

Passion Week of Prayer and Fasting



MARK 11:15-17

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, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?' But you have made it 'a den of robbers'."

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he whipped the money changers out of the temple to present himself as the Messiah. It was appropriate for him to take such authority and first cleanse the temple of those who, under the guise of being God's chief priests, made God's house one of merchandizing. It was even more appropriate at the close of His ministry, He entered the city as a king and publicly claimed authority. This was part of prophecy.

ISA 56:7 *these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.*

JER 7:11 *Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.*

Why was Jesus so angry and upset with the money changers and those selling doves?

- Every Jew had to pay a temple tax of one half-shekel. This could be paid before going to Jerusalem. A month before Passover, booths were set up in the towns for early payment. After a certain date, it had to be paid at the temple. It's similar to buying tickets in advance for a lower price than buying them the day of the event for a higher price. This tax had to be paid in certain currency, although for general purposes, all kinds of currencies were equally valid in Palestine. The money changers exchanged unsuitable currency for correct currency, for a price.
- For most visits to the Temple you were required to bring an offering. Animals cost a lot less outside the Temple. All sacrificed animals had to be without blemish. The official inspectors for the Temple usually rejected anything purchased outside the Temple and would send people to one of their booths to buy an unblemished offering. A pair of doves could cost as little as 4 cents outside the Temple and as much as 75 cents inside the temple. If you only earn a penny a day, that was highway robbery. Jesus' anger was directed against those who made it impossible for simple people to worship in the House of God. In the noise and business of buying and selling, prayer was impossible.
- May our focus and attention at all times be on this amazing Saviour's perfect sacrifice on the Cross. May we be women and men who would spend much time at the feet of the Master, seeking His face in Prayer, and out of that would come an overflow, to be the salt and light, the hands and feet of Jesus to a city, a nation and a world that so desperately needs this wonderful Saviour.

Prayer Points

We praise and thank God for His love that brought salvation to mankind.

- **ROMANS 4:25** *"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."*
- **HEBREWS 2:17** *"that Christ made "propitiation for the sins of the people" and 1 JOHN 4:10 says "in this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*