

# Triumphal Entry and Temple Cleansing

*An Exposition of Matthew*

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We get to Matthew 21 tonight. We're going to read the first 17 verses. I don't guarantee we'll get through all of it but Matthew 21.

1 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'" 6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. 8 Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. 9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!" 10 When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." 12 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. 13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER'; but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN." 14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the

temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant 16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'OUT OF THE MOUTH OF INFANTS AND NURSING BABIES YOU HAVE PREPARED PRAISE FOR YOURSELF?'" 17 And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

Well, if the gospels were a piece of music, we would now be hitting the crescendo because in terms of, think of it, the entirety of redemptive history going all the way back to the creation and to the fall of man, everything that's been happening throughout age after age has been leading up to this point in history. Throughout the gospels, especially the gospel of John, Jesus would frequently say something like this, "My hour has not yet come." Well, now his hour is come and we begin what is commonly called Passion Week. The prophets pointed to this hour. The prophets foretold of this time and when you think about Passion Week, you begin to realize what a disproportionate amount of time the gospel writers spend on this one week in Jesus' ministry and life, and yet they do so because it is the most important week in all of human history. I challenge you to think of one week in which more eternally significant events took place than the week that begins with the triumphal entry.

Now Matthew is 28 chapters long. Matthew devotes chapters 21 to 27, if you want to throw in 28 for good measure, it's the resurrection, of course, and that would be appropriate, Matthew devotes a full 25% of all of his gospel to this final week. I've told you before that the gospels are theological geography. We get to verse 1, "When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples." So they're approaching Jerusalem. Remember, the gospels all revolve around Jesus making his way to Jerusalem, right, and so here he approaches Jerusalem, he's traveled from Jericho to Jerusalem. Jericho, by the way, is 800 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is 2,400 feet above sea level and it's a simple 18 mile stretch. And so Jesus and his disciples make that trek. Jerusalem was his goal, of course. Jerusalem, city of peace. Jerusalem, the city of David. Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God. Jesus gets to Jerusalem because his hour had come and he needed to be in the city not that was simply known for being the location of Israel's temple but because he had to get to the city of which he would say in just a couple of chapters, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you." Jesus will remind his disciples, he has reminded his disciples that no prophet is killed except outside of Jerusalem.

Now he's going to Jerusalem for a very obvious reason and that is the celebration of Passover. Jerusalem had probably about 30,000 inhabitants through the course of the year. During Passover, though, the city swelled to 180,000 people. Think about that for an ancient city. First of all, for an ancient city 30,000 is fairly large. There were larger cities, of course, Corinth, Ephesus and so on, but 30,000 is a fairly large city but that city would swell at Passover with all the pilgrims coming in from all over the diaspora and there was this regular Passover celebration and what Jesus is about to do as he's entering into Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with his disciples, but what he is about to do in his

celebration of Passover would not only transform Passover forever, it would transform Jerusalem forever.

So this event, this approach to Jerusalem brings Jesus' earthly ministry to its crescendo, to its climax. What's interesting is you have the synoptic gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke, we call them synoptic because they are related to each other, they cover much the same material. John is not one of the synoptics, it's a very different gospel. And so you have, you know, each of the gospels has stuff that's unique to itself, but what's interesting is that every single one of the gospels spends an incredible amount of time on this last week. It is the focal point of all redemptive history.

So they get to the Mount of Olives. Remember, the Mount of Olives is where much of Jesus' ministry as messianic prophet had already taken place, and it was also the place where the Jews anticipated future messianic glory. Zechariah 14:4, "On that day His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, which lies before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley so that the one half of the mount shall withdraw northward and the other half southward." And so the Jews were anticipating some great messianic glory to take place on the Mount of Olives and here's the Lord Jesus at the Mount of Olives.

Now what he does is he sends two of his disciples, "Go into the village opposite you and you're going to find a donkey tied there with her colt. Untie them and bring them to Me." And so Jesus gives his commission to his disciples to go find this donkey. Now a donkey, by the way, that had not been ridden has Old Testament significance. The idea of a donkey that had not been ridden is that it has been devoted to some kind of sacred purpose, and so Jesus says, "You're going to go find this donkey and her colt," and when they say, "What are you doing," all you have to say is, "The Lord has need of it and, of course, they're going to let you take it." So the disciples go. This is always such a remarkable thing to me, the disciples go into the town and it happens just exactly the way Jesus says it's going to happen.

You know, commentators are not always the most thrilling to read, especially when they're not really all that exuberant about little things like this. It's amazing how many commentators say that obviously when Jesus said, "Just tell them that the Lord has need of it," that he obviously had made prearrangements. Now I don't think that that's actually the case at all. I think that actually Jesus just, I mean, he's a prophet. He tells them to go in and this is what's going to happen and it happens simply the way the Lord said it.

Now the colt itself is a messianic sign, Genesis 49, the idea of the tribe of Judah and this colt is this messianic symbol. Well, there's more significance. What does David do when Solomon is going to be anointed king? He actually has Solomon ride on one of his colts going into Jerusalem. And so it is a symbol of royalty but it's also royalty riding on a donkey is also a symbol of humility and peace. So during times of war, kings would ride on, what? Well, on horses, right? I mean, big horses, strong horses, war horses. Kings did not ride on donkeys except in times of peace, and so here the idea is that Jesus is saying,

"I'm about to enter into Jerusalem and it's going to be a royal entry, therefore go find the donkey that has been designated for this sacred purpose."

Matthew tells us, verse 4, "This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet." Of course, this is familiar Matthew formula. This was done to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet and here the quotation comes from Zechariah 9:9. Just one little interesting detail, "Say to the daughter of Zion." Most Old Testament and New Testament scholars now don't think that this expression which, of course, comes from the Hebrew Bible should be "daughter of Zion" but it should just be "daughter Zion," okay? And so, "Say to daughter Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" And so the king has come and he's come not in the pomp and circumstance of earthly kings with militaristic victory and triumph, but rather he comes in humility and lowliness. Why? Because what he's about to do in Jerusalem is not kick out the Romans, what he's about to do in Jerusalem is to suffer and to die. So the donkey as a symbol of humility and of peace is very appropriate. R. T. France makes this really terrific observation. He says, "Jesus has chosen an Old Testament model which subverts any popular militaristic idea of kingship. The meek, peaceful donkey rider of Zechariah 9:9 is not a potential leader of an anti-Roman insurrection."

"The disciples," verse 6, "went and did just as Jesus had instructed them." They bring the donkey and the colt and, you know, it's kind of funny because Matthew and Luke only mention just the donkey and so the great length that people will go to to try to make sure that this harmonizes perfectly, some commentators have Jesus riding the donkey and her colt at the same time. Well, that's not really necessary, I don't think, do you? Okay, and the colt at the same time, it's not necessary.

They bring the donkey and the colt, they lay their coats on, makeshift saddle on them, and he sat on... The New American Standard tries to just avoid the problem altogether. Do you see that in verse 7? "And He sat on the coats." No, it just says he sat on them so, of course, it's ambiguous, right? So the NAS just figures it'll just escape any foolishness, but whatever the case may be, here they are and now Jesus is traveling from Jericho to Jerusalem and guess what? He's got crowds traveling with him. Who are these crowds? Well, the crowds are other pilgrims and, in fact, if they're coming from Jericho to Jerusalem, there's a pretty good chance that they are, in fact, at least by and large Galilean pilgrims. So do you think that there may be a little sense of excitement in the air?

Verse 8, "Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road." Are you going to take your coat off and let a donkey walk on it? There's something that's happening here and they know it, they have a sense of it, there's some greatness going on. "Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road." You know what they're doing is they recognize the symbolism and they are, as it were, rolling out the red carpet for the king. And so here you have this beautiful picture and you've got crowds that are going ahead of him and those who were following, and they're shouting. This is not just some little event that

happened, this is something that is, first of all, it includes, it involves a large crowd and here are these people and now they're shouting.

Now it might be if you've got the crowds in front and the crowds in back, it may be that as they're going, remember they're pilgrims which is significant, we'll see that in a second, and what's happening is that they're shouting and maybe they're shouting in unison, maybe they're shouting in antiphonal response to each other, but what they are shouting is a demonstration of the fact that they recognize that this is, in fact, the Son of David. Where in the world would they get that idea just because he's riding a donkey? Well, the answer is in chapter 20, verses 30 and 31 when the two blind men are sitting by the side of the road and these very same crowds are the ones who were trying to get them to be quiet at first, remember, and they kept crying out all the louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!" They just witnessed a miracle by the Son of David.

Hosanna probably means "Lord, save us now." "Hosanna, hosannas to the Son of David," messianic title. No doubt what's happening is, at least to some degree, some messianic fervor. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Now part of the quotation here comes, of course, from Psalm 118. Psalms 113-118 were the pilgrim songs of ascent that were sung as the Jews made their way up to Jerusalem. This is at least part of the song that they would have been singing on their pilgrimage but what's interesting, we know actually because of Jewish history and tradition, that they would have sung these songs of ascent in their entirety.

So just keep your finger there and look over at Psalm 118. This is the final song of ascent. Notice this. There's actually so much we could look at here but just start at verse 19.

"Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation." Then they would have sang these words, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send," shalom, "prosperity," peace. "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and He has given us light." Then they would have sang these words, "Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar."

I've told you many times that when the New Testament quotes the Old Testament or even makes an allusion to the Old Testament, it's like playing just a few notes, the whole song comes back. The amazing thing is that Matthew would have had no second guessing whether or not his readers would have thought of the whole of Psalm 118 as they heard these simple words, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And perhaps they had just with a loud ringing cry sang, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone," and, "This is the LORD'S doing." Oh, I think on that day there was a multitude of pilgrims who spoke, or rather they sang better than they knew. Now make no mistake, they knew better than some of the others that were standing around, as we'll see. So they cry out, "Hosanna in the highest!" And so the shouts of

praise, this hallel Psalm, this song of assent is a song of Davidic hope and yet probably not a single one of them had a clue when they then sang, "Bind the festal sacrifice." And by the end of the week, that's exactly what would happen.

Now I picked this up today. I missed it for, well, 30 something years, I guess, and that is this crowd would in all likelihood be mainly Galilean pilgrims coming from Jericho. I was always thought the triumphal entry was, you know, on the first day of the Passion Week, they were crying, "Hosanna, the Son of David," and then at the end of the week they were the same people that are shouting, "Crucify Him!" and I don't think that that's actually true anymore. This group, this crowd are probably from Galilee. They're actually traveling the road with the Lord Jesus. These are not the Jerusalemites that we will see later.

Verse 10, "When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred," you'd better believe all the city was stirred. This is not how just everybody entered. This was unique. "Who is this?" So the people in Jerusalem are saying, "What's going on?" They hear this, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" What's happening? There's a guy coming in on a donkey and people are throwing their coats down in front of him and they're singing this song of praise, "Hosanna in the highest." Who is this?

Notice who answers: the crowds that had been on the pilgrimage. They answer, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." Now this is almost indisputable proof in my mind that these people were from Galilee. If you wanted to announce a prophet and you wanted to give his credentials so that everybody would be impressed, one of the last things that you would say is he's from Nazareth in Galilee. That was a Gentile-laden, backwater, backwards, hillbilly town, and yet they said, "This is the prophet Jesus. He's from our place."

It's a great picture and so here's this first event in Passion Week, we call it the triumphal entry. The King rides into Jerusalem in the shadow of triumph, right? Now, in a sense, when I say shadow of triumph, I'm talking about the triumph of the cross. Passion Week is, in a sense, the cross cast this huge shadow over everything in that week and so the second event that we're going to see next, and then the third event which we'll look at next week, are all related. Jesus is going to go cleanse the temple and there's a very good reason why that's the first thing he does once he enters Jerusalem, and then he's going to curse the fig tree and there's a very good reason why that's the second thing that he does in that course of that week, and so there is a common truth, in a sense, behind these symbolic acts. We'll bring that out more next week as we look at the cursing of the fig tree.

But verse 12, here we have, "And Jesus entered the temple." Now Jesus is not entering into the holy place, Jesus is entering, most likely, into the temple precincts which we would commonly call the court of the Gentiles. And remember, from a Jewish perspective that temple was the place, it was the location, it was the sacred space where God met with man, and the Jews loved their temple. In fact, one rabbi says any man who

has not seen the temple has never seen anything beautiful. That was the sentiment. That was the sentiment.

Now of course, this is the second temple, right? This is Herod's temple and it was impressive but it wasn't nearly as impressive as Solomon's temple, but Solomon's temple was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians, but here this second temple, it was the pride and joy of those who were in Jerusalem, it was the very symbol of their covenant relationship of God dwelling among his people. It was sacred space. Understand the very idea of sacred space throughout Old Testament history plays a very very significant role whether it's Jacob at Bethel, or whether it is the tabernacle in the wilderness, or it is the temple on Mount Zion, it was a symbol of God dwelling in the midst of his people. But we know that with the temple, the first temple and the second temple both, that both temples were plagued by spiritual infidelity, by greed and by hypocrisy, and the temple was no longer a place of true worship. You remember in Jeremiah's day, Jeremiah preaches his famous sermon on the temple steps and he says, "Don't you dare say Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. We've got the temple of the Lord. We're safe." God's going to do here just like he did in Shiloh, destroy his dwelling place.

So Malachi prophesies that there will be a purging of the temple and so Jesus' action, what is about to take place here is not Jesus walks in and goes, "Oh my goodness, look at these creeps! What are they doing? They're selling stuff in the house of God." It's not a matter of him getting angry and then just kind of cleaning house, rather it is a fulfillment of what needed to happen before anything else in Passion Week could happen. Remember Ezekiel, Ezekiel gives us an extended picture. You have Ezekiel 8 and you see the temple there and the way that Ezekiel describes the temple in chapter 8 is that it is corrupt and it's corrupt with idolatry, and then in chapters 10 and 11 of Ezekiel, what Ezekiel sees next in a vision is that this corrupt idolatrous temple, now the Shekinah glory, the visible manifest glory of God actually goes up above the temple, right, and then departs, in those two chapters it departs in stages and then stands over the mountain which is to the east of the city which, by the way, would be the Mount of Olives, and then its destruction is predicted. Ezekiel 11 also then tells of a restoration of the temple and a regathering of the people and then, of course, at the end of the book of Ezekiel, 40-48, you have a new temple which is a temple if you take the dimensions of Ezekiel 40-48 literally, you have a temple that's actually bigger than the Temple Mount. What Malachi prophesied, what Ezekiel prophesied is about to be fulfilled in the life of the Lord Jesus. He symbolically carries out judgment on the temple. Make no mistake about it, that's exactly what he's doing. He's not just irritated that there's commerce going on, it's a symbol of him bringing judgment on the temple.

You know, in Mark's gospel we have the night before Jesus looked around at the temple and then the next day comes back. Matthew leaves that detail out but verse 12, "Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves." Now you have to understand something and that is the background of this scene. You have that 180,000 people in Jerusalem for Passover, guess where the most crowded

place is in the city? Of course, it's going to be the temple, right? And so the court of the Gentiles which was where people would gather to offer prayer, maybe even hear a rabbi teach, the court of the Gentiles had been turned into a marketplace, okay? It had been turned into the cattle, sheep and dove version of Walmart, okay?

Now what we know from extrabiblical history is that this practice was instituted by none other than Caiaphas around 29 or 30 AD. Caiaphas, of course, very interested in turning a profit especially, especially, this is better, this is better than having the Super Bowl in your town, okay? Passover. The Mount of Olives, there actually were markets that would sell animals for sacrifice. Was that a necessity for the pilgrims? Yeah. You're not going to travel from somewhere in the diaspora and bring your sacrifices with you. It had been a very natural thing to actually get there and then have access to buy the animals for sacrifice once you were there. It was something that was necessary. Now what the high priest and his family did was that they made sure that only a certain type of coinage could be used to purchase animals for sacrifice. So not only did you have the selling of the livestock, lambs and doves and so forth for sacrifice, but you also had to have money changers. This was like, this is like going to Chuck E. Cheese, you can't just put quarters in the machine, you've got to get tokens. And so you had guys sitting there and they were the token exchangers, right? Now we also know that there was a lot of greed in the temple, 12% on the exchange probably. That's like changing your money in China before you get back on the plane.

The court of the Gentiles had been now turned into a shortcut, a thoroughfare where people were exchanging their money and buying animals for sacrifice. Probably the biggest thing, the biggest offense in all of this was not that there were money changers nor that they were selling animals for sacrifice, probably the biggest offense was simply the location of what was happening. So Jesus, gentle Jesus, meek and mild, John's gospel tells us actually fashions a whip and he drives out those who were buying and selling in the temple. So understand this: he drives out everybody, not just money changers and not just sellers but buyers too. He drives them all out. Now we also know in John's gospel that he's tipping over the tables.

Now, I mean, how hard do you think it would be to separate a money changer from his money changing table? This is the man's livelihood. How easy do you think it would be to separate a man from his goats and his doves? Jesus absolutely meant business and he drove them out, tipping over their tables, and while he does this, he quotes Scripture and he quotes two passages. He said to them, so he's driving them out and he says to them, "My house shall be called a house of prayer but you're making it a robbers' den." What is interesting is that the quotation of those two passages, one comes from Isaiah 56 where God is reminding his people that their very purpose of existence was to be a light to the Gentiles and that they were actually prostituting themselves, as it were, so that they were not being a light to the Gentiles but robbing God of glory and of the Gentiles of their spiritual good, the next text that Jesus quotes is actually from Jeremiah 7:11 and Jeremiah 7 is where the temple sermon is found in the book of Jeremiah, further description of the perversion of the people and their worthiness of destruction both of them and of the



temple. Now this is not a temper tantrum. It's not a fit of rage. It is measured, controlled demonstration of righteous anger.

I think that there are two cleansings, one at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in John 2, and then the cleansing at the beginning of Passion Week. When Jesus cleanses the temple in John 2, the disciples remember Psalm 69:9, "Zeal for thy house has consumed thee." And so, in a sense, the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap of Malachi 3:3 is now purging the visible place of God's worship. This is a big deal. Verse 14 then, "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them." I have a feeling Jesus had a little bit of space after this. Can you imagine? So he has a little bit of space and, of course, who's in that crowd? Well, there's two blind guys on the side of the road, don't forget about them. Don't you know that all along the way they were probably saying, "You know, the most amazing thing happened to us on the way to Jerusalem and that is God opened our eyes through Jesus, Son of David." So here now the lame people and the blind people are coming to Jesus and he's healing them, so this is, I mean, you talk about quite a scene. Okay, so first of all, there's feathers everywhere and probably coins everywhere and Jesus is standing there and the blind and the lame are saying, "Hey, here's our chance."

And so Jesus is healing them and there's someone else there too and that is the chief priest and the scribes. They're watching all of this. Verse 15, "when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done." Now understand this, it's not that they thought they were wonderful but remember Psalm 118, "This is the LORD'S doing. It is wonderful and marvelous in our eyes." The wonderful things he had done, "and the children who were shouting in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.'" Now by the way, this is part of the song that they're singing as they're making their entry, then we have this event. What do you think has continued on? So here are the kids, the kids are hearing this song, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and now the kids are still singing. It really it's this marvelous scene if you just think about it, just kind of use a little bit of imagination. There's Jesus and the children are shouting and singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David," and there are the religious professionals standing there absolutely fit to be tied, looking like they had been weaned on dill pickle juice. They are so mad, they are so beside themselves. By the way, it will be this event that now precipitates a number of confrontations between Jesus and the Jewish leadership.

So what do they say? Well, they're indignant. They're angry. Now we know from Mark, for instance, "Hey, well, who gave You the authority to do that?" So they're really irritated over this whole money changer and animal deal, but they say to him, "Do You hear what these are saying," presumably these children. "Do you hear it? What kind of teacher are You?" You know, you see footage from the '30s and you see these little Hitler youth kids that are singing songs of praise to Adolph Hitler, it just turns your stomach, right? And you see little grammar school kids singing songs of praise to Obama. I don't care if it's Obama or Ronald Reagan, no human being is worthy of children's praise. But there was a day when it was absolutely appropriate that children should cry out, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

So Jesus says, "You're right, we're in God's house. We should be quiet." I have a feeling the children were quite loud. That's not what he says. Jesus says to them, "Yeah, I hear them." And I love it when Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees this question, "Have you never read?" This is a ginormously insulting question. These are people who have studied Torah their whole life. These are people that have Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Torah. They have Aramaic targums. They've got rabbis' sayings. They've got the Talmud. And they've got stuff memorized and of course they've read it. But just because you read it doesn't mean you understand it. Anybody ever remember the President of Multnomah Bible College years and years ago, the founding President, I think it was, John G. Mitchell? Anybody ever listen to John G. Mitchell on the radio? He was an old country preacher like J. Vernon McGee and he would stop and he'd say in this kind of squeaky hick-sounding voice, "What's wrong with you folks? Don't you ever read your Bibles?"

Here's Jesus, "Haven't you read? There's this place, Psalm 8 to be exact, it's a celebration of man and I think ultimately a celebration of the Son of Man, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself.'" Well, that's a peculiar thing because they're praising Jesus, now Jesus turns around and says, "Actually what Psalm 8 is talking about is that God has prepared these children to praise Me."

The next thing we see is we don't see exactly what they say, maybe they don't say anything, but what happens next is not just some sort of logistical detail in the text, "And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there." Jesus leaves that temple and just as Ezekiel saw the glory of God depart from the temple, so the scribes and the Pharisees see the glory, the incarnate glory of the living God depart from that temple. He will have more to say about the temple but this is a symbolic act in and of itself.

So what is the significance here of Jesus' teaching on the temple? First of all, there is a twofold aspect. Jesus is, in a sense, bringing that judgment on the temple. He departs from the temple. This is more than just some renegade prophet who's now leaving the precincts, this is, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten, full of grace and truth." By the way, that very language comes to us from the Hebrew Bible in Exodus 34 and it refers to the very fullness of God filling the tabernacle. Jesus Christ comes into this world as God's incarnate glory, the one who's abounding in lovingkindness and truth, and just like in Ezekiel's day, just like in Isaiah's day before him, just like in Jeremiah's day, the worship of Israel at the temple had become absolutely corrupt and Jesus' act of departure was a sign, a shadow of the judgment which was to come and to come in its finality in AD 70.

But he also purges the temple, he cleanses the temple which points to the fact that there was going to be one who was going to do just like the prophet said, he purged the temple, he would cleanse the temple and restore true worship even among the Gentiles. What's interesting is that in the original cleansing of the temple event in John 2, Jesus says, "Destroy this temple and I'll raise it again in three days." Of course, the Pharisees are upset, "It's taken us 46 years to get to this point." And then the disciples remembered after his resurrection Jesus was speaking about his body.

So there is that confused woman at the well of Jacob in Samaria and she says, "So, since you're going to obviously get into my business about my husbands, let's change the topic and talk about the worship wars. You Jews say that you have to worship in Jerusalem, we Samaritans worship in Mount Gerizim." And Jesus says, "Truly I say to you, an hour is coming and now is that those who worship God will no longer worship Him in Jerusalem or at Mount Gerizim, but those who worship the Father will worship Him in spirit and in truth, for it is such that the Father seeks." Jesus is reminding us, he's telling us in John 4 there's a coming a day when there's no more sacred space. Why is there no more sacred space? Because Jesus Christ himself is the very fulfillment of the temple. Jesus Christ himself is the very dwelling place of God. What was typified in a tabernacle made out of sea cow's skin is now fulfilled in the human body of the Lord Jesus. The Father comes and dwells in his fullness. We have seen of his fullness and what does he do? He brings grace in the place of grace.

So he's purging the temple because the true temple is there. So Jesus himself is the fulfillment of everything that that temple symbolized and, in fact, it's in this very same gospel where he looks at his listeners and says, "Something greater than the temple is here." What could be greater than the temple? The eternal Son of God who is the very dwelling place of God himself in human flesh.

So Jesus prepares Passion Week with the cleansing of the temple, looking forward to its judgment in destruction in terms of an earthly temple, but pointing to himself in terms of the true temple, and now just for good measure, Jesus has ascended into heaven, sent forth his Spirit, and now his church is the dwelling place of God on earth. It is his body, the temple of God. It's an awesome thing, actually, to be able to say the true temple has come, we are now in union with that true temple, therefore we are the temple of the living God. You know, people get all excited about some kind of rebuilt temple that's going to supposedly take place and they're going to move that nasty mosque off the Dome of the Rock and, boom, we're going to have a new temple. You know, in my opinion, that's rather anticlimactic when you realize that Jesus Christ is the true temple, far more glorious than any supposed rebuilt temple in the future.

Let's pray.

*Hosanna to the Son of David. Lord, save us now. Father, may Your praise be continually on our lips, may our hearts be filled with praise for the Lord Jesus who is David's greater son, David's son yet David's Lord. We thank You, Father, that in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and will forever. Father, we pray that as we travel through this inner sanctum of Holy Scripture that You would give us an awesome sense of the accomplishment of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we see everything He did and hear everything He said. May it change us. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

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