

# MAKE NOT MY FATHERS HOUSE AN HOUSE OF MERCHANDISE JOHN 2:13-17

Text: John 2:16

## **John 2:16**

<sup>16</sup> And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

Introduction:

The other gospel records do not record this cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of the Lord's ministry, but, as we all know, tell of a similar act at the very close of the Lord's ministry (Matthew 21:12f; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45f).

## **Matthew 21:12**

<sup>12</sup> 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,

## **Mark 11:15-17**

<sup>15</sup> And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; <sup>16</sup> And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple. <sup>17</sup> And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

## **Luke 19:45**

<sup>45</sup> And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

John, on the other hand, does no mention of the latter incident.

We learn from the repetition of this cleansing the solemn lesson: that outward reformation of religious corruptions is of small and passing worth. God desires pure worship in the innermost man.

Now, this narrative has many points of interest.

## **1. THE PASSOVER IN THE TEMPLE (VS. 13-14)**

### **John 2:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

The Passover was the annual commemoration of the great deliverance of the people's from the land of slavery (Ex. 12).

A one year old male lamb without blemish was killed in the afternoon.

That evening a family celebration took place.

Many oxen and sheep were offered up in sacrifice to God as the Festival of Unleavened Bread continued for seven more days.

**Ezekiel 45:21**

<sup>21</sup> In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

John speaks of three (2:13; 6:4; 11:55 ), possible four Passovers (5:1).

**John 2:13**

<sup>13</sup> And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

**John 6:4**

<sup>4</sup> And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

**John 11:55**

<sup>55</sup> And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

**John 5:1**

<sup>1</sup> After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

The Passover was one of the three occasions in the year when the Law required males (12 years and up) to “appear before God.

**Deuteronomy 16:16**

<sup>16</sup> Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of

unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

Verse 14 records what Jesus found going on in the temple. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.

The temple area was always crowded during Passover with thousands of out-of-town visitors. The religious leaders crowded it even further by allowing money changers and merchants to set up booths in the court of the Gentiles. They rationalized this practice as a convenience for the worshipers and as a way to make money for temple upkeep.

Because of the long journey that so many had to make in traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover many could not bring animals.

Some who brought animals would have them rejected for imperfections. So animal merchants had a thriving business, a business they moved into the temple court yard.

So, being convenient for all and profitable to many, the thing became a recognized institution.

They turned worshipers into attenders and the place of worship into a place of worldliness.

The Lord got angry.

He was angry at the dishonest, greedy, practices of the money changers and merchants.

What we learn from this is that the Lord house is to be a place of worship and not a place of worldliness.

Today too many churches function like fortune 500 companies.

Pastors lead like CEO instead of a shepherd.

Certainly there are business items at times that must be dealt with, but sadly the only time that some show up at many churches is for business meetings.

Notice not only the Passover in the Temple but also:

## **2. THE PURIFYING OF THE TEMPLE (VS. 15-16)**

### **John 2:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; <sup>16</sup> And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

Verse 15 & 16 record the Lord's reaction to the events that were taking place during the Passover at the Temple.

He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

Worldly minded men in God's house were exercising worldly wisdom in order to get worldly riches. God's temple was being misused by people who had turned it into a marketplace. They had forgotten, or didn't care, that God's house is a place of worship, not a business nor a place for making a profit.

Our attitude toward the church is wrong if we see it as a place for personal contacts or business advantage. Make sure you attend church to worship God.

The Lord's actions reinforced His words.

The Lord was obviously angry at the merchants who exploited those who had come to God's house to pray and worship.

He cleansed the temple of distractors and distractions.

What can we learn from this?

May we not be guilty of becoming a distraction from the worship of God.

Notice not only the Passover at the Temple and the Cleansing of the Temple but also:

### **3. THE PASSION FOR THE TEMPLE (VS. 17)**

#### **John 2:17**

<sup>17</sup> And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

The effect of the Lord's zeal on the disciples was to remind them of Psalms 69:9.

#### **Psalm 69:9**

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

The effect of the Lord's zeal on the disciples was to remind them of Ps. 69:9. The action of the Lord revealed the inward passion He had for God. It gave evidence of a consuming zeal for the house of God and the Scriptures found their fulfillment in what He did.

The Lord exercised His right as the only begotten Son of God. He took the oppressive, disruptive, dishonest, evil dealings in the temple as an insult against God, and He did not deal with it halfheartedly. He was consumed with righteous anger against such flagrant disrespect for God's place of worship.

The Lord came to purify the Temple showing that He had come to remove all barriers to the true worship of God. He came to open the way to the true worship of God.

I read a quote this week that I think is very appropriate:

“A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God’s truth is attacked and yet would remain silent.”

I would add to that quote we shouldn’t remain silent when we see true worship diluted or distracted.

Close:

The real temple, the real place God wants to live, the real place of worship and prayer is the human heart.

If the Lord took such zeal to cleanse a temporary earthly temple, imagine the zeal He experiences in giving God a proper place of worship in our lives.

He has a passion that our hearts not be clutter with the world but be set aside as a place of prayer and worship.

The only way to keep the world out of my heart is to have Christ filling it.



