

## "JESUS CLEANED HOUSE..."

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

John 2:14-16 records Jesus' cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem. He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers. Jesus the worshiper now became a reformer, as He did not like what He saw. That being - the place of worship had become a place of commerce. The Sanhedrin was permitting this and probably was controlling such for its own financial interest (trafficking in sacrificial animals and money changing). This traffic, which was carried on in the large area known as the Court of the Gentiles, was to the advantage of the pilgrim, since he could acquire his sacrifice here rather than bring it with him.

Presumably there was a guarantee that the animal was "without blemish." Various kinds of coinage could be changed at the tables for the Palestinian half shekel required for the annual temple tax. This trafficking turned the Temple into an emporium of trade. Infuriated at the irreverence, Jesus responded by creating a whip out of the ropes lying around the area. With this whip he drove the men and the animals out of the temple area and upset the tables of the money changers. Seemingly, the Father's house had been perverted into a house of merchandise.

There have been some who have attempted to use this event in the Bible as a "proof text" that it is sinful to sell anything in the Christian church building (even Gospel tapes, Bible dictionaries/encyclopedias, etc). However, it really is difficult to do so.

Acts 4:32-37 and I Corinthians 16:1,2 teaches that the local church should be supported with tithes and offerings. The local church is a good place to share one's tithes. The church member is supplied with a house of worship, various programs/ministries, and a Pulpit Minister. This takes money. Thus, support of the local church is needed. However, one must decide if he/she is going to share all of his/her tithe in one treasury or with several Christian ministries. Some would have the church to be financed by various types of sales, but, the tithe is the Lord's and should be given to Him and His ministries. Other worthwhile programs should be supported above and beyond the tithe. The tithing principle must be constantly taught in Bible classes and from the pulpit. Then, the church will have plenty of money to proceed with the Lord's work.

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