



CAPITOL COMMISSION

The King's First Act: Purging the Perverted Temple

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Matthew 21:12-17 And Jesus entered into the temple and cast out all those buying and selling in the temple, and the tables of the moneychangers He overturned and the seats of the ones selling the doves. And He said to them, "It has been written, 'My house shall be called a House of Prayer,' but you yourselves are making it a den of robbers." And the blind and lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But the chief priests and the scribes, seeing the wonders which He did and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. And they said to Him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" But Jesus said to them, "Yes, Have you never read that out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You prepared praise for Yourself?" And leaving them, He went out, outside the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

Most of the Jews believed that the Messiah would purify the temple when He came because of the clear prophecy in the final book of the Old Testament, Malachi 3:1-4. Matthew has already mentioned that Jesus has applied the beginning of this prophecy to John the Baptist (11:10), as His forerunner. Now Christ fulfills this prophecy specifically as His first official act after His coronation as He entered triumphantly into His capitol, Jerusalem. Mark 11:11-19 gives us the precise timing of this event as the following day, which would be Monday after Palm Sunday. Rather than attacking the Romans and all the tyranny that they represented, Jesus chose to deal with the worship of His people and the corruption and sin of their leaders.

"JESUS EXPELLED THOSE WHO THE AUTHORITIES PERMITTED AND PERMITTED THOSE WHOM THE AUTHORITIES EXPELLED: HE DROVE OUT THE MONEYCHANGERS AND HE WELCOMED THE CRIPPLED."
DANIEL M. DORIANI

"THE SUPREME ISSUE FOR JESUS WAS NOT ROME'S ARMY, BUT GOD'S TEMPLE. THE MESSIAH DID NOT COME AS A MILITARY, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, OR SOCIAL SAVIOR FROM INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION BUT AS A SPIRITUAL SAVIOR FROM SIN"
JOHN MACARTHUR

Why does Jesus make this His first official act? What is the timing of this event in the Passion Week? Why are the sellers and buyers, moneychangers and dove merchants such an offense to Christ? Is this Christ's only use of force in His ministry? Why doesn't any of the temple guard, or the merchants, or the leaders of the temple oppose this action? Does Jesus Christ present Himself here as a political king or a spiritual king? How can these religious leaders become indignant at Christ healing the needy and being praised for it? What is the significance of Christ's departure?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > FEBRUARY 25: MATTHEW 21:18-22 LESSON ONE: THE POWER OF PRAYER
- > MARCH 4: DR. JEFF GINN LAST YEAR'S PASTORS' DAY SPEAKER LEADING OUR STUDY
- > MARCH 11: MATTHEW 21:23-32 JEWISH LEADERS QUESTION THE AUTHORITY OF THE KING

I. HIS DIVINE ANGER MT. 21:12-13

Jesus cleanses the temple both at the beginning (John 2:13-17), and the end of His ministry. The high priest, Annas, had discovered a way to acquire much more money and power for his family due to their position in leadership over the temple, its taxes, sacrifices and grounds. The men of Israel were required, every time a census was taken, to pay a half shekel for the upkeep of the sanctuary (Ex. 30:12-16). So Annas made sure that the census was taken often. Because the half shekel was to be a "*shekel of the sanctuary*," then any other money had to be exchanged for this shekel, and there was a hefty commission for the moneychangers in the exchange. Thus Christ especially "*overturned the tables*" of these monopolizing cutthroats. The only other group who were not just "*cast out*," but their "*seats*" were "*overturned*" included those who sold "*the doves*."

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30AM –INTERCESSORY PRAYER – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY @ 12:00NOON –BIBLE STUDY – WYTESTONE PLAZA AT 8TH & MAIN 2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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If a family could not afford a lamb for the yearly sacrifice, then they could give “two turtledoves” (Lev. 5:7). Because the sacrifice had to be without blemish, and the priests decided what was blemished, then if you brought your own animal, they would usually find a blemish, after you had paid an exorbitant fee for the inspection. But if you paid about “fifty times more,”¹ in their currency, for their “pre-approved” animals, those were always accepted. Jesus was especially angry at this flagrant monopolizing against the poor. Great power was in His words, “*It has been written, ‘My house shall be called a House of Prayer,’ but you yourselves are making it a den of robbers.*” One could hardly pray after becoming so irritated at being taken advantage of so brazenly in God’s house. These “robbers” were so keenly aware of their wickedness that not one even reproved Jesus.

“AS THOSE TRAFFICKERS WERE DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE, AND HE SPAKE, THERE FLOCKED IN FROM THE PORCHES AND TEMPLE-MOUNT THE POOR SUFFERERS—THE BLIND AND THE LAME—TO GET HEALING TO BODY AND SOUL.” ALFRED EDERSHEIM

II. HIS DIVINE COMPASSION MT. 21:14-15

As the “Court of the Gentiles” in the temple area must have been in shambles and Jesus would not even allow anyone to “*carry a vessel through the temple*” (Mk. 11:16), the blind and lame must have been graciously helped by compassionate friends as they “*came*” to Jesus. The temple that day became a most exalted “*House of Prayer*” as these poor supplicants, most of them probably beggars, made their requests. The King of the Universe revealed His divine compassion and wonderfully “*healed them!*” The crowd of worshippers pouring through the nearby porches must have stood in awe as they watched the most helpless cases completely healed and the rejoicing that accompanied

such a compassionate demonstration of power. The word for “*wonders*” is only used here in the entire New Testament. The demonstration of power to heal was so profound that the young boys, probably coming to the temple after their Bar mitzvahs to celebrate their first Passover as a man, shouted together the celebration cry of the Triumphal Entry the previous day, “*Hosanna to the Son of David!*” But the more that they rejoiced, the more the chief priests and scribes became “*indignant.*”

“THIS IS REMARKABLE AS THE ONLY SYNOPTIC REFERENCE TO JESUS HEALING IN JERUSALEM”

R. T. FRANCE

III. HIS DIVINE ANSWER MT. 21:16-17

These hardened leaders could not tolerate Jesus’ compassion upon the needy because it was a scathing indictment upon their unmerciful, selfish actions. Even more, they would never tolerate the shouts of the boys that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. So they angrily retort, “*Do you hear what these are saying?*” But Jesus simply says “*Yes.*” Then He reminds these guardians of the God’s house and law of a well-known psalm with the cutting sarcasm, “*Have you never read that ‘out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You prepared praise for Yourself.’*” The word for “*never*” is the strongest among the three words for never, meaning “not even at any time.”² The word for “*read*” means “to know again” and carries that concept “to know certainly,” or “acknowledge”³ Though He would be acknowledged by these boys as the Messiah, their leaders had never known words that they had repeated often with a smile when a child would get some spiritual truth right. What was so clear to the common Jew and even these young boys, was complete nonsense to these arrogant and unethical temple elite. Finally Jesus doubly abandons them, “*and went out, outside the city to Bethany.*”

² W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, & William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 430.

³ *Ibid*, 507.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What purging does Jesus need to do in your temple?
- 2) Is your leadership characterized by compassion or selfish ambition?
- 3) Have you ever acknowledged Jesus Christ as your Messiah and are you willing to humbly submit to Him and His Word?

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew, The triumph of the King*, Vol. 2, (Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Books, 2001), 443.