

THE COUNTDOWN

DONKEYS, DOVES & SHARKS

CLEAN OUT YOUR TEMPLE

CRAIG REES

KEY IDEA: Jesus's actions in cleansing the temple reveal his greater mission: to bring peace between God and humanity through his own death.

KEY SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 21:1-14

Leviticus 5:7

Mathew 22:17-21

John 2:13-16

1 Corinthians 3:16

Mark 11:15-17

1. EF Scott said, "Jesus purified the temple, showing thereby that he had come to remove all barriers to the true worship of God." **How does Jesus cleaning the temple foreshadow the work he would do on the cross?**
2. Warren Wiersbe writes, "The tragedy is that this business was carried on in the court of the Gentiles in the temple, the place where the Jews should have been meeting the Gentiles and telling them about the one true God. Any Gentile searching for truth would not likely find it among the religious merchants in the temple." **In what ways could our religious practices—even our worship—not help lost people find the truth? What can we do about that?**
3. **Read Mark 11:15-17 and John 2:13-16.** Note that they, in addition to Matthew, focus on the dove traders. With Leviticus 5:7 in mind, why do you think that is?
4. Jewish teachers did not require blind or lame people to make the journey to the temple, and some traditions excluded them from the temple (2 Sam 5:8; also Acts 3:1ff). **What significance do Jesus's actions have for those who had been historically restricted from worship?**
5. **Read Matthew 22:17-21.** What does the fact that worshippers at the temple could no longer change their local currency for temple acceptable coins say about the type of worship God expected from them?
6. There's a sense in which Jesus did not die because they misunderstood his actions, but because they understood them only too well. Jesus offered a means of access to God that bypassed the temple and had its focus solely in him. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16. **What role should cleaning have in believers' lives? Share one way you allow the Lord to 'cleanse' you.**
7. What one lesson from this message can you apply to your life?
8. What unchurched or de-churched friend can your group pray for you to share with?