

Jesus Cleanses the Temple
Matthew 21:12-17

Jesus had been teaching, healing, and doing many wonderful works. It was time for the Passover feast, an annual feast of the Jews. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The people put their coats on the ground and cut branches from the trees and waved them as they cried out, "Hosanna in the highest!" It was a joyful triumphant occasion.

Jesus went into the temple and looked around at everything that was going on, but it was late and he didn't stay. He and his twelve disciples went back to Bethany and spent the night.

Under the law of Moses people were required to offer animal sacrifices. If you had to travel a long way to get to the temple in Jerusalem, you would probably not take your animal with you. You would take some money and buy an animal for your offering after you got to Jerusalem.

The next day they went back to Jerusalem and again Jesus went to the temple, but this time he took action. Men were selling the animals for sacrifices right there in the area of the temple! He knew this was not right and he did something about it. He made a whip out of cords, or small ropes and he drove the money changers out along with the sheep, oxen, and doves. He turned the tables over and poured out the money on the floor of the temple.

He said, "Take these things away! My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

The Jewish religious leaders were very upset by all this and they began looking for a way to destroy Jesus. However, they were afraid of him because all the people were amazed at his teaching.

Then blind and lame people came to him in the temple and he healed them. The children were crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" When the religious leaders heard this, they said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?"

Of course, Jesus did hear and he accepted their praise. He told the leaders that this was "perfect praise" coming from the lips of the children.

Memory Verse

It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"
Matthew 21:13 (NKJV)

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