

Lesson 43 Matthew 21 12-46 (20) Jesus teaches the true answer to the question "Who is this?"

By cleansing the temple In John 2.13-19 at the inception of His ministry the LORD acted authoritatively to cleanse the temple. Now as His earthly ministry comes to its climax He acts decisively. He went into the holy place of God and drove out buyers and sellers, he turned over the money changing tables of those who sold doves and said, "It is written, 'my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations; you have made it a den of thieves.'" Clearly exorbitant prices were charged and in any case the true sacrifice for sin was this very Passover in place so these offerings were already technically outmoded. The dispensation of sacrifice had ended.

By healings and by Restoration of God's praise

The LORD was approached by the blind and the lame in the precincts and He healed them. The chief priests were watching the miracles which were wonders to them. They were listening to the chant of youths, "Hosanna to the Son of David" which was like the baying of dogs and they were unwilling to hear it (Greek *αγανακτεω* meaning "violently irritated" and "grieved with a person") They said, "Do you hear what they are saying?" How could He otherwise? The LORD replied, "Yes, did you not even once read, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings I have restored" (Greek *καταρτιζω* meaning "to reform by a mediator" or "to restore the right mind" or "to prepare a healing concoction") praise." Scarcely ever could there have been a more appropriate quotation-which prophetically predicted the "reform of the house" together with the rendering of praise within it as of ancient Davidic times. Having given this second evidence of His glorious person-David's greater Son-he went to Bethany and Shepherd that He was he was "out in the open" (Greek *ηυλισθη*)

By the fig tree of curse and blessing

This was a single fig tree. The period was one where figs should have been maturing. The tree was at the point of entry (Greek *πρωιας δε επαναγων*) to the city. It was on the flank of the road and it acted on this occasion as a sort of civic dendrology representative-a tree standing for the preparedness of the city. The LORD cursed it with these words, "May no fruit grow on you up to or until the age or aeon.(Greek *εις τον αιωνα*)" Now this particular tree would never fruit but the city it represented would bring wonderful fruit in the last aeon of the kingdom to which our LORD referred. The disciples were aghast at the immediate withering of the tree. Jesus said you will be involved in this curse and its implications-namely proclaiming by faith gospel peace and assurance represented by the fig tree to the world. You will be involved in moving mount Zion overseas by bringing the blessing there by faith. You will be involved in this "prayer for all nations" as you travel-and you will receive what you ask.

By authority implicit in his baptism of John

Upon entering the temple the chief priests and elders query Jesus sternly, "By what authority do you do these things and who gave you this authority?" Jesus moved to John and the baptism he proclaimed which was intimately related to his ministry and the vision John saws of the Lamb. He put the question, "Was John's baptism of divine or human origin?" They demurred. Jesus also stopped short of an absolute answer but told an illuminating parable. His story was of a man with two sons-one of which refused to work in the vineyard and the other who agreed to work. The positive response proved so many words. The one who said "No!" repented and went to work. Jesus told the chief priests that the tax collectors and harlots were the ones who repented and they were the one's who refused God's prophet(and by implication, "God's lamb")

By presenting as the land-owner and judge of all

This parable is triplicated -occurring in each gospel and appears to be built on the parallel in Proverbs 24 28-34 and the evil plot of the tenants to slay the Son is apposite the thinking of the High Priests and Elders. Jesus refers his religious critics to Psalm 118.22 where Messiah features as the "rejected corner stone". Jesus predicted that a new ethnicity of the Kingdom which would be given to fruitful Gentile believers. He gives stark warnings; rejecters of His foundation- work. (1) Would pay for contempt to the stone "of turning" or the Stone that causes repentance (2) Would be crushed like grapes in a winepress is the judgment-of the fall of Jerusalem (3) to be "shovelled before the wind" (Greek *λικναζω* from *λικμαω*) is a word respecting the continuing adjudication of conscience and the Spirit of God in history.

From paper to practice



Which body of evidence appears most impressive to you?

Jesus warned people of consequences of rejecting His word. Are we too gentle?

In faithfulness to the serious message we preach vow to be serious with your fellow men as to eternity.