

**7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)****Lesson Plan:** Cleansing the Temple (Luke 19:45-46)**Learning Goals:** Students will evaluate Jesus' response to the moneychangers in the temple and will seek to illustrate examples of this kind of behavior in the church today.**Question:** In your opinion, what is the wrong way to express your anger? What do you think is the right way? (or Alternative Activity)

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

Activity: "Bible Balderdash"

Item needed: Bible Dictionary, notecards, pen/pencil

The teacher will use the dictionary to find the definition of obscure and outrageous words and names from the Bible. Break the class into three teams. For each round, read and spell the word so that each team can write it down. Give the team a few minutes to write a phony (but believable) definition for the word. They should write it down on the notecard and give it to you. Then you will shuffle the papers and read aloud all the definitions including the correct one, which you have written down on a notecard. By raising their hands, students will vote for the correct definition. Award one point to each team that guessed the right definition and three points to any team that got the other team to vote for their phony definition. That motivates teams to try and fool others by writing convincing definitions.

Follow Up Questions:

- Which phony definitions fooled the most people?
- How did you know which one was correct?
- How do people in real life trick people using words that mean something different than what they think it means?
- In our lesson today, we'll learn about people who redefined what God's temple was to be used for. In what ways do people misunderstand the real purpose of going to a church or temple?

**Read Luke 19:45-46**

Read Stein p. 187-188

Coins:

- Every year during Passover, every adult Jewish male had to pay a temple tax of 1/2 shekel. (Only one available without idolatrous image and terminology was the Tyrian silver half-shekel - technically the silver didrachma of Tyre)
- Tables of moneychangers were set up to exchange your currency to a non-pagan coin - for a fee, of course.

Animals:

- Jews who needed to bring a sacrifice often did not bother to find their own spotless animal.
- Finding your own spotless animal sacrifice was difficult but this practice of selling animals by the temple turned the temple into something like a bazaar or stable.
- At the temple, spotless animals were sold to make the sacrificial system “user friendly”

Jesus:

- He see the animals, smells them, and hears their loud noise.
- He sees the greedy money changers, taking advantage of God’s temple.
- He cleansed the temple because it was being used for commercial purposes rather than for worship.
- Jesus demonstrated his authority over the temple in this act.
- Jesus pronounced judgment on the temple itself (it will be destroyed in AD 70)
- Jesus has “righteous indignation.” He has emotions but he is not carried away by them.

(Read 20:1-8; 19-47)

In groups of 3 or 4, discuss and find 5 examples in our culture of “moneychanging.” How does our current church try to make the gospel “user friendly?” List them and describe your answer. Turn them in at the end of class with the names of all your group members on the sheet.

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**Lesson Summary/Review:**

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Silver Didrachma of Tyre
- Why did Jesus turn over the tables in the Temple and get so angry when he arrived in Jerusalem?

death of Jesus was inevitable because of the hostility of official Judaism toward him.

### **The Cleansing of the Temple**

The temple of Jerusalem in Jesus' day was a magnificent structure. Bordered on the east and west by the Kidron and Tyropean valleys, on the south by the old city of David, and to the north by the fortress of Antonia, the temple occupied an area of more than 170,000 square yards. The area did not form a perfect square but was trapezoidal in shape, with the north and west sides being longer than the south and east.

The temple area was the largest such site in the ancient world. The platform was surrounded by massive walls that supported the large amount of material used to level the area as well as the great weight of the temple and its other structures. The walls descended more than fifty feet below the level of the street and rested on bedrock. They also towered more than eighty feet above street level. Many of the stones used in the wall were enormous. Some of the stones visible today are forty feet long and weigh more than a hundred tons. Josephus mentions even larger stones used in the construction of the temple, some as large as forty-five by five by six cubits (*War* 5.5.6 [5.224]). Elsewhere he describes them as twenty-five by eight by twelve cubits (*Ant.* 15.11.3 [15.392]). (A cubit was about eighteen inches.) Even the lesser dimension would mean that these stones were enormous in size.

The temple of Jesus' day was the result of continual work and alteration. After the Solomonic temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., it was rebuilt by the returning exiles led by Zerubbabel in 538 B.C. This temple was continually modified, but the most influential and monumental work occurred under the rule of Herod the Great. In 20 B.C. he began a massive rebuilding of the entire platform, walls and temple. Some ten thousand workmen, a thousand wagons and a thousand priests were involved in the rebuilding (Josephus *Ant.* 15.11.2 [15.390]). These priests were specially trained in various construction techniques so that they could perform the necessary work in the sacred areas of the temple, which were off limits to the general public. Work continued on the temple after Herod's death until shortly before its destruction in A.D. 70.

The temple was mostly covered with gold. What was not covered consisted of bright white stone. The roof contained gold spikes to pre-

vent the birds from defiling it. In bright sunlight the temple reflected the sun so brilliantly that one could not look directly at it. The magnificence of the temple was such that it could be compared favorably with any of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Numerous gates gave access to the temple area. From the south were Huldah Gates 1 and 2; on the north side was the North Gate; from the west were what is now called Warren's Gate, Barclay's Gate, Wilson's Arch and the West Gate; the Golden Gate gave access from the east. Each gate led people into a large area called the Court of the Gentiles. This made up most of the temple area. Around the walls of the temple were covered walkways or porticoes. In the middle of the temple area was a stone fence or balustrade that led into the temple proper. This fence marked the end of the Court of the Gentiles and separated it from the inner court of the temple. The stone balustrade was about four and a half feet high. All the gates leading through the balustrade into the inner court of the temple had inscriptions written in Greek and Latin warning non-Jews that they were prohibited upon pain of death from entering.

Upon passing through the balustrade one encountered a tier of fourteen steps that led to another wall. This wall was more than thirty-five feet high. Nine gates led through it into another courtyard area. The eastern third of this courtyard area was called the Women's Court. The larger western part of the courtyard was called the Court of Israel (the men's court). Even as Gentiles were not allowed into the inner court of the temple, so women were not allowed into the Court of Israel. From the Court of Israel one then entered the Court of the Priests, which contained the altar of burnt offering and the temple proper. The latter, proceeding from east to west, contained the porch leading into the temple, the holy place and the holy of holies.

As Jesus entered the temple area, probably through the Golden Gate facing the Mount of Olives, he saw in the Court of the Gentiles the selling of sacrificial animals and the exchanging of money. Each year around the time of the Passover, every adult Jewish male had to pay a temple tax of a half-shekel (compare Mt 17:24-27). This was based on Exodus 30:13-15:

This is what each one who is registered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the LORD. Each one who is registered,



### THE TEMPLE MOUNT IN THE TIME OF JESUS

Herod's Temple Mount was the focal point of Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. Sitting atop Jerusalem's north-eastern ridge, it occupied one-sixth of the city's area. Under Herod the Great, the Temple Mount's foundation was expanded to encompass approximately 1.5 million square feet (140,000 square meters). Its foundational walls were constructed using gigantic stones, the largest found being 45 feet long, 11.5 feet high, and 12 feet thick (13.7 m by 3.5 m by 3.7 m).

Wilson's Arch formed a bridge over the Tyropoeon Valley below, leading from the Temple Mount to the Hasmonean Palace. A section of the western wall south of Wilson's Arch (187 feet/57 m long, sometimes called the Walling Wall) has been a place of prayer for Jews for the last 700 years. The lowest seven stone courses, which can be seen at ground level, are Herodian.

The early square Temple Mount preserved its identity as a separate area with its own walls and gates.

Robinson's Arch and its massive stairway led from the Tyropoeon Street below up to the Royal Stoa.

The Double Gate and its monumental stairway

A ritual bath-house for pilgrims to cleanse before entering the temple precincts

A Council House for legal proceedings

The Triple Gate and its stairway

Small shops, which had a narrow street built above them, were built along the southern wall of the Temple Mount.

The Antonia Fortress was where Herod (and later the Romans) commanded the garrison in order to protect the temple and to suppress religiously motivated rebellion.

Herod's Temple (for a detailed cutaway drawing, see p. 1343)

The Court of the Women was the farthest point of the inner temple complex that women could enter.

The Pool of Israel was probably used to wash sacrificial animals before they were led to the Temple Mount.

The Golden Gate, then known as the Shushan Gate

Stairs descended from the Muster Gate into the Kidron Valley and eventually went up to the Mount of Olives.

The eastern city wall of Jerusalem

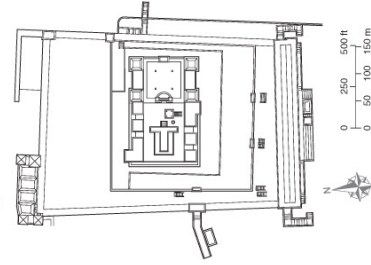
Solomon's Porch, the portico built along the eastern wall, was a place of congregation (cf. John 10:23; Acts 3:11).

The soring (a low, latticed screen or railing) prohibited Gentiles or non-purified Jews from entering the temple courts.

The Court of the Gentiles was the area between the soring and the outer walls of the early square Temple Mount.

The Royal Stoa was a 912-foot-long (278 m) portico, containing four rows of 40 columns. The Sanhedrin met in the central apse after C. A.D. 30. This may have been where Jesus cleansed the temple. The southeast corner overlooking the Kidron Valley created a drop of 140 feet (43 m) to the street below, and 300 feet (91 m) to the valley below. This may be the "pinnacle of the temple" mentioned in Matt. 4:5 and Luke 4:9.

#### Temple Mount Architectural Plan



0 250 500 ft  
0 50 100 150 m

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