

"Cleansing the Temple"

Part 1

John 2:12-22

Introduction: Last week in our study we looked at Jesus' first public miracle that was done in Cana of Galilee. Jesus turned the water to wine and in the first miracle there was a picture of what Jesus had come to do. The wine had run out at the wedding, and the wine was symbolic of joy. The six empty water pots were symbolic of unsaved man. They were empty stone pots that were cold which pictures our lives before salvation. The water poured into the pots represents the Word of God. The miracle is a picture of the new birth. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. So, when unsaved man hears the Word of God as it is poured into his life and he receives it then there is a miracle that takes place. We are saved and it is then that we learn what true joy is as we enter into a relationship with the Father and the Son.

Now as we continue in our study we are going to watch as Jesus goes to the Temple and he chases the sellers and the money changers out. Tonight, in our study we will learn what this is all about.

➤ **The Sin in the Temple**

Notice John 2:12

We need to notice in this verse that Mary was with Jesus, His disciples, and His brethren. Who were His brethren? After the birth of Jesus Mary and Joseph had a normal relationship as a husband and wife and Mary gave birth to children whom Joseph fathered. I point this out because there are many who believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary. She did not remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus Christ, but she had other children to Joseph.

Notice John 2:13

Here we see that the Passover was at hand and for this reason Jesus went to Jerusalem. Our Lord would waste no time. He would go right to the source of the corruption in that day. This would prove to be a dagger to the religious leaders. Now this verse sets the background for us to better understand what is going to transpire here. The Passover was commanded to be kept by the Jews. It was a reminder of how God protected the nation when He was preparing to bring them out of Egypt during the ten plagues.

Exodus 12:3, 5-7, 12-14

³ *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:*

⁵ *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:*

⁶ *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

⁷ *And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.*

¹² *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.*

¹³ *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

¹⁴ *And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and **ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.***

Josephus recorded that there were as many as 3 million Jews who would come into Jerusalem for the Passover. They came from all over and so at this time the city would be packed.

Notice John 2:14

When Jesus arrived at the Temple, he found it had been turned into a huge place of sales. There were people there selling livestock and others were changing money. Now let us understand that all of this was taking place in the court of the Gentiles. What was behind all of this? Let us consider that people came from great distances and some would not want to travel with sacrificial animals, so the religious leaders had set up a place in the court of the Gentiles to sell these travelers sacrificial animals. Of course, they elevated the prices and charged far too much taking advantage of the travelers just to put more money in their pockets. If they did bring an animal the animal had to be inspected by the

religious leaders and you can be sure that many were rejected, which put the people in a place where they had to buy what the religious leaders had available. Then there were the money changers. In order to pay the Temple tax, you had to have Tyrian coinage. Those coming from another region then had to exchange their money for the proper currency and the religious leaders charged a high percentage to change the coins. Notice the words of John Phillips.

"The Temple grounds were divided into four courts. Coming in from the east and moving toward the sanctuary itself, a visitor would successively pass through the court of the gentiles, the court of the women, the court of Israel, and the court of the priests. With their usual contempt for all things gentile, the Jews had designated their court as a suitable place to transact business....The place of prayer for all nations smelled of the barnyard, sounded like a cattle market, was filled with noise and din, was the scene of many a swindle."

There is yet another thought that needs to be considered here. Let us look at a few verses then we will get the picture.

Genesis 12:3

³ *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

When God called Abram, He made it known that the nation which would come from him was to be a blessing to all the Gentile nations.

Isaiah 49:3-6

³ *And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.*

⁴ *Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.*

⁵ *And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.*

⁶ *And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

Here in Isaiah God tells the nation that they were to be a light to the Gentiles to make God's salvation known to the entire earth.

Exodus 19:6

⁶ *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Here on Mount Sinai God told Moses to tell the nation that they would be His spiritual representatives to all the world.

Now let us get back to John and consider the scene at the Temple. Were they a light to the Gentiles? Were they being the spiritual leaders they were called to be? Were they a blessing to the Gentiles? The answer to each of these is, "NO!" They had set up a giant "flea market" in the court of the Gentiles and they were taking advantage of everyone that had come to worship. These religious leaders were controlled by their love for money.

1 Timothy 6:10

¹⁰ *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Notice John 2:15-16

When Jesus saw what was happening, He made a scourge and He drove them all out of the Temple and He turned over the tables of the money changers. Now let me point out that this happened two different times.

Matthew 21:12-13

¹² *And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,*

¹³ *And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

We need to notice something very interesting in what Jesus said in John and in Matthew.

Notice John 2:16 again.

He called the Temple, "His Father's house." This is recorded by John because John is striving to show his readers that Jesus is the Son of God. In Matthew Jesus calls the Temple, "His house" and in this He is stating that He is God because the Jews knew the Temple to be God's Temple. When He left the Temple for the last time He said something else that should have arrested the attention of the Jews.

Matthew 23:37-38

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

³⁸ Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Here Jesus refers to the Temple as, "Your house" which means God had nothing to do with the acts carried out there and the Jews were bound for judgment.

The cleansing of the Temple is what caused much of the hatred in the hearts of the religious leaders. This cut deeply into their finances.

Notice John 2:17

The minds of His disciples went back to Psalm 69.

Psalm 69:9

⁹ For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

Jesus' time on earth was consumed with pleasing the Father and being about His Father's business.

Application:

All of this makes me wonder how our Lord views what takes place in many churches today. He knew that as time would go on, that many churches would become something which they were never intended to be.

Matthew 13:31-32

³¹ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

³² Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Here we see that Christendom would forsake the will of the Father and become a place where Satan and his demons would be at home. We see that today in the churches where the Bible has been compromised and sin is now tolerated and accepted. This has caused the church to be powerless. Many have compromised due to money. They fear they might offend the people with the Truth and if the people are offended, they will leave and not give their finances. Therefore, they soften the message and water down the Truth, and the result is they have offended God and His power has been removed.

Conclusion:

Paul gave us the blueprint for the church in Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

¹⁶ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.