

What God Loves, What God Hates

Mark 11.12-25

What is the largest, most important building in your country? The one with the most historic meanings and associations? The one where famous people come, either to work or to visit? The one that stands for, and symbolizes, the very centre and meaning of your country, its life, its rulers and its people?

Now supposing you were convinced that this building was shortly to be devastated, say in an earthquake, or by enemy action. And supposing you believed that this was God’s judgment upon it, because the rulers of your country were wicked beyond repair. And supposing you felt obliged to tell people — to warn them solemnly, to give them a sign of what was to come, to urge them to change their ways while there was still time.

How would you do it?

From N.T. Wright, Mark for Everyone, 2004

Jeremiah 7.1-11

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “Stand at the gate of the Lord’s house and there proclaim this message:

“Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. ³ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in deceptive words and say, “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!” ⁵ If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, ⁶ if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, ⁷ then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever. ⁸ But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.

*⁹ “Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe”—safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹ **Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching!** declares the Lord.*

Isaiah 56.1-7

*¹This is what the Lord says: “Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. ²Blessed is the one who does this—the person who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps their hands from doing any evil.” ³**Let no foreigner who is bound to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.”** And let no eunuch complain, “I am only a dry tree.” ⁴ For this is what the Lord says: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—⁵ to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever.*

*⁶**And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.** Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; **for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.**”*



What is God saying to me?

What am I going to do about it?