

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

F. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Cleansing And Changes In The Temple (Matthew 21:12-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Malachi 3:1 predicted the coming of Messiah's forerunner and of the Messiah's sudden arrival at His temple, but Malachi 3:2 ESV asked who could "endure" it, for He would be like a refiner's fire, purging out sin.
- B. Though this purging ministry is largely reserved for Christ's second advent, a foretaste of it occurs in Matthew 21:12-17, and we view that passage for insight and edification for our era (as follows):

II. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Cleansing And Changes In The Temple, Matthew 21:12-17.

- A. Though Jesus had cleansed the temple at the start of His earthly ministry in John 2:13-16, He did so again near the end of that ministry as recorded in Matthew 21:12-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 68.
- B. Several changes occurred in that cleansing as recorded in Matthew 21:12-17 (as follows):
 - 1. First, Jesus cleansed the temple of thieving commercialism to make it a house of prayer, Matt. 21:12-13:
 - a. Upon entering the temple area, Jesus cast out all those who sold and bought in the temple and He overthrew the moneychangers' tables and the seats of them that sold the sacrificial doves, Matthew 21:12.
 - b. This activity critiqued and rejected the thieving commercialism that thrived in the temple: many made a living from insisting that worshippers not use regular secular coins in the temple, that they exchange such coins for temple money for a fee, and then use the temple money to buy sacrificial animals on the site "at inflated prices," real "extortion" that oppressed the worshippers and countered the spirit of worship, Ibid.
 - c. Accordingly, Jesus complained these moneychangers and sellers of sacrificial animals made the temple a "den of thieves" versus a "house of prayer" as God intended, Matthew 21:13. Jesus thus reversed the temple, purging it from thieving commercialism to make it into a house of prayer for the nations.
 - 2. Second, Jesus made the temple a place ministering to the needy instead of rejecting them, Matt. 21:14:
 - a. The blind and the lame entered the temple to see Jesus, those usually excluded from it, Matt. 21:14; Ibid.
 - b. So, versus rejecting such needy folk from the temple, Jesus made it a place to minister to their needs.
 - 3. Third, Jesus made the temple a place of testifying of His Gospel versus rejecting it, Matt. 21:14 with 11:5:
 - a. Matthew 11:5 records Jesus' reference to Isaiah 35:5 and 61:1 where the blind and the lame were predicted to be healed as evidence that Messiah [and God] had arrived in Israel.
 - b. Thus, with Jesus' healing of them in the temple, a place that had long squelched the heralding of the Gospel of Jesus as the Messiah (John 7:12-13), the temple became a place to herald the Gospel of Jesus.
 - 4. Fourth, Jesus made the temple a place of praising His Name versus rejecting Him, Matthew 21:15-16: with the response of the children in the temple to Jesus' healing of the blind and lame in their crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the son of David," and with Jesus' approval of their praise in Matthew 21:16, He made the temple a place that no longer suppressed faith in Him, but that rightfully praised Him.
 - 5. Fifth, Jesus refused the error and fellowship of lost religious leaders versus lauding them, Matt. 21:15-17:
 - a. The chief priests and scribes, upon seeing Jesus' miraculous healings of the blind and lame, and of the resulting praise of Jesus as the son of David by the children, expressed great displeasure, Matthew 21:15.
 - b. They voiced their displeasure to Jesus, wanting Him to support their concern that the children cease praising Him this way, but Jesus refused their wish, citing Psalm 8:2 to verify that God was at work to provide for Himself praise from the mouths of "children and infants," Matthew 21:16 NIV.
 - c. Then, upon countering their error, Matthew 21:17 reports Jesus left them, leaving both the temple and the city of Jerusalem for Bethany about two miles away on the other side of the Mount of Olives, rejecting to fellowship with these unregenerate religious leaders, Matthew 21:17; Ibid., p. 69.

Lesson: *Jesus presented Himself as Messiah by cleansing the temple and changing its practices from thieving commercialism to prayer, from rejecting the needy to aiding them, from rejecting the Gospel to giving it, from not praising to praising Him and from lauding lost leaders to refusing their error and fellowship.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) In the local church, may we heed Jesus' lead to avoid thieving commercialism, to avoid rejecting the needy, to avoid rejecting the Gospel, to avoid not praising Christ and to avoid lauding lost leaders, and to replace these vices with the edifying practices of prayer, helping those in need, giving the Gospel, praising Christ and refusing the error and fellowship of lost religious leaders.*