

# CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

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JANUARY 22, 2017

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“Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five Years old. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, He opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired Them. He brought in the priests and the Levites and said to Them, ‘Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves and Consecrate the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers, and Carry out the filth from the Holy Place. For our fathers have been Unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the Lord our God. They have forsaken Him ...therefore the wrath of the Lord Came on Judah and Jerusalem’ ... The priests went into the inner Part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it, and they brought out all The uncleanness that they found in the temple ... and the Levites Took it and carried it out to the brook Kidron.”

† 2 Chronicles 29:3-16

“Behold I send my messenger and he shall prepare the Way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will Suddenly come to his temple ... But who can endure The day of his coming, and who can stand when

**He appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like Fuller's soap ... Then I will draw near you for Judgment."**

**† Malachi 3:1-5**

**"The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple He found those who were selling oxen and Sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers Sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he Drove them all out of the temple, with the Sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins Of the money-changers and overturned their Tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.'"**

**† John 2:13-16**

**"Do you not know that you are God's Temple and God's Spirit dwells in you?"**

**† 1 Corinthians 3:16**

**I've preached for many decades now the fact that although as Christians we are under a "better covenant based on better promises" mankind is still the same—we're born in the flesh and we have certain sinful tendencies from birth due mainly to two factors: 1) the original sin of Adam which is carried through the human bloodline, and 2) the sins of our fathers (parents) which is generational and must be dealt with. We've found in deliverance ministry that very often spiritual, sinful problems that people have is because their immediate parents or grandparents created "issues" for them. For example, a very common spirit**

people have to cope with from birth is a spirit of rejection—we see this quite often when ministering to people.

Most people don't realize that even before the womb a child's spirit is alive and can "hear" and "see" things going on. They may hear their human father or mother say, "I never wanted this baby; I told you we should have an abortion because we cannot afford a baby right now." That's one reason on our questionnaire we give people to fill out before we minister deliverance one of the questions is whether or not either of their parents had contemplated abortion. Remember, if your wife is pregnant you'd better watch what you say because it can affect the unborn child.

Another reason we know that mankind has not changed much even though we're in the age of the New Covenant is because the *things* we read about in the Old Testament are often seen in the New and today in our churches as well. Such is the case with the Temple—if we truly love the Lord and want to live our lives as a good testimony for the Father and the Kingdom of God then we must take a look at our temple from time to time and *cleanse* it.

In the Exodus period of Jewish history, the covenant people of God were nearly always in rebellion. In fact, throughout the historical literature, especially during the time of the Judges, we see a cycle of r's in God's relationship with His people. There would be a cycle taking years of *rebellion, retribution (judgment), repentance* and *restoration*. Then the cycle would repeat itself. Is not the same thing true today? Isn't most of the Church in rebellion to God? Have the churches thought about cleansing the temple? I submit they have not.

It's important to "judge ourselves" in this regard on a continuing basis because if we "judge ourselves" the Word says we "will not be judged." Read the Scriptures at the top of this teaching article, especially Malachi and you will clearly see that when the Lord comes to His Temple He will be like a refiner's fire.

The books of Chronicles are interesting historical books; much of the information is also contained in 1 and 2 Kings; however, the reign of Hezekiah is

given much more and also different treatment in Chronicles than in Kings which deals mostly with the Syrian invasion of Jerusalem during the time when Isaiah was prophet to the king. Hezekiah was the first godly king in a long time and his actions led to God's staying the hand of judgment against Judah. You will notice in the Scripture given above from 2 Chronicles 29 if you read all of it carefully several important facts: 1) Judah was in rebellion to God, 2) Worship was nonexistent and not emphasized, 3) the temple had become dilapidated and defiled; what defiled it? Other religious cultish objects that had been placed inside the temple contrary to God's instructions in the Torah, and finally, 4) There was so much "filth" (cult objects) inside the temple that it took two whole weeks for the priests and Levites to cleanse it and make it acceptable to God once again! That means there was a lot of "stuff" defiling the Temple.

Think about that! This is precisely how the enemy works in our lives today to defile our temples—he will obtain a foothold through some sin and pretty soon we are engaged in all sorts of sinful behaviors and thoughts—we've probably also imported cult objects into our temples such as the love of money. There is much of this in the modern day churches just like there was in Herod's temple during the time of Jesus—the religious leaders loved money and prestige more than they did God or the people.

Most Christians don't realize that Jesus cleansed the temple twice—once near the beginning of His ministry and again just prior to the crucifixion. I feel this is an important point for us to note if we want to live our lives as pleasing to the Lord.

Man has a tendency to "lose" his first love of the Lord; we see it with Israel during the days of Moses and we see a stern warning to one of the seven churches in Revelation from the Lord. And invariably the main warning sign is a degeneration from emphasis on the things of the Lord—preaching and teaching the genuine Word, the Great Commission, humility, etc., and a preoccupation with material things, especially money and wealth. We see this throughout the history of Israel and especially during Jesus' days on the earth—the Pharisees and religious leaders loved money and glory more than God and worship of the

Lord. Religious worship had become a ritual rather than a reality and I submit the same is true today. The reason I know that is because most church services are a “ritual,” counterfeit service rather than the genuine thing and the reason this has occurred is because of something the Lord said to me in October, 1991, “The church is not being led by the Holy Spirit; it’s being led by religious spirits.”

You see my brothers and sisters, religious spirits use all the right buzz words—they’re like the shields of brass that Jeroboam used to replace the genuine shields of gold—from a distance they look like gold but they’re fakes, not real gold but simply cheap brass!

Make no mistake. This is Satan’s work and he knows what he is doing. As I’ve preached for decades, he has his own five-fold ministers and he doesn’t care if your “pastor” uses the name of Jesus and reads the Bible in a church service. As long as there’s no Holy Spirit present to anoint that word it will be still born and have no effect on the spirits of those in the congregation. Remember, the anointing is God’s stamp of approval on a service whether it be worship or preaching of the Word—if it’s not anointed God’s not in it, period.

All a person has to do today to verify this is turn on almost any unchristian T.V. station and you will find that “Campmeeting” does not mean what it used to in the church. Almost every satellite unchristian network has the same Balaam boys on there hawking their lies about *prosperity* and how you can be rich or healed of cancer by “sowing a seed” into that unchristian network they’re whoring for.

In Jesus’ day the reality of worship had been replaced by commerce and the desire for financial gain and “prosperity.” Is not the same true today? What was Jesus’ reaction? Most preachers today, if Jesus came into their service and acted this way in anger they would rebuke Him and say, “Brother, you’re not walking in love.”

And yet the old ways die hard. The religious leaders when Jesus began His ministry did not learn their lesson regarding “making my Father’s house a house of trade” and so He had to remind them again just before the crucifixion.

**What about you? Have you taken a good look at your temple? If you're born again by the Spirit of God then He's taken up residence there as the Scriptures state but you are still the custodian of this temple.**

**Remember the lesson from King Hezekiah, God did not cleanse the temple—He expects us to do something about it. Hezekiah recognized the problem and did something about it during the time of Solomon's temple—he instructed the priests and Levites to cleanse the temple. It's our responsibility to cleanse our temples daily if possible so that bad and sinful items don't gain a foothold in our temples and displace the Holy Spirit.**

**The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy these important words that you should never forget:**

**“If anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a Vessel of honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the] House, ready for every good work.” † 2 Timothy 2:21**