

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Key Verse: *“Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.”*
—**Jeremiah 7:11**

Selected Scriptures:
Isaiah 56:6,7;
Jeremiah 7:9-11;
Mark 11:15-19

THE SETTING FOR THE FUL-
fillment of these prophetic words of Jeremiah was just after Jesus’ official presentation as King of the Jews. As he entered Jerusalem, the people shouted, “Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Mark 11:9) Jesus visited Israel’s Temple that day, and “looked round about upon all things,” and when “eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.” (vs. 11) After arising the next day,

Jesus returned to Jerusalem and went again to the Temple. Those things that he had seen the previous day included the tables of money-changers, and the stalls in which doves were sold to people who wanted them to offer as sacrifices. He was greatly troubled by the many things he saw taking place in the outer courts of the Temple which were contrary to God’s law given to Israel.

As a Jew, Jesus had visited the Temple many times before. (Luke 2:41-47; John 5:14; 7:14; 8:2; 10:23) It was according to the Heavenly Father’s plan, however, that this visit would be different from any other. The prophetic words from our Key Verse were now to be fulfilled. The Temple had been polluted, in opposition to the direct statement

made by the Heavenly Father recorded in Isaiah 56:7: "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

In a rare departure from Jesus' normal behavior and actions taken, he momentarily assumed kingly authority and began to cast out the traders. He overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the stalls of the sellers of doves. In another account of an earlier experience during his ministry, we are told that during a similar cleansing of the Temple Jesus "made a scourge of small cords," and "drove them all out of the temple." (John 2:15) As the Jews' Messiah, Jesus had a legal right to take on the task of cleansing the house of God, and removing those who had been defiling it. The Temple had been taken over by those who desired to take advantage of people in distress. Jesus further identified these hypocritical religious leaders as those who would rob widows of their homes, while at the same time making long prayers, pretending to be sincere and righteous.—Matt. 23:14

There is an even greater lesson to be learned from the account of our Lord Jesus cleansing the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jews' "house of God" was a picture of a much greater temple, the true church of God, which is now in preparation. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3:16) This temple, once completed, will be one of glorious perfection. Nothing will defile it, as was the case with Israel's Temple of our Lord's day, of which the business done in it was profane in the sight of God, and spoiled the beauty of what God had intended for it to represent.

After all those called of God, also chosen and faithful, have finished their earthly courses, they will constitute the glorified "house of God." (I Pet. 4:17) This symbolic temple will then become a "house of prayer for all people." Mankind will have the opportunity to approach God through the mediatorial work of the glorified church, his holy temple, in which his presence will be shown, and his mercy made available to all. ■