

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #247

Passion Week: Monday... Day of Authority in Action

Jesus Takes Authority Over the Temple By Cleansing It MK 11.15-18; LK 19.47-48 (Parallel Texts: MT 21.12-13; LK 19.45-46)

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.

17 And as he taught them, he said, *“Does it not stand written: ‘MY HOUSE WILL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS’?* (Is. 56.7)

“But you have made it ‘A DEN OF ROBBERS.’” (Jer. 7.11)

18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

47 ¹Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to destroy him. 48 Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	The Temple Courts in Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	B. Monday: Day of Authority in Action
Title	2. Jesus Takes Authority Over the Temple by Cleansing It

COMMENT:

Jesus began Monday morning by revealing his authority over a fruitless fig tree. Now he entered the Temple and displayed his authority over the House of God with fiery zeal.

Jesus had cleansed the Temple in the same at during the first Passover of his ministry, three years earlier. He was relatively unknown at that time. Now, he repeated the same action at the peak of his fame, for the same reasons, but with a greater expression of his authority.

In addition to driving out the money and animal merchants as he did at the first cleansing, this time Jesus guarded the Temple Courts to prevent carrying merchandise within the courts. These courts comprised a huge area--the size of several football fields. Jesus' ability to control such a massive space filled with people indicates the scope of his influence, and power of his personality.

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Jesus' **"zeal for his Father's house"** was fueled by three concerns. First, the honor and glory of his Father. We addressed this in our comments on the first cleansing (DJN #36).

The second concern was his mission to all the nations with the gospel. He quoted Is. 56.7 in reference to this: **"My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations."** The Temple was intended to be the most glorious place on earth, a place that the Gentiles would flock to, so that they could come to know the God of all the nations. The "Court of the Gentiles" was especially devoted to this purpose. Yet, this was the very place where the merchants created such a bedlam with their business.

They sound, smell, and space taken by the sale of money and animals destroyed God's intention for all the nations to come to know him there, and commune with him in prayer. The merchandizing was in direct opposition to God's passion for the evangelization of all the nations. It could not be tolerated.

Finally, the second cleansing was all about authority. The Temple was under the jurisdiction of the high priest, and the council of the chief priests. They used their authority to support and protect the merchandizing in the Court of the Gentiles, and reaped a tidy personal profit from it as well. They were utterly derelict in their responsibility to represent God's interests in their office as priests.

Jesus came to the Temple as the Messiah, the Son of God, and High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. He possessed all the power and authority of God. He exercised it in line with God's eternal purpose to create a kingdom made of people from all the nations, a kingdom of priests that minister to God forever as his representatives.

Jesus is the eternal King and High Priest over the House of God. This was why He cleansed and policed the Temple on Monday of Passion week.

APPLICATION:

Just as Jesus cleansed the Temple for the second time during Passion Week, he is zealous for the holiness of God's House today, so that we will be effective in his mission to "make disciples of all the nations."

Under the Old Covenant the plan was for God to draw all the nations to himself through the glory of the Temple, and the holiness of his people. That covenant failed. Under the New Covenant, God's people became his Temple, and the mission is now to "GO!" to all the nations with the gospel, rather than waiting for them to "come to church."

Like the merchandizers in the Temple, it is all too easy for us Christians to become distracted from our primary task in this age—to evangelize all the nations by "going" to them with the gospel.

How much more of your gifts, financial resources, time, prayer, and energy can you channel into Jesus' mission to all the nations? What is stopping you from doing that today?

What does Jesus need to clean out of your life in order for you to be more effective and committed to his will to reach all the nations with the gospel through you?