

A Nation Rejected

Sermon 61 in the Matthew Series

Matthew 21:12-13, 18-19

Christ curses the barren fig tree on Monday morning.

He then proceeds to the Temple – Where much of John 12 takes place – and cleanses the Temple.

The next day (Tuesday) the disciples see the fig tree has quickly and visibly withered.

I. The Second Cleansing of the Temple -- Matthew 21:12-13

A. Commerce and Profiteering

Annas, Caiaphas and the priests were the ones who profited from this commerce.

1. Here is the indignation of the Lord Jesus Christ – who was the Lord of the Temple – as he saw religion being used as marketing and for profiteering.

“My house shall be a house of prayer – but you have made it a den of thieves.”

The first part of the verse comes from **Isa. 56:7** “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

2. It was a clear warning to the Nation – as the first cleansing was.
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.

B. Why didn't the authorities arrest Jesus for this action?

1. Because he was right – and used Scripture to prove His point.
2. All Jerusalem was clamoring to see and hear him after the Triumphal Entry.
3. He was Christ -- God manifested in the flesh – and his time had not yet come.
But – it was coming before the week was over.
4. Jesus was challenged the very next day.
5. The people themselves hated the practices going on in the Temple.

C. What do we learn from the Temple cleansing?

1. Worship is serious business. It is not a time for frivolity, entertainment, or bringing in the things of the world.

2. Worship must be pure and not driven by the methods and profit-making schemes of the world (den of thieves).
3. He declared it was to be a house of prayer.
4. He declared it was to be for all people – not just Israel.
Israel failed badly in any kind of evangelism of the world – going so far as to believe that Gentiles could not be saved.

II. Cursing the Barren Fig Tree

A. Why the Cursing?

B. The Meaning of the Cursed Fig Tree

C. The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree Luke 13:6-9

1. The Parable Itself

2. Exegetical Issues

Verse 7 – the two Greek verbs translated “*I have come seeking*” are in a tense that show progressive action and emphasis.

I have continually come seeking! I keep on coming!

Verse 7 – “Cut it down” here and verse 9 literally is “cut it out”.
In others words – don’t just cut it down – Take it out by the roots.

3. Practical Issues

- a) It was a favored fig tree
- b) The Vinedresser asks for patience
- c) The conclusion