

Jerusalem SmackDown

Round One – The House of Prayer

January 10, 2010

Matthew 21:1-17

¹ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵ “Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them.

⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Hosanna in the highest!”

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

¹² Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³ “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a ‘den of robbers.’ ”

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant. ¹⁶ “Do you hear what these children are saying?” they asked him. “Yes,” replied Jesus, “have you never read, “ ‘From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise’ ?” ¹⁷ And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night

Discussion Questions

Have you ever given someone a gift that they just didn’t show the right amount of gratitude for?

They ignored it or worse, misused it?

What makes Jesus so protective of the Temple?

Is it just the building or what is supposed to happen there as well?

What do you think of when you hear ‘den of robbers’?

Read Jeremiah 7:1-11. Does it still carry the same meaning for you?

So, how were they making it a ‘den of robbers’ in Jeremiah’s time?...in Jesus’ time?...does it happen today?

What is Jesus’ alternative?

How is a ‘house of prayer’ opposite from a ‘den of robbers’?

What does it mean for our churches to be ‘houses of prayer’ today?

Why is it so important?