

19 Minutes With the Messiah

Jesus' Body as the Temple

(John 2:13-22)

► **Jesus' Body as the Temple**

- The Living Water
- New Cloth
- New Wine in Old Wineskins
- The Salt of the Earth
- The Light of the World
- The House Built on the Rock
- The Two Debtors
- The Sower
- The Weeds
- The Growing Seed
- The Mustard Seed
- The Yeast
- The Hidden Treasure
- The Fine Pearl
- The Net
- I AM the Bread of Life
- Becoming Childlike
- The Unmerciful Servant
- I AM the Light of the World
- I AM the Gate
- I AM the Good Shepherd
- The Good Samaritan
- The Friend at Midnight
- The Rich Fool
- The Wise Servant
- The Barren Fig Tree
- The Great Banquet
- The Lost Sheep
- The Lost Coin
- The Lost Son
- The Shrewd Manager
- The Rich Man and Lazarus
- The Unworthy Servants
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life
- The Persistent Widow
- The Pharisee and the Tax Collector
- The Workers in the Vineyard
- The Ten Minas
- The Two Sons
- The Wicked Tenants
- The Wedding Feast
- The Fig Tree
- The Householder
- The Ten Virgins
- The Talents
- The Sheep and the Goats
- A Lesson About Foot Washing
- I AM the Way
- I AM the True Vine
- The Woman in Labor
- I AM the Alpha and the Omega

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

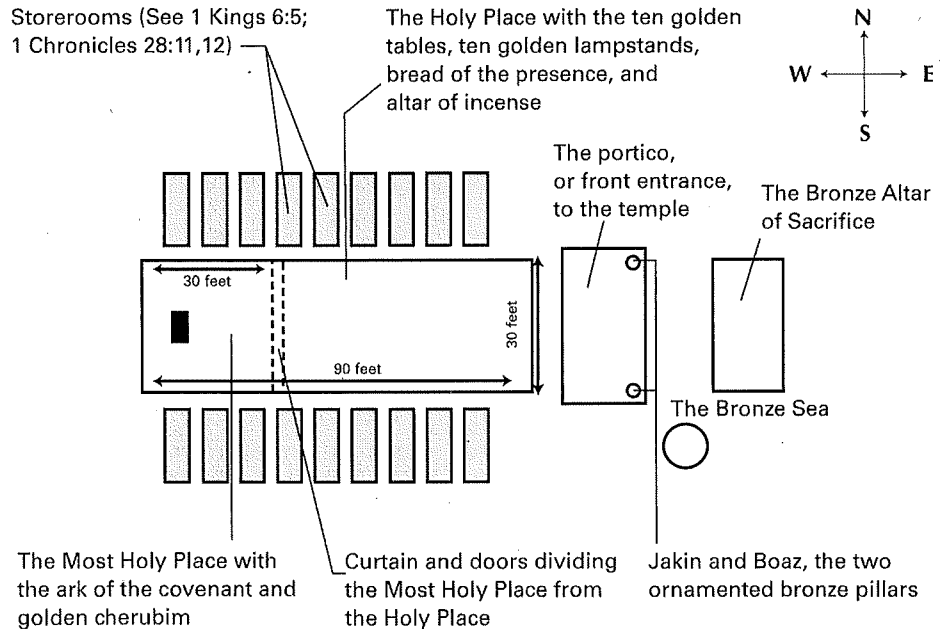
¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

¹⁸Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

²⁰The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

1. The original temple in Jerusalem was built in seven years by King Solomon in the tenth century B.C. That structure was destroyed in 586 B.C. by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. The temple of Jesus' day was a second temple, constructed over a period of 20 years in the sixth century B.C. by the Jews who had returned from their captivity in Babylon. This second building was later renovated at great expense by King Herod. Study the diagram of Solomon's original temple. Which was the most important and significant space in the temple? What did this space signify?



2. The venders and money changers were allowed in the temple area in order to provide sacrificial animals to Jews who had traveled a great distance and to provide the necessary half shekel for the temple tax to those who had arrived with foreign currency. How had this once useful service apparently deteriorated? What spiritual effect did this have?

3. What does the following passage tell us about the purpose of Jesus' actions in the temple?

"Suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple. . . . He will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years" (Malachi 3:1-4).

4. Jesus' words, although misunderstood, were of tremendous significance. Share the significance of the underlined words.

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

5. What additional and comforting truth about God's temple is found in the following passage?

"You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

For Further Study

6. Agree or disagree. This account teaches us that buying and selling (fund-raisers) in or by the church is wrong.

7. Most likely, Jesus' disciples, like his opponents, did not at first understand the Savior's words. Some time later, however, they did (verse 22). Explain how this could be so. What lesson do we find here for ourselves?

Helps: (1) The class leader will benefit from reading the description and meaning of the temple that is found in 2 Chronicles of The Peoples Bible. The Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies) with its ark of the covenant was the most significant space in the temple because it represented God's gracious presence and dwelling among his people. The temple was the place where God's people could meet their God. (2) In Matthew 21:13, Jesus describes the temple, intended to be a house of prayer, as a den of robbers. Because they had a corner on the market, those who sold animals or exchanged money were apparently charging exorbitant sums, exploiting the worshippers. This, together with the noise and commotion of a marketplace, subverted the worship purpose of the temple. (3) Jesus was not only concerned about the marketplace atmosphere in the temple but also (and above all) about his people. Their worship practices revealed irreverence for the significance of the temple and hearts that were not one with God. (4) By using the word temple to refer to his body, Jesus was stating that he fulfilled in person what the Jerusalem temple only foreshadowed. Jesus is Immanuel, God himself among men, God himself in the flesh, in whom all people can truly meet their God. The Jews would destroy this true temple, that is, they would put the Lord to death, but Jesus would raise it to life. Three days is not only a reference to Easter morning but also testifies to Christ's deity and power by standing in sharp contrast to the 46 years and the long periods it had taken Herod and others to build or renovate the temple. This is the gospel: God offers himself as a sufficient sacrifice to save mankind. (5) The holy Christian church (and each member of it) is the temple of God because Christians are "a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit," who graciously called them to saving faith in Christ. (6) God's Word does not say that all selling by the church is sinful. Nonetheless, extreme caution must be used so that scriptural stewardship principles are not violated, proper stewardship by God's people is not hindered, the focus and purpose of worship is not lost, and the church's mission is not distorted among its people or those of the world. (7) Like the disciples, we don't always understand God's Word. However, we too will not dismiss his Word but will remember it and seek understanding of it and confirmation in the rest of Scripture.

Prayer

O Immanuel, God with us, as you came to dwell on earth, dwell in our hearts by the power of your Spirit so that we may always be the temple of God. Amen.