

*Christ Driving the Money Lenders from the Temple*, by Ippolito Scarsellino (called Scarcella)

Art selection and commentary by [Heidi J. Hornik](#) and [Mikeal C. Parsons](#)

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This painting of Christ driving the money lenders from the temple, by the Late Renaissance painter Ippolito Scarsellino, depicts a story told in all four Gospels. In John's Gospel, the event occurs near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (John 2:13-22). Jesus is immediately identifiable slightly to the left of center in the painting, with arms raised and wearing a pink gown and green mantle. He has removed his belt and made it into a flail. The scene takes place on the porch of the temple in Jerusalem with the Solomonic twisted column clearly visible as one of the money changers grasps it while he stoops to collect the basket of coins he has spilt onto the ground. Sheep, birds, cattle, and horses are all present in the painting, echoing details of John's version of the incident and indicating that the temple has become a marketplace where sacrificial animals are sold and money is exchanged. One of the birds has escaped, and a young boy, oblivious to Jesus' actions, tries to trap the bird on a stick. Two women rush off while attempting to regain the attention of a child who is enthralled by what Jesus is doing. During the Catholic Reformation (the time of this painting) this scene, also known as the Purification of the Temple, was used to illustrate the church's need for reform.