



Jesus Clears the Temple



Jesus became very angry when He saw people treating the Temple as a place to make money. Jesus cleared out the Temple and began to teach and heal people there. Through the passion Jesus displays in this story, we learn what is very important to Him.

Day #1: The Temple

In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle was God's plan for His people to meet with Him while they traveled in the desert toward the Promised Land (Exodus 25:9). At certain times, God's glory entered into the Tabernacle. It was a holy place where God came to be near His people (Exodus 40:9). It was also the place where the Israelites came to offer animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins.

After the Israelites, or Jews, came into the Promised Land, King Solomon built a permanent Temple in Jerusalem. It was built according to God's instructions for the Tabernacle (1 Kings 6). It took thirteen years to build the Temple (1 Kings 7:1). God had given VERY specific instructions about how and when the people should use the Tabernacle (Exodus 29-30). The Temple was to be used in the same way. The Temple was created to be a place of earnest prayer and confession of sins (1 Kings 8:29-53). Solomon asked God to bless the Temple.

+ *The Lord said to him (Solomon), "I have heard you pray to Me. I have heard you ask Me to show you my favor. You have built this temple. I have set it apart for Myself. My Name will be there forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there." - 1 Kings 9:3*

Solomon's Temple was destroyed by Israel's enemies (2 Kings 25:9), but was later rebuilt by King Herod. King Herod was a great builder. Because he wanted to gain favor with the Jews, he had the temple rebuilt to be a completely magnificent building. It took nearly 50 years to rebuild the Temple (John 2:20).

The Temple was under construction when Jesus was born, and it is estimated that the building was finished when Jesus was in His late twenties. The Temple was a special place to Jesus. He was taken there when He was a baby (Luke 2:22) and returned there every year with His family (Luke 2:41). Jesus even taught adults there when he was 12 years old (Luke 2:47)!

Many people came from a long way off to worship, pray, and offer sacrifices at the Temple. When Jesus was around 30 years old, He, His family, and His disciples had gone to celebrate the Passover Feast (John 2:12-13). Jesus went into the Temple. He was deeply disturbed at what He found there. Greedy people were using the Temple as a place to cheat others and make money! They were NOT treating the Temple with fear and respect. Because Jesus knows God's heart, Jesus was extremely upset by this sinful behavior. Jesus reacted in a way that shocked many people. We will look at Jesus' actions tomorrow.

***** Pray for a heart to know God, so that you will see things as He sees them (Jeremiah 24:7). We should be broken-hearted by the things that break God's heart.

Day #2: Clearing the Temple

Because some people had to travel great distances to the Temple, it was often difficult to bring animals to sacrifice. It was acceptable for the people to buy an animal along the way. At one time, animals were offered for sale outside the Temple. The animals were offered at a fair price as a convenience for weary travelers. But at this time, greedy people began to sell animals inside the Temple. They charged very high prices because they knew that people who came a long way had no other choice. The travelers needed an animal to sacrifice because they needed forgiveness for their sins. Sometimes, even if the family had brought their own animal, the religious leaders would tell them their animal was not good enough to sacrifice. Then the family would be forced to buy the high-priced animals.

Also, there were moneychangers in the Temple. The religious leaders told the people that the Roman coins made God unhappy because they had a picture of Caesar on them, and Caesar claimed to be god. So, the leaders told the people they had to buy special "temple coins" to put in the offering. The leaders deliberately over-charged people so that they could become rich.

When Jesus entered the Temple and saw all of the greed and deceit, He was very angry.

+ *In the temple courts He (Jesus) found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves He said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" - John 2:14-16*

Jesus quoted Scripture to the religious leaders. Isaiah 56:7 described the real reason the Temple was built - for prayer. These leaders knew this Scripture, and they knew better than to allow and participate in the cheating that was going on.

"It is written," He said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.' " - Matthew 21:13

***** Try to imagine the stunned faces of the people that Jesus openly accused. Jesus was correct in speaking out boldly against their sin. We are instructed to speak to our Christian brothers and sisters if we see them in sin (Matthew 18:15). You can speak boldly when you base your beliefs on God's Word.

Day #3: Righteous Anger

Jesus was bold and forceful when He cleared out the Temple. This is the ONLY time we see Jesus using physical force. Certainly, He did not strike anyone. He used force to drive out the animals and stop the sinful actions of those in the Temple. Jesus had seen sinful behavior before without outwardly showing His anger. We must ask, then, why did Jesus get so upset about this sin? We should examine several factors.

WHO was doing it: Those who were doing the cheating should have known better. Whether the religious leaders actually participated in the cheating, or just allowed it, they were guilty. They knew it was wrong. They were the ones who were so proud of themselves because they were well trained in the Scriptures. They were the ones who were trusted by

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those who were not trained in the Scriptures. These leaders acted as though they never did anything wrong, yet their hearts were full of sin. Jesus said these men were hypocrites (Matthew 23:15).

WHERE they were doing it: Jesus called the Temple His Father's house (Luke 2:49). The Temple was God's plan (1 Kings 5:3). The Temple was blessed by God (1 Kings 9:3). The Bible says the Temple is a symbol, or picture, of heavenly things (Hebrews 8:5; 9:11).

WHAT they were doing: The greedy people were taking advantage of those who were trying to please God. And what is worse, these people were making a money scheme out of the sacrifices required by God. Let's focus on the sacrifice for a moment. God does NOT take our sin lightly. Unless we are forgiven, our sin separates us from God forever. God has a very serious requirement that must be met in order for our sin to be forgiven. God required the Israelites to sacrifice a perfect, firstborn, male animal. Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." This was not a game with which to make a quick buck! And who knew this better than Jesus did? Jesus came to earth to BECOME our sacrifice. He knew the path that He would soon walk down. He knew that soon He would become the Lamb who would take away the sin of the whole world (John 1:29). He knew that He would die on the cross.



We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. - Ephesians 1:7

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. - Hebrews 10:10b



It is not a sin to be angry about sin and ungodliness. However, the Bible does warn us not to sin when we are angry.

When you are angry, do not sin. - Psalm 4:4a

Day #4: All Authority

What is the difference between a sister telling her brother, "Share some of your cookies with me," and that same sister saying, "Mom said for you to share your cookies with me." In the first instance, the sister cannot make the brother share. She does not have **authority**, or power, over her brother. But, when the sister declared that, "Mom said...", she was suddenly speaking with the **authority** of her mother. Today we will see that at the Temple, the religious leaders questioned Jesus' **authority** to do the things He had done.

After Jesus cleared the Temple, He began to teach people every day at the Temple (Luke 19:47). Also, people who were blind and lame came to Jesus at the Temple to be healed (Matthew 21:14). The Bible tells us the religious leaders did not like it when Jesus stopped all of the cheating in the Temple. And, even though Jesus was doing wonderful things, they became so jealous of Him that they planned to kill Him!



The chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things He did. They also saw the children in the temple area shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But when they saw all of this, they became angry. - Matthew 21:15

The chief priests and the teachers of the law...began looking for a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of Him, because the whole crowd was amazed at His teaching. - Mark 11:18

The religious leaders were afraid that all of the people would begin to follow Jesus instead of following them. The leaders feared that all of the people would begin to see them as Jesus saw them. Jesus called the leaders hypocrites - people who said they were good, but really were not good. Jesus' popularity threatened the religious leaders'

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sense of power and security.

The Jewish leaders demanded that Jesus show them a sign to prove He had the authority to clear the Temple and teach as He did (John 2:18). Jesus answered them in a way they were not expecting.

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple He had spoken of was his body. - John 2:19-20

The leaders did not understand that Jesus was prophesying, or telling ahead of time, what was going to happen when He died on the cross. Jesus knew that the Jewish leaders were going to falsely accuse Him and put Him to death. And three days later, God was going to raise Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:24). This would certainly prove that Jesus had ALL authority. In fact, listen to the first words Jesus spoke to His disciples after He was resurrected:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." - Matthew 28:18



When Jesus spoke, the Pharisees and religious leaders refused to hear Him. Their minds were set in their own ways. We must always be willing to hear from God, and align our thoughts to His thoughts.

Day #5: The New Temple

We do not have a Temple to go to today. In fact, God's people are no longer required to offer animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins, because Jesus paid this price once and for all (Hebrews 10:8-9). Today, we have a church that we go to, but it is NOT the same as the Temple. We go to church because the Bible tells us it is good for us to gather with other Christians to encourage each other to do God's work. At church, we worship God together and learn from God's Word.



Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works. Let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us cheer each other up with words of hope. Let us do it all the more as you see the day coming when Christ will return. - Hebrews 10:24-25

The Bible tells us that we have a different Temple now. After Jesus was raised from the dead, He went to heaven to prepare a home for His followers (John 14:2). When He left earth, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to live inside of all believers (John 14:26). Now, each believer's body is a temple.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

We are the temple of the living God. God has said, "I will live with them. I will walk among them. I will be their God. And they will be my people." - 2 Corinthians 6:16

Remember, Jesus said the Temple was created to be a house of prayer. You, too, were created to be filled with prayer. You can pray anywhere and anytime. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to "pray continually." No one can ever keep you from praying. God wants you to talk to Him!



Dear child of God, you have been bought with a price! Jesus laid down His life for you. It was the highest price anyone could ever pay. Now the Holy Spirit lives inside of you. Therefore, do not use your body for sin. And, pray continually, wherever you are.