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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Today we come to that dramatic moment in the Gospel of John when our Lord cleansed the temple.
(John 2)

- John gathers this event around **three factors**:
 - **# 1** Where Jesus was;
 - **# 2** What he did;
 - **# 3** What the disciples learned.

- **After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days. The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (John 2:12-13)**

- Our Lord had been in Jerusalem many times during his formative years before his public ministry began.
- He had been to the temple and would have seen many of these sights before.
 - But he had taken no action in response.

- Now, however, he is going to Jerusalem **as the Messiah,**
- And he will fulfill **Malachi's prophecy** about the Messiah.

- *"The Lord whom you see shall suddenly come to his temple,"*
(**Malachi 3:1** RSV),
- *"and he will purify the sons of Levi,"*
(**Malachi 3:3** RSV).
- **This is the background**
for what our Lord did
when he arrived in Jerusalem.

John 2:13

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

2:16 And said unto them that sold doves,

Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

- **Jesus is clearly angry**
at what he found
in the temple.
- **He takes drastic action**
to cleanse it of:
 - **Money-changing,**
 - **Extortionist,**
 - **Racketeering.**

- John says this occurred at a **Passover feast.**
- A time when every Jewish household spent the day **cleansing the house.**
- Ridding it of any substance **causing fermentation.**

- This was an **absolute necessity** in order to properly celebrate the Passover.

- Yet when Jesus came into the temple, the house of God, he found it:
 - Filled with clutter and noise,
 - Dirty-smelling animals,
 - Money-changers
 - Merchandise,
 - And no one seemed concerned about it.
 - But our Lord was concerned.

- Not only was he angry
at the confusion,
the clutter,
the noise and the smells,
- He was angry at
the extortion
and
racketeering
that was going on.

- Once a year, every Jewish male had to go to the temple **and pay a temple tax.**
- A half-shekel tax at the Passover season.

- That tax could not be paid in **Roman** or **Greek** coin but had to be paid in **a special temple coin.**
 - As foreign coins were considered **unclean.**
 - **So money-changers** provided that service..

- But there was an **exorbitant price** being extorted for making this exchange.
- The temple was making **enormous profits.**

- At Passover season sometimes as many as two million people were in the city of Jerusalem,
 - Racketeering was polluting the Temple of God.
 - And no one cared.
 - But Jesus did!

- A sacrifice offered at the Passover season had to be made with an animal without blemish.
- If it was defective it was rejected.

- Many families would bring their own animal for sacrifice.

- All animals had to be examined by the priests

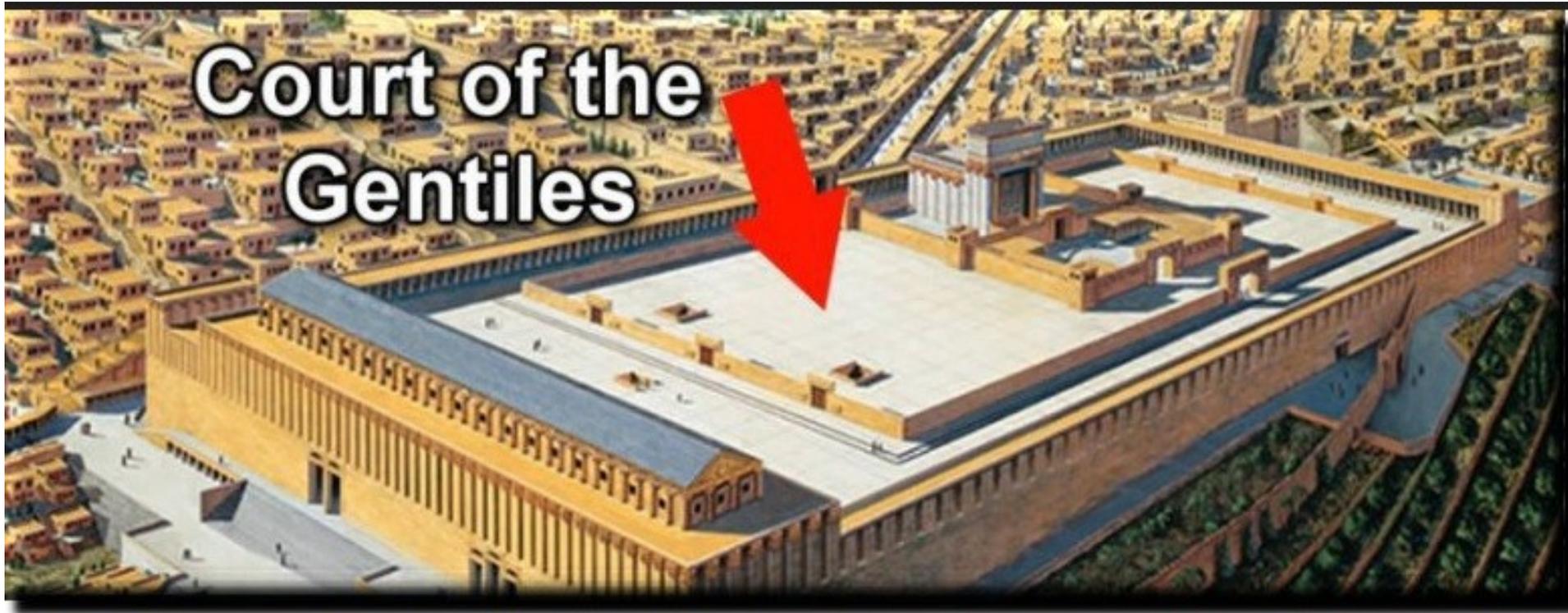
and it would almost certainly

be rejected.;

the priests would find something wrong with it.

- This meant that the only animals that could be offered were those which were bought from the temple herd that was kept in an open courtyard **in the court of the Gentiles.**

**Court of the
Gentiles**



- These animals had **already been approved** by the priests.
- But a tremendously inflated price was demanded for those animals.
 - It was this **extortion** and **greed** from even the poorest of the poor was what aroused the flaming anger of our Lord.

- Our Lord was moved when he saw these swindlers and schemers who in the name of religion were extorting money from the poor by means of a religious scam.
- The Bernie Madoff's of the day.

- So great was his anger that he made a whip out of some cords and drove these extortioners out of the temple.

- Let us not minimize the anger and violence which Jesus manifested at this time.

- This is a different Jesus than many people imagine him to be.

- He is seen by many
as so

loving and understanding

that he lets you get by

with anything;

- But this action
clearly indicates
that our Lord is

capable of anger.

- Yet his anger was under control.
- Ephesians 4:26
Be angry,
sin not.

- There is no indication that he actually struck anyone.

- Neither did he deprive anybody of anything that they owned.

- The animals he drove out could easily be collected again;
- The money he poured out on the temple floor could be gathered up and recounted;
- He did not open the cages of the birds and let them loose, *but ordered them to be taken away.*
(John 2:16)

- **But he made his point!**
 - Do not turn a place which is devoted to **the worship of God** and the cleansing of people, into a flea market.

- The word John employs is, literally,
"emporium,"
{G-1712}
a place where people are
concerned about making a fast buck.
(John 2:16)
 - A Temple
"Wal-Mart"
so to speak.
 - The temple was to be a place
where souls were cleansed.
- No a place to make money supreme.

- What did the disciples learn?

- Three lessons

burned themselves unforgettably
into the disciples' minds
as they watched our Lord.

- The first was an
immediate impression:

- John 2:17

*And his disciples remembered
that it was written,
The zeal of thine house
hath eaten me up.*

- Can you imagine what the disciples felt while this was going on?
- How embarrassed they must have been.

- Here was the One they believed to be the Messiah;
 - They saw a divine quality about him.
- Yet the first thing he does is to embarrass them.

- But as they watched him do this, there came flashing into their minds

a verse from the 69th Psalm.

- There came into their minds **this one verse,**

- *"The zeal of thy house has consumed me"*

(Psalms 69:9 RSV)

- Maybe, they began to realize that God is serious about pure hearts.
(**Matthew 5:8**)
- They began to understand that God does not compromise with evil.

- This touches one of the great paradoxes of our Christian faith.
 - "*Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*" (Matthew 11:28).
 - Anyone can come.

- Murderers, prostitutes, swindlers, liars, perverts, drunkards, self-righteous, bitter, hard-hearted cynics, religious hypocrites, proud self-sufficient snobs, etc.
- Anyone who realizes there is something wrong in his life and wants to be free can come to Jesus.
- Anyone can come.
(**Matthew 11:28**)

- **But be assured**
that Jesus
is not going to leave you
the way you are.
- He is not going to settle for
compromise, extortion,
racketeering,
whatever may be defiling
and corrupting
the temple courts.

- If we mistake His love for anything goes, we are in for a big surprise.
- If we refuse to deal with our faults, one day we will find him:
 - **(2 Thessalonians 1:8)**
- *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

- This explains what will happen to many many who, like the Pharisees, make their outward actions look good, but allow sinful habits to be hidden in their lives.

- Luke 11:39

And the Lord said unto him,
***Now you the Pharisees
cleanse the outside of the cup
and of the platter;
but your inward part
is full of
extortion and wickedness.***

- He is no longer tolerant,
understanding and forgiving.

- His eyes are aflame;
and he means business

- That is what
the disciples learned:

*"Zeal for thy house
will consume me."*

(Psalms 69:9 RSV)

- **The second lesson the disciples learned**
was a delayed lesson:
 - The Jews then said to him,
"What sign have you to show us
for doing this?"
 - Jesus answered them,
"Destroy this temple, and
in three days I will raise it up."
 - The Jews then said,
"It has taken forty-six years to build
this temple, and will you raise it up
in three days?"

- **But he spoke of the temple of his body.**
- **When therefore he was raised from the dead,**
- **his disciples remembered that he had said this;**
- **and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.**
(John 2:18-22 RSV)

- The Jews expected the Messiah to give them certain signs,
 - And one of the signs the prophet Malachi prophesied was that the Messiah *would suddenly come to his temple and purify the sons of Levi.* (Malachi 3:1-3)
- The Messiah had just done that, **but they did not recognize him.**

- Instead, they said to him,
*"What sign do you have
that you are the Messiah?"*
(**John 2:18**)

- Our Lord's answer was
to give them the only sign
that would have any meaning to them
 - The sign of his
resurrection.

- **But even the disciples missed it.**
 - Notice how blind they are.
- They did not catch the meaning of his **answer until after the resurrection.**
 - When they saw:
 - the prints of the nails in his hands
 - the wound in his side,
 - and realized, incredibly, that he was alive again.

- How many people miss it today?
- Thinking that it is the building that is important.

- Across this nation today
great cathedrals
have been erected
- Some costing millions of dollars.
- Every one with a plaque that says,
"Erected to the glory of God."
 - No building is
the house of God.
 - It never was,
it never will be.

- Even the Temple in Jerusalem was not really the house of God.
- When Solomon dedicated the temple he acknowledged that fact.
- "*Heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!*"
(**2 Chronicles 6:18**).

- Buildings have always been but pictures of the house of God.
 - The real temples are our soul, and spirit.
 - That is where God dwells.
- The Apostle Paul caught this truth.
 - *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have from God? You are not your own;"*
(1 Corinthians 6:19).

- **You do not have the right to:**
 - **Run your life,**
 - **Make all the decisions**
in your life.
 - And **why** not?
 - "***You are not your own,
you were bought with a price.
So glorify God in your body,***"
(**1 Corinthians 6:19** RSV).

- Remember
Jesus' conversation with
a woman at the well of Jacob.
- She raises a critical question,
"*Where should we worship God?
On the temple mount
in Jerusalem,
or here in this mountain
in Samaria?*"
(**John 4:20**).

- Jesus' answer was,
*"The hour is coming when
neither on this mountain
nor in Jerusalem
will you worship the Father,"*
 - *"God is a Spirit,
and those who worship him
must worship
in spirit and truth,"*
(**John 4:21-24** RSV).
- That is where God is glorified.

- The disciples learned that day that the Lord of that temple cares about the confusion and immorality that may be there,
- And he will not make peace with it.
 - "As he is,
so are we in this world,"
(**1 John 4:17**)

- There is further significance to this event as John puts this account **back-to-back** with the miracle of changing of water to wine.
 - It is a **learning lesson** for them and us.

- This is what the disciples are learning: the fear of God!

- **"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,"**
(Proverbs 9:10).

- The God whom we have come to love,
who is:

- Accepting and understanding,
- Forgiveness and cleansing
 - Is nevertheless unwilling to put up with sin.
- He will cleanse his temple whether you and I like it or not.

- Hebrews tells us that if the Father loves us he will scourge us and chasten us out of his love until we begin to be what he designed us to be (**Hebrews 12:5-11**).
- He has in mind a temple where he can be glorified.
- Where our deepest human desires will find satisfaction and fulfillment, and that requires cleansing.
- He will bring that about.

- **The third thing**

the disciples learned

John records:

- *Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast,*
 - *many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did;*
- *but Jesus did not trust himself to them,*
 - *because he knew all men*
 - *and he needed no one to bear witness of man;*
- **for he himself knew what was in man.**

(John 2:23-25 RSV)

- As the disciples watched him:
 - Working miracles,
- Healing the sick and the lame
- Opening the eyes of the blind,
 - They noticed that, though many were believing in Jesus because of the miracles.

- **Jesus did not commit**
himself to them.
- The sudden wave of popularity
had not deceived Jesus
 - Who well knew
the fickle and unreliable nature
of public opinion.
 - **Jeremiah 17:10**
I the Lord
search the heart.

- How many people come to Christ and ask him to be their Lord,
 - Yet they do not change.
 - There is no real conversion.
 - They go right on living as always.
 - Eventually, they drift away, and never come back.
- Why is that? John explains it here.
 - He says it is because

Jesus knew what men and woman are like.

- He knew that there were many who were attracted only by the sensational things he did.
- He knew that there were none who understood the way that he had chosen.
 - He knew that if he had begun to talk about service and self-denial.

- If he had begun to talk about **self-surrender** to the will of God,
- If he had begun to talk about a cross **and about carrying a cross,**
- They would have stared at him **with a blank look** and left him on the spot.
- **Sadly**, many are in that frame of mind today.

- It does not take miraculous power
to figure this out.
 - Rather it is the fact of life.
 - We all give signs
that telegraph who we are by:
 - The looks on our faces,
 - The tones of our voices,
 - The positions of our bodies,
 - Telling others what
we really are like inside.

- None of us can read the signs as Jesus did and does.
- Therefore he is
- never deceived,
- never fooled.
- Acts 15:8

God knows the heart.

- It is clear in this account that the people involved **were unaware** that anything was wrong..
 - Through the years **and through tradition** it crept inside the temple until people were unaware that anything was wrong.
 - **But our Lord knew.**

- Jesus refused to compromise.
- He never entertained the idea of:
 - They mean well
so let it go,
 - Or look how religious they are,.
 - Or they are doing a good deed.

- In our lesson for today
Jesus forced the issue

so people saw

what God saw

when he looked at the temple.

- This is what John

wants us to remember.

- We are dealing with a God of reality,

- A God who

cannot be fooled.

- **The disciples learned some wonderful things about God.**
- They learned to **fear** God,
 - That he is a God of **mercy** and **justice**.
- Their eyes were opened **as ours should be.**
 - That is what being **a disciple means.**

- O Love that wilt not
let me go,
- I rest my weary soul in Thee;
- I give Thee back the life
I owe,
- That in Thine ocean
depths its flow
- May richer, fuller be.

(# 48)

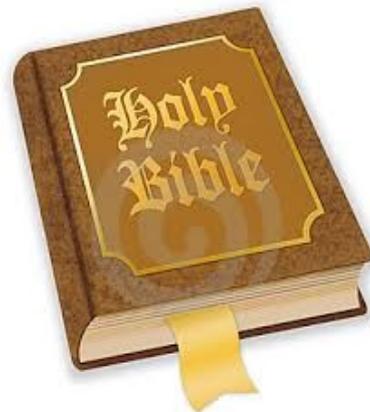
- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



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