

LESSON 8

# Jesus Cleanses the Temple

JOHN 2:13-25



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD DESIRES PEOPLE WHO WORSHIP FROM THEIR HEARTS

**LESSON SNAPSHOT**

**1. OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

**2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read John 2:13–25 from the Scriptures or read story 86, “Jesus Cleanses the Temple,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**3. OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Have Jesus Tell the Story**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Jesus costume—a flat sheet for a tunic, a rope belt, sandals

**4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION**

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

**5. OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 20 MIN**

**Fulfilling the Promise**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper and pencil
- ✓ Bibles—one for each student

**6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

**7. ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Drawing the Temple**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pencil and paper

**8. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

**9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 10 MIN**

**True Faith Is in the Heart**

**TOTAL 75 MIN**

## PREPARING TO TEACH

## TEACHING POINTS

**God’s house is for worship alone**—The Passover was at hand, and many Israelites needed to purchase animals for sacrifices. Those with foreign currency needed to change their money. The moneychangers and merchants set up shop right in the temple. The temple was the center of Jewish life. It was the place where God’s presence lived among the people. These shopkeepers were more interested in making money than worshiping God. When Jesus arrived at the temple and saw that it was now a marketplace, he became righteously angry. To help the people see their sin, he made a whip of cords, drove the shopkeepers and their animals away, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers. He was trying to help them see that God’s house was not a marketplace. Just being in the temple didn’t mean you were praising God.

**The Jews demanded a sign**—The Jews demanded a sign from Jesus to prove his authority for clearing out the temple. Jesus answered them by saying that if they destroyed the temple, he would raise it up in three days. It had taken forty-six years to build the temple, and it wasn’t yet finished! It wasn’t until after the resurrection that the disciples realized Jesus was talking about the temple of his body. Even though the Jews of that time had Jesus right in front of them, they still rejected him. And what greater sign could one ask for than to see Jesus, the King of Glory and Savior of the world?

**Jesus could see the motive of their hearts**—When Jesus drove the merchants and moneychangers out of the temple, he called it his “Father’s house.” The Jews demanded a sign of his authority to do this. After cleansing the temple, Jesus remained in Jerusalem for the Passover. In Jerusalem he performed signs, and many believed in his name, but Jesus did not entrust himself to them because he knew their hearts. Just because you say you believe, doesn’t mean you are trusting God in your heart. Though the people said they believed, Christ knew their hearts were cold toward him.

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

*Animals in the Temple*

It might seem strange at first glance for merchants to be selling animals at the temple, but when you remember that people came to the temple to sacrifice animals for their sins it made sense. Those in the city who didn’t raise animals had to purchase them to take to the priest. That is why there were so many shopkeepers there. Unbeknownst to them, Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God was present—he was the only sacrifice they needed. When he said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19), the people didn’t realize Jesus was talking about himself. Jesus was the better temple and the better sacrifice.

## Where Is the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Only after his resurrection did Jesus' disciples understand what he was talking about when he told the Jews that he could rebuild the temple in three days (John 2:22). People hurled insults at Jesus during his crucifixion, mocking what he said about the temple (Matthew 27:39–40).

Jesus' resurrection validates his ministry claims. His resurrection ultimately proves he is Lord over all, including life and death. The resurrection proves that Jesus was the Son of God and that his sacrificial death on the cross broke the curse of death and sin for all who put their faith in him (Romans 6:4; 8:11).

### THE LESSON

#### OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

#### BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

Read John 2:13–25 from the Scriptures or read story 86, "Jesus Cleanses the Temple," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

#### OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN

##### Have Jesus Tell the Story

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Jesus costume—a flat sheet for a tunic, a rope belt, sandals

Dress up and tell the story from Jesus' perspective. Emphasize the disrespect of the merchants and money changers, who were interested in making money but not interested in worship.

Explain that the people needed to purchase animals to sacrifice, but that the business should not have taken place in the temple. Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Why were animals being sold in the temple?**  
*(Animals were required to be sacrificed for the people's sins.)*
- **Why did they need to sacrifice animals?**  
*(God had commanded the Israelites to sacrifice animals as an offering to cover their sins.)*
- **Why don't we sacrifice animals today to cover our sins?**  
*(Jesus, the perfect Lamb, was the final sacrifice. His death on the cross paid the penalty for everyone who places their faith and trust in him. Jesus died once to make atonement for all sins of those who follow him, so no more sacrifices are needed.)*

## TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

## OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 20 MIN

### Fulfilling the Promise

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper and pencils
- ✓ Bibles—one for each student

Pass out paper and pencils. Make sure everyone has a Bible and have the students turn to Malachi 3:1–4 and read it aloud together. Then have them each write out how this prophecy is fulfilled by Jesus' cleansing of the temple and how it might also apply to Jesus' second coming. (Commentators see Jesus' cleansing of the temple as a fulfillment of this prophecy, which says the Lord will come to his temple to purify it. The phrase, "But who can endure the day of his coming" in Malachi 3:2 refers to his second coming and the final judgment.)

If time permits, go through the same exercise with the following Scriptures: Joel 2:11; Matthew 25:31–34; 2 Peter 3:10–14.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Drawing the Temple**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pencil and paper

Draw a picture of Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers.

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 10 MIN**

**True Faith Is in the Heart**

Tell the story of Blondin who repeatedly crossed Niagara Falls on a tightrope. (Look up Blondin on the Internet for more information and to download photos to show the class [<http://www.notablebiographies.com/supp/Supplement-A-Bu-and-Obituaries/Blondin-Charles.html>].)

Blondin would draw crowds to watch his amazing death-defying feats in walking on a tightrope across Niagara Falls. Often he would carry various objects and do different tricks. One day he pointed to the crowd and asked them, "Who here believes I can go across the falls with a man on my back?" All the people cheered Blondin on saying, "Yes, we believe!"

Blondin turned to the crowd and then asked the more difficult question, "Who is willing to get on my back?" Of course the people who were so quick to believe refused to get on Blondin's back. You see, they said they believed but they didn't really believe enough to trust their lives to him.

In the same way, we can say we believe in Jesus but not really live for Christ. That's what happened in John 2:23. When the crowd saw Jesus' amazing feats they cheered, "We believe."

It was easy for them to say they believed, just like the crowds cheered Blondin on. But they were not ready to follow and obey Jesus. That is why Jesus did not entrust himself to them. Jesus knew that his journey was leading to death on the cross and these folks would be unwilling to follow him. It is much easier to say we believe in Jesus than it is to dedicate our lives to obeying him and following him.

■ **How do we know if we truly believe?**

*(If we are true followers of Jesus our lives will match our words.)*

■ **What actions does a follower of Christ demonstrate?**

*(A follower of Jesus Christ loves Jesus. This is demonstrated by a love for his Word, a love for worship, a love for other Christians, and a desire to obey his commands.)*