

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon November 8, 2020

Luke 19: 45 – 48 “Jesus Cleanses and Teaches, Against All Opposition”

41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." 45 Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " 47 And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, 48 and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him 2 and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?" 3 But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: 4 The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men?" 5 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it was from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

I. Introduction

- a. So, our Lord arrives in Jerusalem, from one scene of His mourning over the coming destruction, then brought suddenly by Luke into the Temple, where we see our Lord's thunder, rather than His tears. His deep sorrow over the suffering of Jerusalem did not keep Him back from His full ministry. Justice is coming, and Luke, by the Spirit's inspiration, chooses to highlight this public Temple cleansing as the arrival event of Christ's Passion week. In addition, we see our Lord daily in the Temple, teaching, with attendant crowds, yet with His enemies prowling around to destroy Him. Let us go on together, learning more of Christ, that we may know, love and obey Him more fully, more joyfully.
- b. Calvin "Though Christ frequently ascended *into the temple*, and though this abuse continually met his eye, twice only did he stretch out his hand to correct it; once, at the commencement of his embassy, and now again, when he was near the end of his course. But though disgraceful and ungodly confusion reigned throughout, and though the temple, with its sacrifices, was devoted to destruction, Christ reckoned it enough to administer twice an open reproof of the profanation of it. Accordingly, when he made himself known as a Teacher and Prophet sent by God, he took upon himself the office of purifying the temple, in order to arouse the Jews, and make them more attentive; and this first narrative is given by John only in the second chapter of his Gospel. But now, towards the end of his course, claiming again for himself the same power, he

warns the Jews of the pollutions of the temple, and at the same time points out that a new restoration is at hand.”¹

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- II. Jesus Cleanses the Temple v45,46
 - a. Drove out buyers and sellers v45
 - i. 45 “Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it”
 - 1. Jesus makes a scene upon His arrival in Jerusalem. No mention of conversation or negotiation first, only of His decisive action to drive out those polluting His Father’s House. Jesus goes straight into the Temple and immediately drives these people out.
 - 2. “Drive Out” to cast out, drive out, to send out
 - a. with notion of violence
 - i. to drive out (cast out)
 - b. of the world, i.e. be deprived of the power and influence he exercises in the world
 - c. a thing: excrement from the belly into the sink
 - i. to expel a person from a society: to banish from a family
 - ii. to compel one to depart; to bid one depart
 - d. to command or cause one to depart in haste
 - i. to draw out with force, tear out
 - ii. implication of force overcoming opposite force
 - 3. Where in the Temple? Bock “Luke briefly describes the cleansing. Jesus’ entry into the temple (ἱερόν, *hieron*) has in view the Court of the Gentiles, where the sellers were.”²
 - 4. Henry “Though the temple must be destroyed ere long, it does not therefore follow that no care must be taken of it in the meantime.... Christ cleared it of those who profaned it. He went straight to the temple, and *began to cast out the buyers and sellers*, v. 45. Hereby (though he was represented as an enemy to

¹ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 3, pp. 10–11). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

² Bock, D. L. (1996). [*Luke: 9:51–24:53*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1578). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

the temple, and that was the crime laid to his charge before the high priest) he made it to appear that he had a truer love for the temple than they had who had such a veneration for its corban, its treasury, as a sacred thing; for its purity was more its glory than its wealth was.”³

- ii. This act is a demonstration of Christ’s unique authority over the Temple.
 1. Calvin “And yet there is no reason to doubt that he declared himself to be both King and High Priest, who presided over the temple and the worship of God. This ought to be observed, lest any private individual should think himself entitled to act in the same manner. That zeal, indeed, by which Christ was animated to do this, ought to be held in common by all the godly; but lest any one, under the pretence of imitation, should rush forward without authority, we ought to see what our calling demands, and how far we may proceed according to the commandment of God. If the Church of God have contracted any pollutions, all the children of God ought to burn with grief; but as God has not put arms into the hands of all, let private individuals groan, till God bring the remedy. I do acknowledge that they are worse than stupid who are not displeased at the pollution of the temple of God, and that it is not enough for them to be inwardly distressed, if they do not avoid the contagion, and testify with their mouth, whenever an opportunity presents itself, that they desire to see a change for the better. But let those who do not possess public authority oppose by their tongue, which they have at liberty, those vices which they cannot remedy with their hands.”⁴
- b. Temple Purpose: House of Prayer v46a
 - i. B&C “Luke summarizes Jesus’ teaching on this occasion with an OT quotation from Isa. 56:7 and with an allusion to Jer. 7:11 (and perhaps echoing Zech. 14:21; Mal. 3:1): “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer’; but you have made it a ‘den of robbers’ ” (19:46). Interpreted in the context of these OT texts, Jesus—standing in the court of the Gentiles, in which the temple authorities tolerated the commercial activities—proclaims the holiness of the entire temple area and thus announces the beginning of the (messianic) transformation of the temple and of its role, and, indeed, the destruction of the temple.”⁵
 - ii. 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,'

³ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1896). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁴ Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*](#) (Vol. 3, p. 11). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

⁵ Pao, D. W., & Schnabel, E. J. (2007). [*Luke*](#). In *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (p. 357). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos.

1. Christ's zeal for the Temple flows from the Temple's purpose in God's design for humanity. The Temple is to be the place where fallen mankind can be restored to God's House, brought back into His family, and rejoined to their purpose of loving obedience to Him. Through the atoning sacrifice of Christ (typified in Temple sacrifices), we His people are washed clean of our sins, and made His friends again, His beloved children.
2. Also, now that the Temple itself is destroyed, we see the full meaning of the Temple. We, His people, are His Temple now.
 - a. 1 Cor 3:16,17 "16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."
3. Jesus references Is 56:7 to define the purpose the Temple.
 - a. Isaiah 56: 6,7 ""Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, And to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants-- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant-- 7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."
 - b. B&C "God promises the foreigners who come to love his name and hold fast his covenant that he will bring them "to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (*ho gar oikos mou oikos proseuchēs klēthēsetai pasin tois ethnesin* [56:7]). In other words, the foreigners/proselytes are promised full access to and participation in the cult in the Jerusalem temple. The Lord "who gathers the outcasts of Israel" promises that he will "gather others to them besides those already gathered" (56:8); in other words, non-Israelites, non-Jews will be added to God's people to enjoy his salvific presence, extending God's promise of integration into his people beyond the proselytes to "all nations""⁶
4. So, these corrupt merchant activities, being set up in the court of the Gentiles, was particularly offensive to God's ultimate purpose for the world. Instead of the court of the Gentiles being a welcoming place to draw near to God and be restored to God, it

⁶ Pao, D. W., & Schnabel, E. J. (2007). [Luke](#). In *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (pp. 357–358). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos.

was transformed into a repulsive spot of selfish profit for the apostate Jews who had no compassion for the lost.

- iii. Corrupting Biblical worship of God, especially by making it into a place of selfish profit, can never bring God's blessing, but will surely bring God's wrath. He will drive away such ones from His Presence.
- c. Instead: Den of Thieves v46b
 - i. "but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "
 - ii. This quote is from Jeremiah 7:11 "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the Lord."
 - iii. This quote is from a section of Jeremiah where the prophet foretells the destruction of the Temple.
 - 1. B&C "The second part of Jesus' teaching focused on Jer. 7:11—linked with Isa. 56:7 by the reference to "this/my house"—a text that belongs to the larger context of Jer. 7:1–20, in which the word of the Lord, proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah, standing in the gate of the temple, warned the people of Judah that if they continue to desecrate the temple through lawlessness and idolatry (7:6, 9), they should not trust in the fact that this is the temple of the Lord (7:4) as a guarantee of their safety (7:10). The prophet asks, accusingly, in the name of Yahweh, "Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den [cave] of robbers [*hamē'ārat pārišîm*; LXX: *spēlaion lēstōn*] in your sight?" (7:11). He challenges the Judeans to remember the destruction of Shiloh—Yahweh's dwelling place after Israel entered the promised land (7:12; cf. Judg. 18:31; 1 Sam. 1:3; 3:21; 4:3–4)—a fate that will fall on Jerusalem as its people refuse to listen to God's message (7:13–15; cf. 7:20). ... Jer. 7:1–15 is a sermon exhorting the nation to repent, but the content, particularly the conclusion of the sermon, implies that judgment and destruction are inevitable."⁷
 - iv. So, this dark cave of hidden unrighteousness, present in Jewish leaders throughout its history, was thriving in filth once again, and by quoting Jeremiah 7:11, Jesus both defines the nature of their evil (covetousness, theft, idolatry) and its certain outcome (redemptive destruction).
- d. Another interesting angle on this Temple visitation from Jesus v Jerusalem
 - i. "Indeed, there were two separate cleansings of the Temple, and there is a better explanation for them. What lies behind these separate instances is Jesus fulfilling the role of the High Priest visiting and inspecting the touch of affliction/corruption in the house. This is described in Leviticus 14:33–53. It accounts for the multiple visitations and the repeated act of removing the corruption, then finally pronouncing the house (Temple)

⁷ Pao, D. W., & Schnabel, E. J. (2007). [Luke](#). In *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (p. 358). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos.

unclean and decreeing the total destruction of the house. It also fits in with Jesus' mission against Jerusalem."⁸

- ii. So, this final inspection visit of the Temple may point to the Levitical statutes that could eventually lead to a house's total destruction if the corruption persisted in spite of cleansing efforts.
 1. Leviticus 14:43-45 "Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered,⁴⁴ then the priest shall come and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread in the house, it *is* an active leprosy in the house. It *is* unclean.⁴⁵ And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry *them* outside the city to an unclean place."⁹

III. Jesus Teaches Daily in the Temple v47a

- i. 47 "And He was teaching daily in the temple."
- ii. After His work of cleansing the Temple, Jesus continues teaching. Note His boldness. After such an act that would surely have repercussions from His enemies, maybe retreat for a while? No, His mission goes on.
- iii. The teaching and preaching of the Gospel must go on, then and now.
 1. Bock "He put it to the best use that ever it was put to, for he *taught daily in the temple*, v. 47. Note, It is not enough that the corruptions of a church be purged out, but the preaching of the gospel must be encouraged."¹⁰
 2. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

IV. Against All Opposition v47b

- a. His enemies sought to destroy Him v47b
 - i. "But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him"

⁸ McDurmon, J. (2011). [*Jesus v. Jerusalem: A Commentary on Luke 9:51–20:26, Jesus' Lawsuit Against Israel*](#) (pp. 137–138). Powder Springs, GA: American Vision.

⁹ [*The New King James Version*](#). (1982). (Le 14:43–45). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1896). Peabody: Hendrickson.

- ii. The devil has come to steal, kill and destroy, and his demonic and human minions are always working to steal, kill and destroy God’s Kingdom, God’s people, God’s Law, and God’s glory. Yet, they always and ever, even in their vilest moments, carry out God’s perfect plan that He has foreordained from before the foundation of the world.
- iii. Bock “Jesus continues to go to the temple each day to teach. As he shared his thoughts with the people and drew support from them, the leadership tried to draw him into debate, which is detailed in the next several pericopes. Meanwhile, three groups are gathering against Jesus: chief priests, scribes, and leaders of the people, a unique threefold description ...Luke describes their desire in simple terms: the leaders were seeking to destroy Jesus (cf. the earlier reactions moving toward a plot in 6:11 and 11:53–54). They were on the constant lookout for any excuse to remove him, and it would come shortly.”¹¹
- iv. This den of thieves, opposed to all sound teaching and righteousness, will go on to use twistings of God’s Word to attack Christ. They are constantly lurking, watching, waiting for some way to attack Him, and finding not enough, they will eventually bring forth false witnesses against Jesus. And, even after eyewitnesses testify to His resurrection, they connive deception and malicious lies to deny His resurrection. Darkness never submits to facts. Darkness denies and twists facts and creates its own facts to advance its own evil goals: steal, kill, destroy.
 - 1. Mark 14 “Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. 57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' " 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.”
- b. His enemies impotent to harm Him because of His favor with the people v48
 - i. 48 “and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.”
 - ii. In spite of their flaming hatred of Jesus, His enemies were afraid for their own lives, afraid to oppose Jesus publicly because of His widespread favor amongst all the people. The Holy Spirit of God was granting the people ears to hear at this time, and hearts that desires to learn of Jesus. While this would not last, at this moment, we see the invincible sovereignty of God protecting Jesus Christ as He completes His mission.
 - iii. Bock “The leadership makes no progress on its desire to silence Jesus. Despite their desire and their powerful position, the leaders are powerless to execute their plan because of Jesus’ popularity.¹¹ His teaching draws all the people (ὁ λαὸς ... ἅπας, *ho laos ... hapas*). This

¹¹ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1580). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

large group of people is distinct from the small group of leaders just named. Throughout 19:47–22:2, λαός is used with constant reference to the populace, while ὄχλος (*ochlos*, crowd) is not used at all (Luce 1933: 307). Λαός is often positive (20:6, 19, 26, 45; 21:38), but in 23:13 this group will turn against Jesus, despite Pilate’s testimony of Jesus’ innocence (Marshall 1978: 722; Rau 1965). The leaders corrupt the people, who at one time had an attitude that was distinct from the leadership ... Luke uses graphic language to describe just how popular Jesus’ teaching was: the people “hung on his every word.” This highlights the gripping power of Jesus’ teaching... Jesus was so popular that the leaders knew they could not act publicly.”¹²

V. Questions to know, love and obey God

¹² Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1580–1581). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.