

THE ANGRY JESUS

John 2:13-22

Anger is a normal emotion of God. We read in Ps. 7: 11 that God is angry with the wicked every day. In Romans 1:18, Paul affirms that reality by stating, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."*

The True Nature of the Temple

The Lord calls it *"My Father's house"* (v.16). It was identified with the Name of God, and was to be a place of testimony for Him. In it God revealed Himself and manifested His glory. It was His chosen, earthly dwelling place. All peoples of all nations could go there and meet God through sacrifice, worship and prayer.

A New Kind of Temple

Jesus promised the temple would be left desolate in Matt. 23:38. Desolate, because he would not return to it. After the resurrection of Christ the temple was no longer needed. His resurrection would lay the foundation for a new, spiritual temple—the church.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit down and took possession on 120 temples, so that they became witnesses, living testimonies for the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8).

Paul tells the Corinthians, but now, *"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you." You are the temple of the living God, who said, "I will dwell in you" – 2Cor. 6:19.*

How the Temple Become Desecrated

It was desecrated by those who were part of the religious establishment. They professed to be friends of the temple, but used their religion as a cloak, to secure worldly gain and recognition for themselves.

The Lord's anger was felt by mainly two groups that day; the moneychangers and the sacrifice inspectors. They had turned the house of the Lord into "a den of thieves," a

market place for bargaining and trade. They had inexcusably commercialized the holy functions of the temple.

The Moneychangers

The moneychangers had the pilgrims at their mercy. Under Mosaic Law it was mandatory for worshippers to pay half a shekel temple tax for its up keep. So pilgrims were obligated to sell their foreign currencies and purchase shekels. When trading, the moneychangers would take advantage of them by overcharging them, even to the point of making 12 1/2 commissions for themselves (F.F. Bruce).

The Sacrifice Inspectors

The sacrifice inspectors also took advantage of the worshippers. Many people would bring their own animals for the sacrifice. But if their offerings did not pass the careful scrutiny of the inspector as their suitability for sacrifice, the owners had to buy a costly replacement from the temple corrals. Of course, the animals kept in the temple cages were not examined with the same care. In trading back and forth, the sacrifice inspectors were making fat profits from their dishonest double standards of inspection. They were on holy ground at the temple, but prostitution of worship did not trouble them. Injustice was rampant. The moneychangers treated sacred things with contempt in order to line their pockets with unjust gain (W.T. Holland).

Jesus was outraged at these temple thieves, for they not only exploited the people; they were also satisfied to allow things to stay the same as they were, year after year.

Jesus had all the right to be angry and furious. His righteous indignation stemmed from an absolute dedication to God's holiness. He had a burning zeal for pure worship.

He would say to the woman at the well, "*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks*"—John 4:21-23.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

In the week leading up to the feasts of Passover and Unleavened bread the Lord had commanded the Israelites to remove any trace of leaven from their homes. Leaven was and is a type of sin in the Bible so it had to be removed. Everyone was extremely diligent to search and remove any hint of it during this time.

So Jesus here was simply doing in His Father's house what all of the Israelites were doing in their own homes – He was removing the leaven – removing the sin—the covetousness, extortion, and idolatry. His Father's house, the temple, had become a "market of leaven."

The zeal that Jesus had for His Father's glory drove him to clear it all out. But, the indignant Lord was merciful in His judgment. Christ rebuked all, but none were injured, and nothing was lost.

Think about it! One man with a simple whip of cords makes all the crowds flee in fear before Him. But this was no mere man. The fear of God had come upon them.

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

After the bazaar had been cleared out of the temple courts, the Jews refused to acknowledge their defilement; rather they asked Him, *"What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"*

The fact that He was able to drive them all out by the power of His own word and will—for it was not by mere physical force—might have been proof enough of His Divine authority, but He answered, *"Destroy this temple (body), and in three days I will raise it up, not build it up"* – John 2: 19-22.

What Jesus was saying was that He had inherent power to rise from the dead. The resurrection would be the evidence of His authority to cleanse the Temple for the glory of the Father.

Judging Ourselves

Paul articulates that if we clean house ourselves, the Lord won't need to do it for us. 1 Cor. 11:31-32—*"But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But should we be judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world."*

So if you need to clean house, don't put it off! This way Jesus doesn't have to angrily come in judgment to turn over the tables of your life and spill your plans on the floor.

Hebrews 12:6 reminds us, *"For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives."* He adds (12:11), *"All discipline for the moment*

seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

1 Peter 4: 17— *Judgment begins with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*