



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1951 ~ Jesus Cleanses the Temple.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. They were each written from a different perspective to show the Lord Jesus to their target audience. Matthew, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, was a Jew and a former tax collector. He wrote in his Gospel book, Matthew, primarily for the Jewish people, and presented Jesus as king because Jesus is the Son of David.

The second Gospel, Mark, was the first gospel written and sent to the Romans. Mark shows Jesus as a Servant. There's no family background to Jesus given because no one was interested in the ancestors of servants. Mark's work was about all deeds and not words. The Romans needed the Gospel of Mark as they weren't interested in Jewish Old Testament Scriptures or the fulfilling of any mentioned prophecies. Interestingly, Mark wasn't one of Jesus' original 12 disciples but was guided in his writings by the Apostle Peter.

Neither was Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke, one of the original 12. Luke was a Greek doctor who wrote for the Greeks; he set forth Jesus as the perfect Man. The account of Jesus' ancestors goes back to Adam, the first man. As a perfect Man, Jesus is seen much in prayer and with angels ministering to Him.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel, the book of John, the Lord Jesus was shown to be the Son of God. This book was written for all who'll believe in Jesus and for the church, with the purpose of leading people to Christ. The Lord Jesus is the theme of the four gospels but each writer highlights some special feature in Christ's character and office that's different from the others. This in effect, means that some events told in one gospel is left out of another.

The mission of the four gospel writers is supported by the first miracle that they each record. The first miracle in Matthew was very Jewish: the leper was cleansed and leprosy was to Jews, a sign of sin. In both Mark and Luke, in writing to Gentiles, the first miracles were demons being driven out of possessed people. John's initial miracle was at the wedding in Cana and the turning of water into wine. John showed that Jesus is Lord of the Old Testament books of sacred writings, because He used the water for purification. But only His disciples initially knew this message.

And at the finish of each gospel: Matthew ended in a very Jewish way with the resurrection; Mark ended with Jesus' ascension in heaven; Luke with the promise of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus' believers, and John finished with the promise of Christ's return, which set the stage for his last writing, the Revelation to John.

When we see these patterns in the New Testament writings, we begin to better understand them. In today's *Bible Adventure*, Jesus has gone to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When He looked around the Temple, He wasn't pleased with what He saw.

In John's Gospel, Chapter 2, we read of Jesus being upset at what was taking place in the Temple courtyard. In Jewish society, which was much the same as in most nations today, the people were divided into levels of prosperity. The Jewish rulers and priests were doing very well but did so at the expense of the very poor. In the Old Testament books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, God had made provision for the poor and needy. Those who had more of this world's goods were to share them with those in poverty.

In the book of Ruth, the rule of leaving the grain at the edge of each field for the poor was being followed. The reapers of Boaz didn't gather all the stray stalks of wheat and barley, but left them to be picked up by those who needed food. Ruth took advantage of this for herself and her mother-in-law Naomi, after recently returning to Israel from a foreign country.

There've been times in Jewish history when the land of Israel has suffered under long terrible droughts. Food at these times was scarce and the very poor suffered the most. But there's a verse of Scripture with a promise from God for such difficult times. The principle of financial giving to God mustn't be neglected.

To the present day, Christians cannot afford to withhold their tithes and offerings from God. A tithe is usually the first 10% of our income. If we give to Him, God promised in Malachi, Chapter 3, that He would open the window of heaven to provide for us. Not only this, but He promised that when we are faithful in our tithes and offerings, He will prevent pests from devouring our crops. At the time Jesus was visiting the Temple for the Passover, the people's devotion to God wasn't very strong.

In the Temple building complex, there were a number of Temple courts. All Jewish men and women were allowed to use the Court of the Women but the women couldn't enter the Court of the Israelites. This area was exclusively for Jewish men. Here they could see animal sacrifices being made by the high priest in the court of the priests.

In another court, the Court of the Gentiles, it was primarily a marketplace, with sellers offering for sale various souvenirs, sacrificial animals and food.

The currency changers there exchanged Roman money for coins made in the seaside city of Tyre because the Jews weren't allowed to make their own money. The Temple authorities viewed Roman currency as very displeasing to the Lord and this meant that any Temple visitors had to pay their compulsory Temple tax at the profitable rate the money changers asked.

The Lord Jesus watched the scene around Him before making a whip out of rope. He drove the animals and people out of the court. He turned over the tables of the money changers, spilling the coins out onto the ground. Jesus was angry that the poor people couldn't afford the high prices that the Temple money changers were putting on the animals being offered as sacrifices to cover each family's sins.

The disciples remembered the words of Psalm 69: "Zeal for Your house will consume Me." Quite naturally, the Jewish Temple rulers were upset that their businesses had been given a setback. They demanded from Jesus a sign of His authority to do these things. They certainly didn't understand or accept Jesus' divine authority over all things. Jesus told the rulers that they could destroy this temple (meaning his own body) and in three days, He would raise it up. Only when Jesus had risen from the dead did His disciples remember these words. But at the time, they and the rulers didn't understand what Jesus meant.

Should Jesus have taken such drastic action? In these days, many people believe that we should be tolerant of others to such an extent, that if their behaviour isn't troubling us, we should keep our mouths shut. There's a famous saying: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

Worse than this, in some courts of law in smaller towns and cities around the world, the jury won't give a guilty verdict on a crime when it is due and everyone knows the accused is guilty. Why not? In a few years, the criminal will be out of jail and chasing after those who convicted him, to harass and trouble them with revenge. Evil certainly takes over a society when no one takes a stand to uphold truth and justice and pay whatever price is needed to ensure that right is being done.

The well-known saying: "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" is commonly used to describe someone who doesn't want to be involved in a situation. It's often printed beside a picture of three monkeys with their paws over their eyes, ears and mouth. One writer has said: "Compromise and tolerance are magic words." However, what does God say about tolerance of sin and compromise of standards?

The Lord Jesus is our example to show us that He didn't have a tolerance of sin; instead, God's standards must be upheld. This is particularly true for the Church today. Christians need to live by an extraordinary sense of God's majesty and holiness. This should be followed by an intense interest in prayer and the reading of the Scriptures. All these things produce enthusiasm for the things of God, respect for God's majesty and ongoing loving-kindness for others.

In many parts of the world, the Church is in decline because it's compromised its convictions. The Apostle Paul said: "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Another preacher said: "Suffering is one of the marks of the true Church." And Jesus said: "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you."

Why then are not the churches in the West suffering for their faith? The unhappy truth is that suffering is often avoided by compromise. The standard of Christians' lives doesn't appear much higher than those of the world these days. Godly lives should challenge and rebuke unbelievers by their integrity and purity. Injustices in society and unbiblical practices should receive the Church's united condemnation. But the effort required to do this is often reserved for our own interests, lest other people think that we are fanatical or racist. Yet it is certain that strong churches influence the world around them for good.

How can things be turned around? Churches must return to the New Testament Christianity that says: "REPENT". When men and women are not challenged to repent or turn away from their sins as they become a Christian, they enter the Christian life with their ego still intact and dominant. At times, the Church says the same things as humanists and focus mostly on building up a person's self-esteem rather than building up the Kingdom of God through putting Christ as the centre of their lives.

God wants us to be wretched about sin and to confess it and forsake it. A person coming to Christ must surrender his or her will to Christ so that they may learn obedience and rejection of their self-centredness.

In Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 7, the Lord Jesus taught us how to distinguish between those who are genuine Christians and those who are false teachers. He said: "By their fruits you shall know them." So we need to inspect the fruit of people's lives to see if they love money or themselves more than Christ, and if they are completely truthful and honest in what they say.

In Mark's Gospel, Chapter 11, Jesus again drove out the money changers and the stall operators who sold things in the Temple. He wouldn't allow them to carry their goods through the Temple. In this second incident, Jesus quoted from Isaiah, Chapter 56, and Jeremiah, Chapter 7, saying: "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves'."

Once again, the scribes and the chief priests were angry with Jesus because of His actions. They tried to think up ways to get rid of Him. They also feared Him because He taught the people with authority. This opposition from the Temple rulers towards the Man that they had rejected as the Messiah steadily grew stronger until they arrested Jesus and had Him crucified.

Here's a precious promise to remember from Romans, Chapter 5, verses 8 and 9: "God has shown us how much He loves us – it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! By His blood we are now put right with God; how much more then, will we be saved by Him from God's anger!"

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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