



# Daily Reflections

## November 9, 2018

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### Scripture

#### **John,2: 13-22**

Since the Passover of the Jews was near,  
Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves,  
as well as the money-changers seated there.

He made a whip out of cords  
and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen,  
and spilled the coins of the money-changers  
and overturned their tables,  
and to those who sold doves he said,  
"Take these out of here,  
and stop making my Father's house a marketplace."

His disciples recalled the words of Scripture,  
Zeal for your house will consume me.

At this the Jews answered and said to him,  
"What sign can you show us for doing this?"

Jesus answered and said to them,  
"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

The Jews said,  
"This temple has been under construction for forty-six years,  
and you will raise it up in three days?"

But he was speaking about the temple of his Body.  
Therefore, when he was raised from the dead,

his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

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## **Our Scripture Reflection**

All four Gospel include the story of the Temple cleansing by Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke place the story towards the end of their accounts and picture Jesus' action as the event that precipitates the accusations made by the religious authorities against Him. John, however, places this important story towards the beginning of His Gospel. Why? Because Jesus came to "replace" the traditional religious institutions and practices of the Jewish people. After the Temple of His body is destroyed God will raise up a New Temple in His glorified body. Jesus, not the Jewish Temple will become the focus of worship beginning on Easter.

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## **Food for your Journey**

What is it that's caused Jesus to become so angry that he becomes a holy terror? It can only be one thing: injustice.

The sacrificial system in the temple had evolved, over the centuries, into an efficient machine for fleecing rich and poor alike, earning a great deal of money for the insiders who ran it. If you went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, your goal was to sacrifice an animal, according to the law of Moses. You could bring your own sacrificial animal, of course, but many who had journeyed from afar found it easier to purchase a beast locally, at a steep markup.

The law said you had to present a perfect animal, without mark or blemish. Unless you purchased a pre-approved animal within the temple precincts, you had to bring your offering before an inspector, who would tell you whether or not it met the grade. The inspectors were in cahoots with the animal-sellers, who knew how to grease their palms with silver. Rarely did they grant approval for a sacrificial animal brought in from the outside.

There was something else. If you had journeyed from one of the lands of the Jewish diaspora -- Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, even distant Rome -- the coins jingling in your purse would have been imperial coins, engraved with the Emperor's likeness. Such graven images violated the Second Commandment, and so were forbidden within the temple precincts. In order to buy yourself

a sacrificial animal, you had to first exchange your Roman money for image-free Judean coins. The money changers, who had a monopoly, charged exorbitant commissions, but the poor pilgrims had no recourse. They got them coming and going, those temple merchants.

The reason Jesus raged through the temple had nothing to do with the proximity of money to a place of worship, as some modern commentators have assumed. His anger was sparked by injustice: the fact that the temple had been transformed into a corrupt machine for cheating pilgrims out of their life savings.

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, Open my eyes and heart to Your sacred Presence in my life. May all that I say and do flow from my relationship with You. You are The Lord of my life, Jesus. Amen