

Introduction

- One cleansing or two?

Entering the Temple

- Second chunk of the passage concerns what happened as Jesus came into Jerusalem and on into the Temple:
- Jews placed great emphasis on the Temple:
 - center of their worship - Holy of Holies, the place of God's special presence, the altar, where sacrifice was made to win their forgiveness, their atonement, their entry into God's presence;
 - unique as place of fullest entry into God's presence - at the Temple you could achieve what you couldn't elsewhere; **it was God's house!**
 - should therefore have been place where God's values were most fully reflected.
- Jesus was often to be found there:
 - dedicated at the Temple, there again as a boy of 12, and often taught in Temple courts or nearby, several of the stories he told were set there.
- Whichever of the scenarios you settle on for the number of cleansings, it is clear that the Temple had a significance in Jesus' ministry, it provoked an intense reaction in him!
 - if two cleansings, then twice being provoked a fairly extreme reaction!
 - or if one cleansing, probably just before he died, transposed to here by John, still a pivotal moment in his ministry!

Clearing the Temple

- So what was going on there?
 - money changers - changing Roman, Gentile, from a wide variety of sources money for the Temple tax which every conscientious Jewish male aged 20 years and over paid; money changers charging interest
 - dove sellers - save bringing own animals all the way from Galilee or even further for sacrifice
 - another area where what was happening has changed in my thinking in run up to tonight - I think!
 - not over-charging that is the problem - but the place as a place of **worship!**
- In other words, though convenient, having the sellers and exchangers in the Temple Courts was detracting from, even preventing, worship:
 - it was Jesus' Father's house, not a place of commerce
 - what's more, the tarry brush of blame extends to Temple authorities, who would have had to condone what was happening...
- **And Jesus can't stand it!**

Psalm 69:9

- The Temple authorities, the Jewish leaders, were making it difficult for people to actually worship
 - and so they were standing between God's people and God's presence;
 - Jesus' zeal is that the Temple should be the place it was meant to be!
- Jesus was concerned that people should come into his presence as readily as possible:
 - and he was angry, intensely angry with anyone whose actions and attitudes stood between God and those he desires to welcome into His Kingdom.

A new Temple?

- Oblique reference to his body!
 - in him, and through what he achieved in his body, that we come into God's presence

Conclusion?

- This is a plea for **real** worship
 - not for a show or a pretense, not for appearance, but for reality
 - not for coming week by week and showing facing, but for a heart that is warm to God, able to focus on him
 - the Temple courts had ceased to be that place - they were getting the right coins, but not the right heart
- When we come to worship, why do we come?
 - I think we come... **because we always come.... because we'll see people** (and maybe we need to pass them some information, organise something with them)... **because other people will think less of us if we don't... Valerie and worried about being ex-communicated!**