

Jesus Cleansed the Temple

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19

MAIN POINT: Jesus drove out the people who were misusing the temple.

KEY PASSAGE: Luke 4:18

2 **BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why do believers share the Lord's Supper?

Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

KIDS WORSHIP

- Countdown
- Introduce the session (2 min.)
- Big picture question (1 min.)
- Giant timeline (1 min.)
- Tell the Bible story (10 min.)
- Christ connection
- Group demonstration (5 min.)
- Review (4 min.)
- Key passage (5 min.)
- Group game (5–10 min.)
- Sing and offering (3–12 min.)
- Missions (6 min.)
- Announcements (2 min.)
- Prayer (2 min.)
- Additional idea

Leader BIBLE STUDY

In preparation for the Passover feast, Jesus made His triumphal entry to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple there. Herod the Great completely rebuilt the temple in 20–18 B.C. as part of his architectural projects. The temple was surrounded by walls and gates, with specific places for Gentiles, women, and men to worship God and offer sacrifices. The temple was a symbol of God's presence

among His people.

When Jesus entered the Court of the Gentiles, He was furious to see people buying and selling in the temple. Animal sacrifices were required for participation in the temple. For many worshipers traveling from all over the Roman Empire to take part in Passover, it was easier to purchase unblemished animals for sacrificing in the Court of the Gentiles. There, they also exchanged foreign currency for the temple taxes and offerings. So why was Jesus angry at the people?

The merchants buying and selling in the temple were treating the temple as a market or bazaar, not like the house of prayer for all nations that God had intended for it to be. (See Isa. 56:7.) The money changers' prices were so exorbitant, they were practically robbing the people. (Mark 11:17) On top of that, people were using the temple courts as a shortcut to get to their businesses. The Gentiles who wished to worship God in peace were surrounded by greed and extortion.

Jesus threw out the merchants and money changers. He was committed to honoring God and did not believe the temple should be used as a marketplace. The chief priests and the scribes saw what happened, and they wanted to destroy Jesus. (Luke 19:47)

These events led up to Jesus' death and resurrection, and now we do not need to go to a temple to meet with God. Jesus came as God's presence among us (John 1:14) and to be the final sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. We gather with the church to worship Him together.

Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://www.gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit <http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject>.

2

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use sound effects:** As you tell the story, pause at appropriate points to gently shake a cup of coins. Play sound effects of farm animals after telling about the animals being sold. Use the sounds to enhance the story, not distract from it.
- **Set the stage:** Before the kids arrive, place an overturned table, tipped chairs, scattered papers, and more at the teaching area. As kids arrive, ask them what might have happened.

Jesus Cleansed the Temple

Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19

It was the week of Passover. Jesus, His followers, and many other Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate.

Jesus and His disciples went into the temple area. What Jesus saw made Him angry. In the area around the temple, people were doing things they were not supposed to be doing. Some were buying and selling animals for sacrifices—animals like oxen, sheep, and doves.

Other people had set up tables, and they were exchanging money. The Jews had to pay a tax at the temple, and they needed to have the right kind of money. So the people at the tables traded for the money accepted at the temple.

And still other people were carrying supplies through the temple area, using it as a shortcut to get from one side of the city to the other. This was not what the temple was for!

Jesus made those people leave. He pushed over the tables of the money changers, and He pushed over the chairs of the people selling doves. Jesus did not allow people to carry supplies through the area around the temple. He wanted the people to learn something important. **Jesus said, “Is it not written, My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?”**

Jesus told the people, **“You have made this temple into a den of thieves!”**

Not only were the people wrong for doing business there, they were not fair in the way they did business. They charged people too much money. **They were misusing the**

temple—God’s house. Jesus was right to be angry!

The religious leaders saw that the people were amazed at the things Jesus taught and at the miracles He did.

Every day, Jesus went to the temple to teach people about God. People who were blind came to Jesus, and He healed them. People who could not walk came to Jesus, and He healed them too. **Children began shouting in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David!”**

The religious leaders did not like what was happening. “Do You hear what these children are saying?” they asked Jesus.

“Yes,” Jesus said. “Have you never read the Scripture that says, ‘You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and babies?’”

The religious leaders were afraid of Jesus, so they started looking for a way to kill Him. That evening, Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem. They went to the nearby city of Bethany and spent the night there.

Christ Connection: When Jesus cleared the dishonest people from the temple, He showed His commitment to honoring God. The temple was supposed to be a place where people could pray and worship God. Jesus was going to die on the cross to take away people’s sins so anyone who trusted in Him could come to God.