

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Zeal For The Temple

(Jerry Fite)

**Y**our commitment to God is severely tested when you feel overwhelmed in sorrow, and those close to you are against you for your stand. David surely felt this as he wrote the 69<sup>th</sup> Psalm. He feels as one mired down in mud in the midst of overflowing flood waters (v. 2). He has become a stranger to his own brethren (v. 8). He turns to God in prayer and through tears, looks patiently for deliverance.

Four reverences in this Psalm find fulfillment in Jesus the Christ. Unjustly, Jesus was the object of many who “*hate me without a cause*” (Psalm 69:4, Jn. 15:25). When Jesus expressed his thirst on the cross, he was given vinegar to drink instead of water. “*In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink* (Psalm 69:21, Jn. 19:28-29). Jesus endured the blasphemy of those who reproach God and gave his life for their well-being “*The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me*” (Psalm 69:9, Rom. 15:3). And in the context of bearing under the commitment to God’s cause in the midst of many enemies David writes, “*For the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up*” (Psalm 69:9).

Jesus fulfilled this when he cleansed the temple. When the disciples of the Lord witnessed Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers and driving out the sacrificial animals with a whip, they remembered David’s statement of one being consumed with zeal for God (John 2:15-17). Jesus was not against honest money changers, for they exchanged the many currencies for the needed shekels of the sanctuary to fulfill one’s responsibility in paying the temple tax. Jesus was not against those providing the needed sacrificial animals to meet the needs of those traveling great distances to attend the Passover. The problem is they were conducting their business “*in the temple*” (John 2:14).

The temple was God’s house. His authoritative name was upon it, so any unrighteous dealings within were inexcusable. It was a “*house of prayer*”, not a “*den of robbers*” (cf. Matthew 21:12-13). The temple was being reduced to a place of “*merchandise*” instead of a place of prayer as God had intended. Jesus saw the purpose of the temple being perverted and to bring people back to the truth, he cleansed it by driving out the perversion.

God’s temple today is the church. His word directs it toward a three-fold purpose: evangelism, edification and when circumstances arise, assisting needy saints (Acts 8:1-4, Eph. 4:16, I Cor. 16:1-2). When the appeal to save souls and edify saints is through entertainment instead of one’s spiritual need, those committed to God’s cause must speak out. Zeal for God’s temple cannot be quiet when the church’s treasury is being used to finance various needs not authorized by its head, Jesus Christ.

The New Testament also refers to the physical body as the temple (I Cor. 6:19). Jesus turned the attention from the temple in Jerusalem to his own physical body as the temple He would raise in three days (John 2:19, 21). Our physical bodies are to be kept pure and not perverted by fornication (I Cor. 6:13). Being zealous for God, we must “*flee fornication*” when such temptation approaches (I Cor. 6:18).

Jesus cleansed the temple at the beginning of his ministry and in the same fashion, had to remind his generation again at the close (Jn. 2, Lk. 19:45-46). Zeal for the temple can never subside!