

Lenten study 2, John 2:13-22 – ‘Jesus cleanses the Temple’

THE TEXT

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, ‘Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a market-place!’ ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, ‘What sign can you show us for doing this?’ ¹⁹Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ ²⁰The Jews then said, ‘This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?’ ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Is anger a sin? (*hint: after some reflection and discussion see Eph 4:26-27*)

Study the diagrams of the Jerusalem temple, how is it similar and different to the way our churches are laid out?

DIGGING INTO THE TEXT

Read Exodus 12:12-14. What did the festival of the Passover commemorate?

Read Leviticus 5:5-7. Why were animals being sold in the temple courts?

Read Deuteronomy 14:22-26 where Moses himself established the temple market and currency exchange. This is another layer to what was going on in temple. Why was this ‘temple market’ necessary?

In verse 16 what is Jesus’ main complaint about what is happening in the Temple? Read Zechariah 14:21 which some suggest is alluded to here.

This event is also found in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Read Mark 11:15-17, what extra words of Jesus are found there? What extra dimensions do these words show us about the motivations of Jesus? (hint: refer also to the Temple diagrams)

Why do the Jews demand a 'sign' from Jesus?

What miraculous sign does Jesus refer to in his little riddle?

Following verse 19-22, someone has said 'By clearing out the temple Jesus is symbolically ending the sacrificial system.' What does this mean? Read Hebrews 10:10.

In the New Testament 'body of Christ' is used in several ways? What are they? (*hint: see Rom 12:5, 1 Cor 10:16*)

Read Eph 2:19-22 and 1 Cor 3:9-17. In the New Testament, what/where/who is the new temple?

APPLICATION

In the Old Testament the people of God had access to his grace and blessing at the Temple in Jerusalem at particular times. What has changed for us, the people of God in the New Testament?

In the Old Testament God dwelt with his people through the sacrificial rituals at the Temple. How does God come to us as the New Testament people of God?

What practical implications are there for your life that you are part of the 'body of Christ' and the 'temple of God' with your fellow Christians?

How (if at all) do you think this text applies to practices like fundraising in the church today?

What do you understand by the term 'the commercialization of Christianity'? What are the dangers in this?