

You often here people talk about God changing from OT to NT

- All wrath versus all love
- A misreading
- God has both; God always acts righteously; the two are not mutually exclusive
- But the idea comes from the many judgment passages in the OT that seem absent in the NT
- But what we have here is a **good ol' fashion judgment** passage

This is the surprising sequel (twist of plot) to the entry that Jesus made into Jerusalem

- He came humbly on a donkey as the lamb who would be slain for us
- But when He gets to the temple we get to see the Lion of the Tribe of Judah!
 - This act of judgment is also a proclamation of His deity
 - Jesus enters the most central site in all Judaism and acts there as one having full authority
 - This was God's house and Jesus was acting as the head of the household

The Temple

- Commanded by God to be built as the Tabernacle (tent of meeting)
- **Exodus 25:8** and **29:43-46**, NASB
- Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of this (**John 1:14**) (and **Revelation 21**)
- Moved with Israel; Later became a permanent fixture in Israel (Solomon)
- Place of worship (including sacrifice)
 - Structure:
 - The court of the gentiles (beyond which no gentiles could go)
 - The court of the women (beyond which no woman)
 - The court of Israel (beyond which no laymen could go)
 - The sanctuary (beyond which no priest could go)
 - The holy of holies
 - The picture was that God was present, but holy

It was Passover, so everyone was there

- Travel from far (need to procure animals for sacrifices) (not necessarily a bad thing)
- That was the buying and selling that was going on (gentile court)
- Here is why that was potentially problematic

1. The money changers were trading usual currency for "temple shekels" that were required as a "contribution to the Lord" (Cf. Exodus 30:13-14)

- Once they got the right form of money, they could use it to pay the temple tax and purchase animals for sacrifice
- Extra biblical writings from the time confirm that temple commerce was **notoriously corrupt**¹

2. Problem with selling the doves is that people who had to get doves to sacrifice were the very poor who could not come up with a lamb (Cf. Leviticus 5:7; 12:8)

- Temple commerce was **notoriously corrupt**

3. The location was irreverent, inconsiderate and prohibitive for those who were already furthest off

- A distraction for the gentiles and for all others too (sound carries)

In front of everyone Jesus, the Lamb, becomes the Lion and acts like God always has (in stark judgment)

- He **overturns their tables and their chairs** (were they in them?)
- Imagine the scene...
- A **good ol' fashion whoopin'**

¹ Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 691.
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Then, as God always does, Jesus explains His actions of judgment (verse 13)

- **"My house shall be called a house of prayer"**
- **"For all the nations"** (not in Matthew)
 - This was happening in the **court of the gentiles**, which meant that they could not really have a worship experience there
 - They were meant to have a place to draw near to God
- **Prayer as general worship and drawing near to God** (more next week...)
- **Isaiah 56:1-8**, NLT
- Picture of the church
 - The **"foreigners"** and **"others"** of **Isaiah 56:6 & 8** are those who are brought into the promises of Israel, as was always the plan
 - Cf. **Ruth** and **Rahab** (and the church now)
 - God always intended to use Israel to reach the world as a witness for God
 - **"In you, and in your seed, all the families and nations of the earth shall be blessed"** –God to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 and 22:18

"Den of robbers"

- Quote from the Book of Jeremiah
- Written to Israel when they were being hypocrites and fakers as God's people (double lives)
- Engaging in sin and excusing it because they attended Temple services (were God's people)
- **Jeremiah 7:1-11**, NLT
- They were doing religious things (going to the Temple) but living incongruently with what that represented
 - They were God's people—but they were not living that way (not cool)
 - **Cf. See Matthew 21:18-19**
 - A living parable of judgment (**Fig tree** = Israel)
 - Leaves without fruit = outward show without real fruit
 - Not just Israel at that moment—but often us as well
 - We are warned (this is unacceptable to God)

Here is where we see grace

- Jesus **curses this tree** to reveal the barren dead, hypocritical religion of the people
 - **But in a few days** He would become a curse on The Tree for them (us)
 - **Galatians 3:13**, NLT
 - Mercy triumphs over judgment
 - In and of themselves, Israel would not bear fruit—but Jesus is their Substitute and Savior!
- The **crowds in the outer courts** were being **ripped off by religion and were far off from God**
 - But in **a few days** Jesus would remove the wall of separation and bring them (us) near to God
 - **1 Peter 3:18a**, NASB
 - **Hebrews 7:25-28**, NASB
- This promise of **meeting with God** was hard to experience in the temple, but realized in Jesus
 - **In a few days**, Jesus would bring those who were far off near through the cross
 - **Ephesians 2:12-22**, NLT

We are those who were far off and have been brought near

- We have become the **household of God**
 - **1 Corinthians 3:16**, NASB
- Since we are the household of God, we ought to glorify God (**bear fruit**)
 - **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**, NASB
- Beware of **tables, chairs, commerce** and **noise** that ought not to be there
 - That hinder witness (Cf. **I will meet with you there**)
 - That hinder witness (Cf. **You will be a light to the nations**)
- The fruit of faithful witness is faithful witness