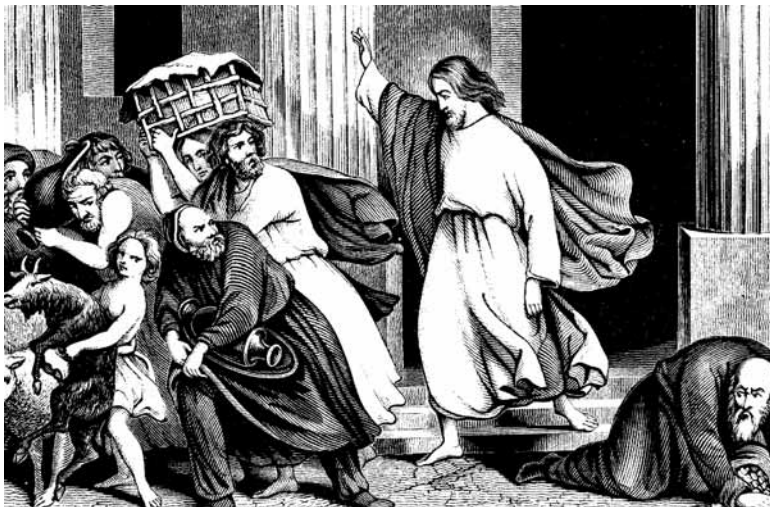


---

**CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE**

---



Now the time of the Passover was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found men in the temple area who were selling cattle and sheep and doves, and also the moneychangers who were doing business. So He fashioned a whip out of cords, and went into the temple and drove out the cattle and the sheep, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and He scattered their coins. And He went up to those who were selling doves and said to them, "Get these things out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a marketplace!" Then His disciples remembered what was written in the Scriptures, "Zeal for Your house will consume me."

John 2:13-17

Confirmation that the Temple was being turned into a marketplace during the time of Jesus can be found in some early Jewish writings. First of all, there is a record of the common practice of setting up money changers in the temple area during Passover. The Talmud states the following:

Beginning on the 1st of Adar ( the month before Passover), a proclamation was made to the people that they should prepare . . . On the 15th day of Adar, moneychangers were sent out to collect the Half-Shekel for its donation . . . On the 25th day of Adar, moneychangers were installed in the Temple itself to help in the collecting of the Half-Shekel donation: Megillah 29a-b

Not only were the moneychangers robbing the people, but history records that excessive prices were being charged by those who were selling animals used in Temple sacrifice.

For example, according to Leviticus 12:6-8, after an Israelite woman had given birth, she was to bring a sacrifice to the temple, preferably a sheep. But if she was poor and could not afford the price of a sheep, she could take two doves or two pigeons for the sacrifice, one for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. The Jewish Mishna states, that because of their greed, those who were selling birds rose their prices so much that the poorer woman of the community could not afford them. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel the Elder, a leading rabbi of his time and a descendant of Gamaliel whom the Bible says trained the apostle Paul as a pharisee, before Paul had come to Christ, took immediate action to lower the market price. The Mishna gives this account in Kritut 1:7:

"If a woman had given birth five times during her life . . . after she brings a single sacrifice, she will be able to eat sanctified foods once again. But she is still under oath to bring four more. It eventually came to pass that the cost of two birds rose dramatically to one gold zuz. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel declared: "I pledge that before I go to bed this very night, the price of birds will fall!" He headed straight to the courtyard and instructed the people to obey the following regulation: "After giving birth five times, a woman . . . needs to bring just one sacrificial offering to cover all five births. . . . That very day,

the price of birds plummeted to one quarter of a silver zuz."

Even many of the high priests during the first century seemed to have given up their love of God for the love of money. Most notably the High priest whom Jesus was brought before, Annas, along with his five sons who succeeded him to that position. The Temple sacrifice during their reigns can best be summed up by the words "The Marketplace of the family of Annas"

The historian Josephus sheds some light on the actions of one member of this family, Annas the younger, the man who had James (the writer of the book of James in the Bible) stoned to death. Josephus states:

"The high priest, Ananus, (after he had been relieved from his office) to some degree, was respected and feared by the citizens, but in a bad way; for he loved to hoard money. He became good friends with Albinus, and of the newly installed high priest. He did so by offering them bribes; he also had wicked servants, who associated with the most vilest sort of characters, and went to the thrashing-floors, and took the tithes that belonged to the priests by force, and beat anyone who would not give these tithes to them. So the other high priests that followed him as well as his servants acted likewise without anyone being able to stop them; so that some of the priests, those who were old and were being supported with those tithes, died for lack of food."

A matter of fact, Jewish history records that these High priests who walked the temple courts during the first century, were despised by the majority of the people for their brutality and hunger for money. So much so that there is a strong condemnation of these men in the Talmud.

Tosefta, Menachoth 13.21 states a Rabbinic Lament over the brutality of the Sadducees - Abba Saul ben Betnith and Abba Jose ben Johanan of Jerusalem say:

"Woe to the house of Boethus! Woe to me because of their rods!" (Simon, son of Boethus, father-in-law to Herod. He was a high priest during the reign of Herod the Great)

"Woe to the house of Qadros (Cantheros)! Woe to me because of their pens!" (Simon Cantheros was one of the high priests appointed during the rule of Herod Agrippa)

"Woe to the house of Elhanan, woe to the house of whispers!" (Elhanan is translated 'Ananus or Annas' in Greek and here refers to the high priest Annas of the New Testament and his sons.)

"Woe to the house of Elisha! Woe to me because of their pens!"

"Woe to the house of Ismael ben Phiabi! For they are high priests and their sons, treasurers and their sons-in-law who were (temple) officers!" "And their servants came and beat us up with staves!" (Ishmael son of Phabi was a high priest under Valerius Gratus, procurator of Judea or may refer to Ismael son of Fabi who was a priest under Herod king of Chaleis.)

## **JESUS GREATEST STATEMENT CONCERNING RICHES:**

"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. **"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"** "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Mark 8: 34-38

## **WHAT GOD THINKS OF THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL:**

"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, **he is proud, knowing nothing, and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of financial gain. From such withdraw yourself.**

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."

1Timothy 6:3-8

**NEXT CHAPTER >>**