

ישוע בוא לבית המקדש

Yeshua Comes to the Temple

After Yeshua had entered Yerushalaim, riding in on a donkey just as the Prophet Zechariah had foretold, He went to the Temple with His talmidim. It was the time of the Pesach Festival, so thousands of people had traveled to the City to prepare for Pesach. Some had traveled long distances, singing the Psalms of Ascent (*Shirei HaMa'alot*, Ps 120–134) as they came up to the Holy City.

Of course, the Temple priests had also prepared for the large crowds that would gather. Since every family would need a lamb for the Pesach sacrifice, but not just any lamb. The lambs sacrificed at Pesach had to be perfect, without any bruises or defects. Most families, therefore, did not try to bring a lamb with them on their long journey for fear that it might be injured along the way. Even more, the Temple priests had made a rule that no lamb could be accepted by them for the Pesach sacrifice unless they were certain it was without any blemish. As a result, people were not allowed to supply their own lamb for the offering. Lambs that had been carefully raised and guarded by the Temple priests themselves were the only ones allowed. So when the people came from all over the Land to celebrate Pesach, one of the first things they needed to do was to buy a lamb from the priests. But the priests had another rule as well: you could not buy a lamb from them using common money. This was because the common money of the Roman Empire had the picture of the Roman Emperor stamped on it, and the priests had declared such money to be like an idol, since it contained the image of the Emperor who had declared himself to be a god. The priests therefore had money changers in the Temple courts. The money changers would exchange the people's money for the money manufactured by the priests themselves, which they declared to be holy. But the whole thing was scam. The exchange rate was always in favor of the money changers, and the lambs offered by the priests were severely over priced. As a result, it cost a lot of money to celebrate the Festival as God had commanded. And it was especially difficult for families who were poor, for they would have to spend a large percentage of their yearly earnings to buy a lamb for Pesach.

Yeshua always had compassion for poor people. It grieved Him greatly that many people were being taken advantage of by the wealthy priests in the Temple. The Pesach Festival was not to be a time for the priests to make a lot of money! It was supposed to be a time of rejoicing for everyone as they came to celebrate the freedom God had given them as He delivered them from the slavery of Egypt.

When Yeshua entered the Temple and saw the money changers doing their business, He was filled with righteous anger. He saw the priests turning a Festival of joy into a money-making scheme for themselves. He remembered the words of Isaiah (56:7): "My House will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples," and how the prophet Jeremiah had written (Jer 7:11), "Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," declares the LORD." Using some pieces of rope for a whip, He began to drive out the animals the priests were selling. Then He turned over the tables of the money changers and told them to leave. By doing so, He was telling everyone that the Pesach Festival was not a time for making money, but a time for everyone to be able to celebrate "the time of our freedom." When the talmidim saw this, they remembered the words of the Psalmist when he wrote: "For zeal for Your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me" (Ps 69:9).

