. And in verse 16 they say to Jesus.

Matthew 21:16

And they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes, have you never read, "Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise?"

What were the children saying? "Hosanna to the Son of David!" What were they calling Jesus? Messiah! Son of David is a messianic term used by the Jews! The people were calling him Messiah! Do you not hear what they are saying Jesus?

Yes. Jesus is giving indication that is what we are created to do. We are to praise God! We are to praise Jesus! This is a quotation from Psalm 8:2, look at the screens.

Psalm 8:2

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

As the Pharisees and scribes were hoping Jesus would tell the children to quit. Jesus says what else can they do? They were created for such. In Luke as he describes the triumphal entry and the people are shouting the same thing and the Pharisees ask Jesus to tell them to stop. ***Jesus says, I tell you if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.***

You know the Tabernacle, the Temple and all the worship and sacrifices were just a picture of what was to come. Jesus fulfilled all of what those sacrifices represented. Through his death, burial and resurrection we don't have to go to a temple to sacrifice animals. In fact now that Jesus has come we are now referred to as a temple. Let me show this to you. Turn to 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.

God created our bodies, Jesus redeemed them, and the Holy Spirit indwells them. This makes our body the very temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Remember in the Temple the Holy of Holies was the most sacred place. Well what Jesus was showing is the whole temple was sacred and that is our bodies. Our bodies are a sacred temple before God. Our mind, our hands, our feet, our eyes. It is through these that we can affect our temple and pervert what is meant to be used to glorify God.

God's Grace is bestowed upon his but in no way does it give us a license to sin. In fact in Titus 2 it gives us the greatest definition of God's Grace.

Titus 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Jesus came into the temple and cleansed it because he hated the perversion that was taking place in the Holy Place of God. As a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ we should hate the perversion that is within us when it pokes up that ugly head. Remember 1 John Chapter 2. Love not the World! Nor the things of this World! The lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life.

What do you need to have cleansed in your life today? Jesus came into the temple and physically cleansed it! But he won't do that to our souls. You realize that he has the same righteous indignation towards you if you are perverting what was meant to give him glory.

Oh, He loves you! He loves you so much he died for you! He loves you so much he took your perversion upon his body that if you will repent of it and turn from it and allow him to cleanse you with his power. You can be cleansed.

There are still some of you that raised your hands a few weeks ago to acknowledge that you were not saved or were not sure that have not come forward. Is today the day to say I am ready to give my life to the Lord? I am ready to repent and give my life to Jesus and say whatever you want Jesus! You are Lord! Here is my life.

Maybe this is a new day at Mt. Pleasant! Maybe you want to come the altar and tell God you are not coming here any more without being prepared to worship and truly praise him. Maybe you truly do worship in here but you are not taking that worship and praise for him to the world and you are ready to do that. However the Lord leads, please be obedient!