

## STORY BOARD #27 (Wilma McLaughlin)

### JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

Cleaning up the temple (Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:12-25; 12:1-12; Luke 19:45-48)

This was the second cleansing of the temple by Jesus (John 2:13-23).

Jesus went directly to the temple following his Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, at which Matthew tells us “all the city was moved, saying, ‘who is this?’” (Matthew 21:10).

Suggested teaching aid: picture/diagram of the temple showing the location of the Court of the Gentiles

The outermost court of the temple, or the Court of the Gentiles, was where this incident occurred. The Court of the Gentiles completely surrounded the sacred enclosure of the temple, was four square and had a circuit of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. The Court of the Gentiles was about 15 cubits or 22-23 feet lower than the vestibule of the temple, and was paved. There were pillars rising above the Court of the Gentiles, with inscriptions warning ‘Let no gentile enter’ the sacred enclosure of the temple, - any that did trespass would bring death to themselves.

Everyone had to pass through this outer court to enter the temple, making it a convenient place for Jewish pilgrims to procure sacrificial animals, rather than bringing them along on their journey. The Sanhedrin controlled the trafficking, likely for financial benefit. There were money changers to change various coinage into Palestinian currency to pay the temple tax, along with merchants selling sacrificial animals and birds, guaranteed to be without blemish and suitable for sacrifice. The court would have been filled with the sounds and smells of a busy market. Such self serving use of the Gentile Court was rationalized as for the greater good of the devout Jews, since Gentiles were regarded as ‘unclean dogs’.

It would seem that Jesus single handedly moved the mass of people before him until the court was quiet, though some speculate that his disciples could have assisted him, coming along behind Jesus.

In the cleansing of the temple Jesus quotes two Old Testament passages:

Isaiah 56:7 ‘Even then will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer’.

Jeremiah 7:11 ‘Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?’

Corruption had invaded the holy place of God’s habitation, not simply in the form of grasping commercialism, but more importantly in terms of robbing God.

The right of the foreigner (Gentile) to have access to the temple to worship had been established by King Solomon (I Kings 8:41-43). By turning the Gentile Court into a market place, the Jewish authorities denied the Gentiles use of the only portion open to them for worship. By obstructing the one area permitted for use by Gentiles, this right had been withdrawn – making it a den of thieves by those who robbed the Gentiles of their right for unobstructed worship of God (Harrison, pg 170), and robbed God of His rightful worship.

The cleansing of the temple was not only remedial, but was also prophetic of the destruction of the temple as God’s dwelling place. It heralded the breaking down of the wall of partition that separated the Jew and Gentile, giving all unhindered access to God through Jesus.

### Moving Mountains

(Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14; 20-26)

It is normal for the fig trees in that region to begin to put forth new leaves in March and April, near the time of the Passover. Typically, the time for figs is in June. This particular fig tree must have been fully leafed out so that Jesus ‘haply’ (Mark 11:13) (or therefore) assumed it would have ripened figs on it. (Wycliffe, pg. 162).

The fig tree was a type and figure of the Jewish church to which Jesus came seeking first fruit, but found none. (Henry, pg. 527).
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The withered fig tree represented the character and state of the Jewish church, or Levitical priesthood. The fig tree was dried up from the roots – no longer suitable for food, but for fuel only. This contrasts with the beginning of the Levitical priesthood, which was established by the miracle of a dry rod that budded, blossomed and yielded fruit. This miracle signified the expiration of the priesthood – as a tree dried up overnight (Henry, 528).

‘This mountain’ referred to the Mount of Olives, located immediately east of and parallel to Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives was significant throughout the ministry of Jesus, (site of the Olivet discourse, Gethesame was a garden at the foot of the mount, and the Mount of Olives was the site of the ascension of Jesus.

Jesus uses this incident to teach on praying in faith. In verse 24, the word *believe* is in the present tense, calling for a persistent, continuing faith. The word *receive* is in the aorist tense – meaning you did receive. In other words, we are to keep on believing that God has already given us our request. *Forgive ...that your Father ... may forgive you* – is directed not to the unsaved, but to the disciples whom already were in a saving relationship with Christ. The forgiveness Jesus refers to is not the forgiveness of sin, but

the forgiveness of a father that restores fellowship. The point is that a disciple cannot pray effectively if an unforgiving spirit has broken his fellowship with God. (Wycliffe, pg.162).

The Vineyard (Matthew 21:33-45); Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19)

- Householder – represents God the Father
- Vineyard – is equated with the kingdom of God
- Hedge – means fence and was a place for the winefat – a pit for catching the wine juice
- Tower – was a combination watch tower and storage place
- Husbandmen – represent the religious leaders of Israel, such as those being addressed by Jesus
- Servant – represents Old Testament prophets; ‘they beat one, killed another and stoned another’ (Jeremiah was beaten, Isaiah was killed, Zechariah was stoned in the temple) – indicative of Old Testament persecution of the prophets
- One son, his beloved – obvious reference to Jesus
- Reverence – respect or give heed to

Husbandmen plotted among themselves, just as the Jewish leaders were plotting at that very time against Jesus (Jn. 11:47-53). From vs. 53 on, the parable changes from historic to prophetic.

Vs. 42- 44 ‘The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’ quoted Psalm 118:22, 23. Further illustrates this parable. The builders were the chief priests and elders, with oversight of the building (church). The stone (Jesus) rejected by the builders became the head of the corner, or corner stone.

The corner stone is the stone placed at the angle where two walls of a building meet, binding them together.
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Vs. 43 Nation refers to new nation of believers, Gentile and Jew alike.

Vs. 44 Christ as the ‘stone’ is revealed in a threefold way: Christ was a stumbling stone to Israel, the corner stone to the church; and the smiting stone to Gentile world domination (Daniel 2:34). (Scofield, pg 1030).

**References**  
**Storyboard 27**  
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