

The Cleansing of the Temple

Matthew 21:12-17



New Testament 2
Part 2: Jesus the Master Teacher

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 2 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "And He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," but you have made it a "den of thieves"'" (Matthew 21:13).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Here's the Church"](#)
- ["The Lord is in His Holy Temple"](#)
- ["A Happy Place"](#)
- ["The Acts of Worship"](#)
- ["This Little Christian Light of Mine"](#)
- ["I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be scriptural.]
- [Miracles & Teachings of Jesus](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "N.T. 2 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- Apologetics Press' [Bible Timeline](#)
- "Summary of the Bible" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- "Matthew Chapter Summary" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- ["Map of New Testament World"](#) (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- ["Map of Palestine"](#) (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- Boyhood and Early Ministry A Beka picture set (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, *not*



the lesson book)

- Poster of ways we can worship and things that can keep us from worship
- Poster or pictures of the Temple

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

We worship God to show our love for Him. Our actions and attitudes when we worship are very important.

LESSON STARTS HERE

TEACHING ALERTS:



- Contrary to what many other religious groups often think, the “church” is not the building but the people who worship in it (i.e., Christians). Christians are, themselves, the Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). See the NOTE in the Sunday morning lesson for further discussion of this point.

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week we studied about Jesus feeding multitudes of people. We can learn so much from studying the life of Jesus. He is the best Teacher. Today, we are going to learn about Jesus visiting the Temple and not being happy about what He saw when He got there. We are going to learn about how important our worship to God really is!

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

There are people all around us that want us to believe that it doesn't matter **how** we worship God, as long as we **are** worshipping God. The Bible (and therefore, God) gives us exactly what we're supposed to do to worship God and how we are to worship Him. It was the same during the time of Jesus. The Jews knew exactly what they were supposed to do, but some had started to do what they wanted instead of what God wanted.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Early in Jesus' ministry, He had visited the Temple in Jerusalem for the Passover Feast (John 2:13-17). [See notes on the Temple at the end of Wednesday's lesson.] (Younger children might understand that the Temple was a special place to worship.) He was very angry at what He saw: business being carried on throughout the Temple courtyard (i.e., the Court of the Gentiles), making it look like a marketplace instead of a place to worship God. There were people selling animals for sacrifices and moneychangers at tables. Jesus made a whip of braided cords and drove out the animals. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers and poured their money out on the pavement. But what Jesus did was temporary. The men who sold the animals and the **moneychangers** came back.



NOTE: Moneychangers: Jews were required to give a one-half shekel coin to the priests to help maintain the Temple. If they had “common” or “Gentile” coins, they had to exchange the coins. The moneychangers were like bankers who sat in the Temple and exchanged money—for a profit. Moneychangers were often dishonest and took advantage of people who came to worship. The priests also benefited from this business. Some commentators estimate that the High Priest may have gained (in today’s dollars) \$300,000 a year or more.

For younger children, you might describe moneychangers as people who were like bankers. People would give them money and get change back. Sometimes these “bankers” did not tell the truth and they took more than what they were supposed to. And further, they should not have been conducting business in the Lord’s Temple.

2. The priests supported this business in the Temple courtyard because they also made money from it. This kind of market probably began as a convenience for Jews who traveled long distances to worship at the Temple. But over time, greedy men turned the convenience into just a way to make money. The Jews who made money from this money exchange system were not interested in using the Temple as a place to teach or to encourage. They did not think of the Temple as a holy place.
3. About three years later, during the last week of Jesus’ life, He rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey. He was very well-known since He had performed many miracles and preached to multitudes of people during those three years. Thousands of people were in Jerusalem for the Passover, and excited crowds of people lined the road, shouting words of praise as He passed by them. He went to the Temple to worship; it was His final opportunity to observe Passover. Jesus must have been brokenhearted to see that the moneychangers and merchants had set up their businesses again in the Temple courtyard.
4. Once again, Jesus turned over their tables and made the merchants leave the Temple courtyard. He would not let anyone carry things to sell through the Temple either. He told the moneychangers and merchants again that they had made the Temple (“God’s house”) a “**den of thieves**.” Once again, many people saw Jesus clean out the Temple, including many Jewish leaders. The chief priests and leaders of the Jews did not like Jesus telling them how to do things or His claiming to be the Son of God. They resented His popularity among the people. So they looked for ways to “destroy Him.”



NOTE: A “den of thieves” is a place where animals or thieves can hide or escape. Jesus called them “**thieves**” because, just like a thief, they were stealing. They were not only stealing money from people, but these men were stealing honor, respect, and money from God. Jewish leaders and merchants tried to appear religious (Matthew 23:27-28) while trying to hide their unholy attitudes and impure hearts.

5. Jesus continued to come to the Temple, day after day, to teach anyone who would listen. He knew that this would be His last week before His death, and He wanted to use every opportunity to tell people about God and how God wanted them to live. How the people worshipped was very important to Jesus because worship is one very important way to show love for God.

6. While we do not have a special, God-ordained worship building like the Temple today, how we worship today is still very important to God. Do we come to worship unprepared (stay up too late Saturday night; forget to bring Bibles; don't do assigned memory work; etc.)? Do we fuss and complain about "having to go to church"? Do we pay attention during worship services, or do we talk, pass notes, play, etc.? If we aren't coming to the assembly and Bible class with the right attitudes, we are robbing God of love and respect—just like the Jews did in the Temple courtyard. Jesus feels the same way about our attitudes as He did about the Jews who were making money there.



NOTE: Under the Old Testament system, the Temple was a physical location set aside by God for worship, including sacrifice. The Jews were required to travel to that location in Jerusalem three times each year to worship. This made the Temple a special place in God's sight—a site not to be profaned with greed and sin. Under the New Testament system, there is no physical Temple. Instead, God lives in the heart of Christians, whose bodies are described as the Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The "church building" is not the equivalent of the Temple. The Christian worship assembly can be held in many places (cf. John 4:20-24), including places where business is conducted at other times. This was not the case with the Temple, which was not to be profaned with greedy businessmen seeking to extort money from brethren.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article "[Chronology and the Cleansing of the Temple](#)" by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the allegation that the Bible contradicts itself regarding the time frame of the Temple cleansing event.



NOTE: See Dave Miller's "[Pleasing God in Worship](#)," [Surrendering to His Lordship](#), and [Piloting the Strait](#) for a studies on the importance of worshipping according to God's plan.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Keys](#).

Ages 2-5:

- "[The Temple Coloring Sheet](#)" (provided in activity sheets)
- For each child provide several heart-shaped cutouts onto which he/she can color and glue pictures of parts of worship. Make small booklets titled, "I show love for God in worship."
- "Getting Their Attention: Critter Calls" (Can be used in place of the INTRODUCTION to the lesson.): Before class, make a tape with animal sounds on it. (They don't have to be authentic; you can make your own sounds; NOTE: only include sounds for those animals that were suitable for sacrifice under the Old Law.) Have the children close their eyes. Tell them they are going on a walk with you to discover some animals. Give them a couple of clues about each animal, such as where they are hiding (on land or in water), whether they are furry or smooth-skinned, what color they are, etc. Then play the recording of the animal's sound. After they have guessed correctly, move on to the next one. Discuss that Jesus and His

disciples heard lots of animal noises. The only problem was that the sounds were coming from the Temple, where they were being sold for profit rather than sacrifice.

1st-2nd Graders:

- Put the words of the memory verse on cards and mix them up. Make three or four sets of these cards, depending on the size of your class. Divide the class into teams, and let the kids put the words in the correct word order.
- For each child provide several heart-shaped cutouts onto which he/she can color and glue pictures of parts of worship. Make small booklets titled, “I show love for God in worship.”
- “Getting Their Attention: Critter Calls” (Can be used in place of the INTRODUCTION to the lesson.): Before class, make a tape with animal sounds on it. (They don’t have to be authentic; you can make your own sounds; NOTE: only include sounds for those animals that were suitable for sacrifice under the Old Law.) Have the children close their eyes. Tell them they are going on a walk with you to discover some animals. Give them a couple of clues about each animal, such as where they are hiding (on land or in water), whether they are furry or smooth-skinned, what color they are, etc. Then play the recording of the animal’s sound. After they have guessed correctly, move on to the next one. Discuss that Jesus and His disciples heard lots of animal noises. The only problem was that the sounds were coming from the Temple, where they were being sold for profit rather than sacrifice.
- [“Jesus Cleaned Out the Temple”](#) fill-in-the blank and crossword puzzle (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Worship is Important”](#) activity sheet (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Have the children read Matthew 21.
- Put the words of the memory verse on cards and mix them up. Make three or four sets of these cards, depending on the size of your class. Divide the class into teams, and let kids put the words in the correct word order.
- Review/discuss emotions that Jesus showed in previous lessons (e.g., sorrow, grief, compassion) and the reasons He demonstrated those emotions. Discuss how He showed anger in today’s lesson, but He did not lose control, nor did He act inappropriately. Our emotions, as humans, are from God. There’s nothing wrong with showing emotions. The trouble begins when people let their emotions get out of control (discuss Ephesians 4:26). Discuss times when they have seen others (or themselves) lose control of their emotions. Discuss what we can do to be in better control.
- [“Jesus Cleaned Out the Temple”](#) fill-in-the blank and crossword puzzle (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Worship is Important”](#) activity sheet (provided in activity sheets)

FINGERPLAYS:

“HERE IS THE CHURCH”

Author: Unknown*

“Here is the Church building,”

(Fold hands together so that fingers are hidden inside, with thumbs pressed together and pointing straight up)

“And here is the steeple!”

(Raise index fingers and put tips together to form a tall triangle)

“Open the doors,”
(Separate thumbs)

“And see all the people!”
(Turn hands “inside out,” to reveal ten fingers interlaced and wriggling.)

SONGS:

“A HAPPY PLACE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “The Farmer in the Dell”)

I like to go to church.
It’s a happy place to be.
My brothers and my sisters,
And my mom and dad and me.

I like to see my friends,
Come walking down the aisle.
I’m happy when they nod to me,
And smile a great big smile.

Our teacher’s nice and kind.
She teaches us to mind.
She tells us about Jesus,
And how we can be kind.

I like to go to church,
It’s a happy place to be.
I know that you’ll be happy,
If you come and go with me.

“THE ACTS OF WORSHIP” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Mary had a Little Lamb”)

Let us sing the acts of worship, acts of worship, acts of worship.
Let us sing the acts of worship, there are five in all.

Singing, giving, praying, and preaching, praying and preaching, praying and preaching;
Singing, giving, praying, and preaching,
And the Lord’s Sup-per.

“I’VE GOT THE JOY, JOY, JOY, JOY DOWN IN MY HEART” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Traditional*

I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart.

I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. (Where?)

Down in my heart to stay.

CHORUS:

And I’m so happy,

So very happy.

I’ve got the love of Jesus in my heart,

Down in my heart,

And I’m so happy,

So very happy.

I’ve got the love of Jesus in my heart.

I’ve got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart....

(CHORUS)

I’ve got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus, down in my heart...

(CHORUS)

“THIS LITTLE CHRISTIAN LIGHT OF MINE” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: See Internet)

(Hold up finger and move in circle motion while singing.)

This little Christian light of mine,

I’m gonna let it shine.

This little Christian light of mine,

I’m gonna let it shine.

This little Christian light of mine,

I’m gonna let it shine,

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

All around the neighborhood,

I’m gonna let it shine.

All around the neighborhood,

I’m gonna let it shine.

All around the neighborhood,

I’m gonna let it shine,

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel? No!

I’m gonna let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel? No!

I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a bushel? No!
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Won't let Satan [blow on finger] it out.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Won't let Satan [blow on finger] it out.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Won't let Satan [blow on finger] it out.
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, all the time let it shine.

“THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE”

[See Internet for words and tune]

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

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The Cleansing of the Temple

Matthew 21:12-17



New Testament 2
Part 2: Jesus the Master Teacher

WEDNESDAY EVENING

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

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MEMORY WORK:

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

We worship God to show our love for Him. Our actions and attitudes when we worship are very important.

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

- Briefly review Sunday morning's lesson (see [N.T. 2 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
- Talk more about the parts of New Testament worship and why it is so important that we (1) worship in biblical ways, (2) are on our best behaviors, and (3) have the right attitudes. Discuss some actions that would not be our best behaviors and/or showing the right attitudes.
- Put pictures of poor behavior and good behavior on the table or on the board. Let the children put a happy face on the good behavior and sad faces on bad behavior shown during worship services.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

- Briefly review Sunday morning's lesson (see [N.T. 2 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
- [N.T. 2 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under "N.T. 2 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- Talk more about the parts of New Testament worship and why it is so important that we (1) worship in biblical ways, (2) are on our best behaviors, and (3) have the right attitudes. Discuss some actions that would not be our best behaviors and/or showing the right attitudes.
- Read some or all of the Scriptures upon which we base our worship.
 - PREACHING AND LORD'S SUPPER—Acts 20:7
 - CONTRIBUTION—1 Corinthians 16:2
 - SINGING—Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:15
 - ATTENDANCE—Hebrews 10:25
 - PRAYING—1 Corinthians 14:15-16; 1 Timothy 2:8
 - ORDERLY—1 Corinthians 14:40
 - MALE LEADERS—1 Timothy 2:8,11-14; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Discuss some things that other religious groups do during worship service that are not found in Scripture. Discuss why these things are not pleasing to God (Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Matthew 15:8-9; Acts 4:2; John 4:24; John 17:17).

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

TEACHING ALERTS:

- Contrary to what many other religious groups often think, the "church" is not the building but the people who worship in it (i.e., Christians). Christians are, themselves, the Temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). See the NOTE in the Sunday morning lesson for further discussion of this point.



The following study on the Temple(s) would be good for students beginning in 1st or 2nd grade and any pictures or diagrams you can find would be useful. During this discussion, emphasize that during the Old Testament, the place of worship was very important. Under the New Testament it does not matter where we worship, but how we worship is very important.

ADDITIONAL STUDY NOTES ON THE TEMPLE(S) IN JERUSALEM

By Terry Bagents

The Temple was a building dedicated to the worship of God, taking the place of the Tabernacle, which was the focal point for Judaism from the time of the Wilderness Wanderings. The Temple was also called “the House of God” and “the House of Yahweh.”

There were actually 3 temples built in Jerusalem:

1. Solomon’s Temple: Plans and arrangements for the first temple were made by King David (1 Chronicles 22), but the Temple was actually built by his son Solomon over a period of seven years. The Temple was built on Mount Moriah, the same place where Abraham offered Isaac and the place where David made offerings to the Lord (2 Samuel 24:18-25).

The blueprints for Solomon’s Temple were copied from the original tabernacle, but the dimensions were doubled. The building process was considered such a holy undertaking that no hammers were used in its construction. Noise was kept to a minimum (1 Kings 6:7). It was very ornate; filled with treasures and gold.

Solomon’s Temple was plundered for treasure several times and was finally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. It had stood for over 400 years to that point.

2. Zerubbabel’s Temple: This temple was modeled after the first one. It was larger but not as ornate or beautiful, nor did it have all of the furnishings of the original. Ancient Jewish literature (the Mishna) says that the second temple did not have an ark in the Holy of Holies and no sacred fire for the lighting of the candlesticks or burning incense. Since there was no ark in the Holy of Holies, when the high priest entered that empty room on the Day of Atonement, he set the burning censor on a stone.

This Temple was built under very adverse conditions. A group of Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem from captivity to begin the rebuilding of that city in general and the Temple in particular. There was a lapse of about 16 years when no work was done because of persecution from neighboring peoples (Ezra 4:1-24). It was dedicated in 516 B.C. and stood until the time of Herod the Great.

3. Herod’s Temple: This temple was built over a period of 46 years (John 2:20). Herod the Great built the third temple to gain the support and approval of the Jews over whom he ruled. Herod’s temple was much more elaborate than the previous one. In fact, it was in the process of construction or repairs from 19 B.C. until 62-64 A.D. It was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. Shortly thereafter, Caesar Hadrian built a temple to Jupiter on the same site. Today, “The Dome of the Rock,” a sacred site for Muslims, stands on the site believed to be where Herod’s temple stood.

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See Sunday morning’s lesson.

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