

PRESERVING PLACES OF HERITAGE Sunday School- April 6, 2014

Unifying Topic: JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Lesson Text

I. The Heritage Of The Temple (Isaiah 56:6-7)

II. The Abuse Of The Temple (Jeremiah 7:9-11)

III. The Preservation Of The Temple (Mark 11:15-19)

The Main Thought: Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 7:11 KJV)

Unifying Principle: When an activity becomes rote, the original helpful intents and purposes may be lost and replaced by new, harmful intents and purposes. How can a good activity be prevented from evolving into an unintended harmful result? Jesus' angry action in the temple called attention to the ways in which the priests and worshipers had lost sight of the tradition of God's dwelling place as a house of prayer for all peoples.

Lesson Aim: To help students understand that God is not pleased when selfish motives replace godly intentions.

Life aim: To encourage believers to remain focused on preserving the original intent and purpose of godly faith traditions being careful to always honor God in their words and their actions.

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- 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;
- 56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.
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- 7:9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;
- 7:10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?
- 7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord.
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- 11:15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;
- 11:16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.
- 11:17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.
- 11:18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.
- 11:19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

HISTORY:

Isaiah 56:1-5 begins with Isaiah revealing to the Israelites: *"thus says the Lord"*— commanding Israel to keep God's Law; do what's right; rest, and honor God on the Sabbath, for He's coming soon. Salvation was coming to rescue them. Focusing on God on the Sabbath was crucial. Blessings are for the man who does this: that lay hold on it; that keep from defiling the Sabbath and that turn away from doing evil. There are blessings for the Gentiles too when they accept the Lord. God never before asked the Gentiles to join the Jews in keeping the Sabbath, but here he does. So, the Gentiles and the eunuchs will not be made second-class citizens. They will all be treated with the same liberty as the Israelites. The invitation is for everyone. They would be like everyone else, saved and accepted by God because they are doing the things that please Him—obeying His Laws. The eunuchs will have a name far greater than the honor they would receive from having sons and daughters. The name the Lord gives, would be an everlasting one in His house (Temple of Jerusalem) and His walls will never disappear.

LESSON:

Isaiah 56:6-7 The Heritage Of The Temple

56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;— He says the same thing again from verse 2 to the sons of the stranger which refers to the Gentiles— Why? Because they have

joined themselves to the Lord to serve and love His name and have accepted the New Covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ. With such willingness to love and serve the Lord and partake of His covenant, God can't help but bless them.

56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. It does not matter, even the stranger God will bring to His holy mountain. The *"holy mountain"* was Zion. The Jews built God's house but He's going to bring Gentiles in. They will be made joyful in God's house; in His Temple because their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted upon the altar of God. His house will be called an house of prayer. That's what Jesus wanted His house to be when He told the moneychangers in Mk.11:17— *"it is written my house shall be a house of prayer for all nations"*.

Jeremiah 7:9-11 The Abuse Of The Temple

7:9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;— Jeremiah was complaining that God's people were treating His covenant as license for immoral living by doing all kinds of corrupt things. Five ways were mentioned. Questions were asked the Israelites: "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal?" "Will you walk after other gods whom ye know not?" They would be deceiving themselves if they think God would put up with their deceptive actions and not do anything.

7:10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?— The question asked will they do all of those things mentioned above and still come and stand before the Lord in His house thinking they are safe; the house that's called by God's Name? They were not free to do these sins, just because they belonged to God. No, it is not safe to do those things and think you are right with God. They were only giving Him lip service. He will not allow us to continue down the same path of destruction. He wants to deliver us from all these abominations!

7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord. The Lord allows them to know that He has seen all the abominations they have done and then asks another question: *'Is His house (Temple) a place for people who continue to steal, kill, hurt others, and say things that are not true and think everything is alright with them?' 'Has it just become a den of thieves in their eyes?'* No, we're back to its true purpose—*"a house of prayer."* The Lord has seen it, for Jesus faced this centuries later. The temple was supposed to be a place of worship, but the true worship had disappeared

Mark 11:15-19 The Preservation Of The Temple

11:15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;— After Jesus and His disciples came into Jerusalem, Jesus goes into the Temple as usual; not to pray, for He sees in the court, doves being sold, and moneychangers sitting at tables handling money for merchandise. ¹Every Jew had to pay a temple tax of one half shekel a year. That was equivalent to nearly two days wages for a working man and it was paid at the Passover time. Jews came from all over the world to the Passover and with all kinds of currencies. And Jesus didn't like what He saw and began to cast out the things being sold and bought in the temple. He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and even the seats of those that sold the doves. His house was being defiled and He was doing the cleansing.

11:16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. Jesus was very strict at this time after seeing what He had seen in the Temple. Moneychangers did big business during the time of the Passover. Jesus did not want anyone to continue the practice of using the court as a shortcut through which to carry utensils and containers with merchandise because such a practice revealed great irreverence for the temple—and ultimately for God

¹ <http://www.gracepointdevotions.org/2010/05/10/mark-11-commentary/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Himself! The Court of the Gentiles was the only part of the temple they were allowed use for prayer and worship of God. The Jews had frustrated that worship by turning it into a place of greedy business.

11:17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. Jesus began to teach them from the Scripture (Is.57:7d), *"It is written..."* In the kingdom of the Messiah, the Jerusalem Temple will be the focal point for worship of the Lord, by people of all ethnic backgrounds. It will not be made a den of thieves. ²Doves were an important part of the sacrificial system (Lev.12:8,15:14), but they had to be without blemish. They could be bought on the outside but the temple inspectors were sure to find something wrong with them. The ones approved by the inspectors and sold in the temple area often cost 20 times more. The poor people were being swindled by the temple leaders. Jesus said they had made it a den of thieves instead of a *"house of prayer."* Even in Jeremiah 7:11 God declared the false worshippers to be violent thieves preying on others and He would not have that today in His Temple! ³By quoting from Jeremiah 7, Jesus reminds the people that something holy can be perverted.

11:18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. The religious leaders (scribes and chief priests); those who comprised the principle leadership in the Sanhedrin hated Jesus for His indictments against their hypocrisy, and they began to conspire (plan; scheme) as a result of jealousy to destroy Him. They even feared Him over His popularity as a teacher because all the people were astonished at His teachings.

11:19 And when even was come, he went out of the city. Jesus' practice during the first 3 days of Passion Week was not to leave Jerusalem until sunset, when the crowds dispersed and the city gates were about to be closed. He therefore retreated from the public out of the city.

SUMMARY:

The Gentiles joined themselves to the Lord, ministered to Him; they love His Name, they go to be His servants, keep the Sabbath, they don't profane it, and they hold fast His covenant—these, God will bring to His holy mountain, and make them joyful in His house of prayer. Even those who had once been subject to exclusion and strict regulations, such as eunuchs and foreigners would freely enter the Lord's temple. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on God's altar; for God's house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples (**Isaiah 56:6-7**).

God's people would not obey Him, and Jeremiah complained that the people were treating God's covenant as a license for immoral living. How can they do such things and stand before God in His Temple which is called by His Name? The question: Is this My house? Whatever is going on God sees it! Wow! (**Jeremiah 7:9-11**).

When Jesus reaches Jerusalem He went into the temple area and found the people buying and selling and began to overturn the tables and seats of the moneychangers and would not allow them to have His house as a house of thieves, because His house was to be a house of prayer. The religious people didn't like what He taught after hearing Him teach. They feared Him, and sought a way to destroy Him, while the people were amazed at His teachings (**Mark 11:15-19**).

APPLICATION:

You can't stand for any and everything to go on in your house. That's the same way with God house. Jesus wouldn't allow any and everything to go on in His house, which was to be a house of prayer! The true intent and purpose had to be preserved not abused!

² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/mark-11-12/>

³ <http://www.gracepointdevotions.org/2010/05/10/mark-11-commentary/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>