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Revelation and Rejection; Matt 21:12-17
GPBC
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Introduction – Our text today is thematically a repeat of the closing of ch20 and opening of ch21. As Jesus nears Jerusalem in 20:29-34, He heals 2 blind men and those blind men identify Him as the Son of David. So you have the actions of Jesus and the witness of others testifying with remarkable clarity that Jesus is none other than the promised Messiah. That theme essentially repeats itself in the opening verses of ch21. Jesus at point A explains to His disciples everything that will take place at point B with precise detail and when He rides into Jerusalem the crowds welcome Him as the Son of David. So here for a second time, the actions of Jesus and the testimony of others reveal Jesus as the Messiah.

Now if 21:1-11 was the repeat, today's text is the "threepeat." The actions of Jesus reveal who He is. The children praise Him as the Son of David. And note for even further convincing, the Scriptures testify to who Jesus is in all three settings. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would open blind eyes. Zechariah prophesied the Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a colt. Psalm 8 says that children would praise the Lord.

The closer Jesus gets to the cross, the various evidences of who He is becomes impossible to deny. Leaving no doubt whatsoever that the man who you will see hanging on the cross in just a matter of days is none other than the Son of God. Therefore, when Jesus hung on the cross, God must have been doing a great and awesome and wondrous work. There can be no other explanation. If Jesus is God in the flesh, then He cannot be killed by man unless that happens to be part of His plan. And so it was. And what an extraordinary, wondrous, and gracious plan it was – that in dying on the cross, Jesus would pay for my sin and your sin that we might find life and forgiveness and life everlasting in Him!

- I. The Actions of Jesus Identify Him
 - a. The temple was to be a place of worship. One would come to the temple, offer a sacrifice for one's sin, and thus having been cleansed of sin, could approach the presence of the Lord.
 - b. Remember this is the time of the Passover feast. People have traveled to Jerusalem and the temple officers have created a way to

ease the burden of travelers and make some money in the mean time. You could purchase an animal for your sacrifice right there at the temple. What could have been a ministry to those who travel to worship at the temple turned into a money scheme for chief priests. They had to approve your sacrifice and they set the price.

- c. So rather than the temple being a place of solemn worship, it had become a place of extortion. Rather than hearing the sound of prayer, you could only hear the drowning sounds of hustled bargaining and underhanded price gouging. What a sight to behold right at the door of where you were to meet with God!
 - d. So the first thing Jesus does when He enters Jerusalem is to cleanse the temple of all that defiled it. If you want to see the holy righteous anger of God, look no further than this scene at the temple. Jesus Christ, the meek and mild Savior, who rode into town on a donkey, drives out the buyers and sellers, overturns the tables and chairs, to cleanse the temple.
 - e. Nothing stirs the holy wrath of God as to turn the worship of God into mockery, to belittle the presence of God into nothing more than a trifling, frivolous, common event, to gut the wonder of approaching the Almighty by making it about you and not Him. Worship is a glorious encounter, a wonder of grace that sinners can be welcomed into the presence of God. Worship is serious. Worship matters. Worship is the purpose for which we were created. When we turn worship into making much of us rather than making much of God, into a means for our own gain, to promote our own brand and build our own empire, God is not pleased!
 - f. Jesus quotes Isaiah 56:7 and Jer 7:11. And through His actions and by His words of OT Scripture, He sets Himself before the temple as the One who carries out the will of God. In a very real and true sense, this was His house and He sets His house in order before He lays down His life.
- II. The Praise of the Children Reaffirmed by Scripture Identifies Him
- a. V14 – After removing what defiled the temple, Jesus begins to do the work of God in the temple. He removes idolatrous sin first and then He begins to remove the stain of sin. He drives out the rebellious ones and heals the hurting ones. You see, the temple was to be a

picture of heaven on earth. That's precisely what Jesus returns it to in this passage. Sin has no place in the presence of God. Jesus not only cleansed the temple space of sin, He cleansed those who would seek Him from the effects of sin.

- b. This is nothing less than a view of heaven. Sin is not welcome there. And sin's effects will have no place there.
- c. The reason why our bodies are broken at times, the reason why this world is broken all leads back to the presence of sin. We are sinners, living in a fallen world. Jesus came to earth from heaven to bring heaven to earth and one day bring us to heaven. That's why the Son of David will die on a cross in a few days. The presence of sin is removed by the presence of God. Every time Jesus opened blind eyes in the temple that day and every time He invigorated lame legs, He was displaying what heaven will be. He was showing what salvation in Him means.
- d. And so right there in the temple, the children rally a chorus of praise, declaring of Jesus – Hosanna to the Son of David!
- e. Notice when Jesus was challenged about having this title attributed to Him, He did not quiet or correct the children – He rather affirmed them with Scripture. In other words, He received their praise as being scripturally true. He was the Son of David.
- f. Just as Psalm 8:2 says, God puts it into the heart of babies to praise Him when they are in His presence.
- g. This isn't the first time this has happened with Jesus, is it? Remember John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb when Mary, who was pregnant with Christ came to visit!
- h. You know kids say the darndest things, and sometimes kids say the greatest, truest things!

III. The Priests and Scribes Adamantly Reject Him

- a. The children are praising Him and the priest and scribes are furious with Him. Indignant means angry and resentful for a perceived unfair treatment. You see from their perspective Jesus has stolen the show. He's come in and taken over. He put an end to their money scheme. Instead of tables making them money, the floor is filled with blind people seeing and lame people walking. And on top of that, the place is filled with screaming kids calling Him the Messiah!

- b. Who does He think He is? Don't you hear what these kids are saying?
- c. They were so gripped with greed and caught up with the loss of their sway with the crowd, they couldn't see what was so plain to see. They were so caught up in themselves, they never stopped to think He might really be the Savior.
- d. It wasn't as if they didn't have ample evidence before them. They saw the wonderful things that He did. Blinded eyes were opened. Lameness, useless, crippled, atrophied legs were made strong and new. When it comes to having faith in Christ, seeing is not believing!
- e. They just refused to have any other Messiah other than the Messiah they had imagined, the Messiah who fit into their plan and their way.

Conclusion – My friend, don't be as the chief priests and scribes. If you're waiting for a Jesus that fits your plan and idea, you'll never find Him. There's only one. He didn't come to be like you; He came to make you like Him!

Look at the wonderful things He has done. Take a walk by the cross and see Him dying for your sin. Stoop down and look inside that empty tomb and know that He is alive. And join the praise of these children. Repent and trust Him today. Give Him your life and He will give you life eternal!!