

Third Wednesday – 2023

Wednesday, March 8 at 11 am & 7 pm



# His Final Steps...

## *Led to His Father's House*

Text: Selections from Matthew 21:12-17 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: During these Wednesdays of Lent, we are on a journey with Jesus as He takes His final steps toward the cross.

- Ash Wednesday – Jesus' final steps led to the tomb of Lazarus, about 2 to 4 weeks before Good Friday, *then Jesus raised the very dead Lazarus back to life!*
- Last Wednesday – Jesus' final steps led to the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, on the Saturday before Palm Sunday – *when Mary anointed Jesus with a very expensive perfume in preparation for His burial!*
- Today – Jesus' final steps led to the temple in Jerusalem, on Holy Monday – *where Jesus did things that were ♦shocking, ♦wonderful, ♦anger-inducing, and ♦instructive!* Today we are in **Matthew chapter 21:**

1. **Jesus Cleansed the Temple:** <sup>12</sup> **And Jesus entered the temple [complex] and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple [that is, the Court of the Gentiles], and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. <sup>13</sup> 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.**"**

- a. Within the Temple: There were separate areas for  
 ▶priests, ▶Jewish men, ▶Jewish women, and ▶Gentiles.  
 Each area was intended for gathering, praying, and  
worshiping, but, *at the time of Jesus*, the Court of the  
 Gentiles had become a place for ☹exchanging money  
 and ☹buying an animal for sacrifice. **“A strange scene:**  
**The lowing of the cattle, the bleating of the sheep and**  
**lambs, the cooing of the doves, the cry of the venders,**  
**the clink of money, all this in the place which was**  
**sacred to the name of God.”** [At the time of Jesus:]  
 “...the priests were often deriving benefit from this  
 [money-changing and animal-selling] **arrangement by**  
**[making money from those businesses]... / cheating**  
**and overreaching was the order of the day”** (Kretzmann).



- b. Den of Robbers: Why did Jesus say that? 600 years  
 earlier, *the LORD spoke these words through Jeremiah*:  
 “Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and  
 swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after  
 other gods that you have not known, then come and  
 stand before Me in this house, which is called by My  
 name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’...? Has this house,  
 which is called by My name, become a den of  
 robbers...?” (Jer. 7:9-11). People **WRONGLY** thought they  
 could ▶*continue in sin* **and**, at the same time, ▶*have*  
*God’s forgiveness*☹.

2. **Jesus Healed Blind and Lame:** <sup>14</sup> **And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. //**  
Let us add Jesus' **shocking words** to His **awesome miracles!** To some Jesus may have looked wrong – *when He drove out the changers and merchants*, but God showed Him to be right with mighty miracles! Picture the scene: the blind being led by others and the lame coming on their crutches; **then, after God's powerful intervention,** ♦the seeing were marveling and ♦the lame were leaping!
3. **The Jewish Leaders Became Angry:** <sup>15</sup> **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 [angry] <sup>16</sup> and said to Him, "Do You hear what these children are saying?"**
- a. The Bible is clear from the **Gospel according to Mark** that Jesus was welcomed as **The Promised Messiah** ♦by the crowds on Palm Sunday and ♦by the children in the temple on Holy Monday. They both shouted, **"Hosanna to the Son of David."** In other words: **Jesus, the promised Messiah, save us, we pray!**
- b. Since Jesus ♦drove out the changers and merchants *without the permission of the Jewish leaders* AND ♦accepted the Messianic-directed praise of the children, those leaders were steaming mad!
4. **Jesus Explained the Scriptures:** **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' [Ps. 8:2]?"**
- a. What is normal? The adults know more than the children. But what happened on Holy Monday in the

Court of the Gentiles? The children understood, *so they responded with proper praise*. But the learned Jewish leaders, *who were spiritually dead and blinded to their own wickedness*, did **not** recognize Jesus, *so they did not praise Him as the Messiah*.

b. Then, to help the Jewish leaders get it – *about who He is and what was going on*, Jesus quoted **Psalm 8:2** as the fulfillment of what they had just witnessed. Would some of them, by God's grace, finally see the connection, recognize Jesus, repent of their sins, and embrace Him as Savior? Some did; *thanks be to God!*

5. **Jesus Left Jerusalem:** **17 And He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.** // Each day for Jesus had to be very intense †as His arrest, beatings, and crucifixion drew near, and †with His many encounters and challenges from the Jewish leaders. So Jesus followed His practice of leaving Jerusalem each day to travel the two miles to Bethany to stay at the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha.

**Let Us Pray:** Dearest Jesus, **with** Your cleansing of the temple – *You showed love for the Gentiles*, **with** Your reference to the den of robbers – *You called the Jewish leaders to repent*, **with** Your healing of the blind and lame – *You showed the loving power of God*, and **with** Your acceptance of praise from the children – *You identified Yourself as the Promised Messiah*. Now, please help us to **be sorry** for our sins, **always trust** in You for eternal life, and **honor You** in all our lives!

**Website:** [www.BLC7500.com](http://www.BLC7500.com); **YouTube and Podcast:** Benefit from the Bible

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