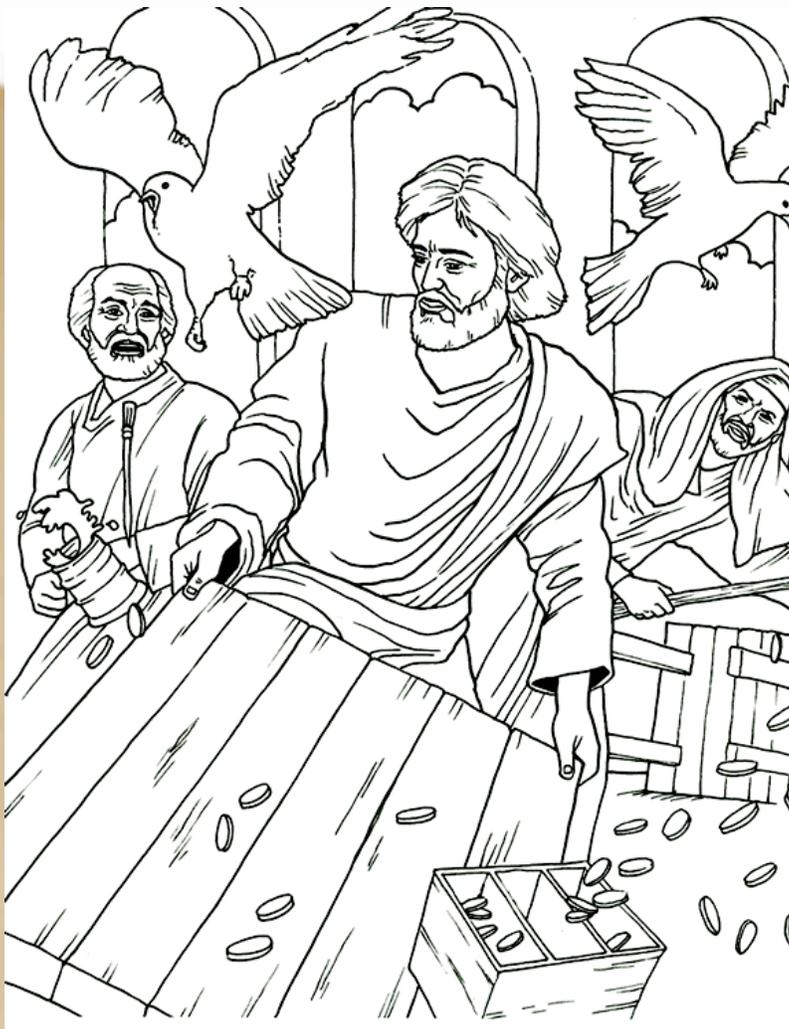


January 19, 2013

Lesson 15: Cleansing the Temple



John 2:13-25

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered

that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

Cleansing the Temple

John 2:13-25

“But he was speaking of the temple of his body.”

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The Big Story Truth: Jesus is God’s presence on earth! He is the new temple.

About This Scripture Passage: In Jesus’ day, the temple in Jerusalem was being rebuilt. The one Solomon had built was destroyed by the Babylonians, but sometime around 19 BC the people were able to begin rebuilding the temple. In this scene today, the new temple is still under construction. Even as it is still being built, though, it is being used for worship and the day that Jesus appeared in the temple was one of the biggest worship days of the whole year. This was the time when people would have been traveling from all over to come to Jerusalem and make their required sacrifices. What was going on in the temple was absolutely necessary for fulfilling the law. They would have been traveling and needing to buy the animals for sacrifice. They would have needed to exchange their foreign currencies. Jesus

overthrowing tables is about more than injustices (although there probably was that going on too). Jesus is overturning the whole temple system. And Jesus’ authority to do that is based on the fact that he is now God’s presence on earth. It used to be that the temple and the ark of the covenant were where God was present with humanity. That changed though with Jesus. Jesus is the “temple” -- he is the place where God will meet humanity.



Making the Connection: The Greek word for house is “oikos.” Perhaps our kids will remember this word from Vacation Bible School. Jesus is announcing something big in this passage. Before Jesus, God’s house was the temple. But Jesus is announcing that he is God’s “house” or God’s home among people. Jesus is God made flesh. Jesus is God’s presence with us! This was a new concept to those who were in the temple that day! Later on in the New Testament, Paul talks about our bodies also being a “temple of God” because God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit lives in us, our bodies too are temples!

What an amazing opportunity this lesson is to talk to kids about God living and breathing and moving and working in the world! God refuses to be confined to a single place or boxed into one particular spot. God is present in flesh! God is present in Jesus, and God is even present in us!

Where in the World Are We? The temple was in Jerusalem. The buying and selling would have been done in the outer courts (the Court of Gentiles) that everyone, even non-Jews, could access.

For Your Reflection:

Does hearing that your body is a temple of God change your self-image? If so, what difference does it make to you to hear these words this week? During this week and beyond, how might we encourage our children to see the holiness of their bodies?

