

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Crowning Works of the Ministry

The Rite of Cleansing the Temple

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

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

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;

And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.—*John 2:13-16.*

According to the first three Gospels, the cleansing of the Temple occurs late in the Master's Ministry; it is placed after His entry into Jerusalem. In the Gospel of John it is described at the beginning of the Ministry. This final cleansing of the Temple of the body in preparation for its use as a pure and holy channel for the things of the Spirit marks a high place in spiritual advancement. John alone mentions the scourge of small cords, referring to a definite process which takes place in the body as the spinal fire is raised.

That this Temple cleansing has an inner as well as an outer significance is shown in the fact that in each of the Gospels it is followed by definite teachings of purity and regeneration. Matthew proceeds with the cursing of the fig tree and the marriage of the king's son; Mark with the vineyard parable; Luke with the story of Zacchaeus; and John with the interview of Nicodemus. Each of these incidents has as its basic note the work of regeneration through purity and chastity.

The external significance of this Temple episode is noted in the fact that the priests received an enormous revenue from those permitted to sell animals in the Temple courts for sacrificial purposes. The deprivation of this revenue augmented their animosity against the great Teacher and led to their concerted efforts in plotting His destruction.

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

—*Matthew 21:12-14.*

The ejection of the money changers is given an important place in each of the four Gospels, as it represents a most important and necessary event in the life of every aspirant. The Temple is the body which, rightly used, is a house of prayer for the indwelling Spirit but which, through the misuse of the sacred life force within for many lives past, has become a den of thieves.

And they came 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 money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves. And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.—*Mark 11:15-17.*

When man recognizes his body as the Temple of the indwelling Spirit, he will keep it pure and undefiled. He will not admit into it such destructive emotions as anger, envy, lust, or hatred, knowing that they serve but to defile.

The education of the youth of the New Age will include a psychology which deals with the power of thought to mold or mar this body-Temple of the Spirit, and to the youth will be given the truth that this Temple is the most precious heritage of the Spirit.

The Apocrypha states: "Be ye good money changers in that ye know the true from the false, gold from dross, in an understanding of the scriptures. Ye do, therefore, err, not knowing true things of the Scriptures and for this reason ye are ignorant of the power of God."

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