

Jesus and the Temple

Explanation

A strong thread runs through all four Gospels: whenever Jesus was in Jerusalem, he spent time at the temple. Jesus did not reject the idea of the temple. Instead, he desired to replace the temple system in Jerusalem with a new ritual order, a sacred way of holiness and purity. The temple was very important to Jesus.

The bar graph in chart 8-11 displays the total number of verses in the Gospels. The darker section of each bar shows the percent of verses that describe Jesus' sayings and doings in the temple at Jerusalem. While John devotes the highest percentage of writings to these themes, Luke uses thirty-one more verses describing what Jesus said and did there.

Chart 8-12 shows that the earliest Christians remembered vividly many things that Jesus said and did at the temple. All four Gospel writers remember Jesus walking and teaching in the temple. In the Synoptics, directly following his triumphal entry onto the holy mount, Jesus drove out the money changers. The temple was seen in the Jewish world as a source of God's power. From this sacred place flowed streams of living water and divine blessing. Jesus was unwilling to misuse those powers. Recollections of Jesus at the temple are even stronger in the Gospel of John, and not just at the end of Jesus' ministry as in the other Gospels, but on many occasions for Passover and on other holy celebrations.

In this light, it is instructive to connect what Jesus said with where he said it. Some of his most memorable teachings about obedience, chastity, marriage, lordship, authority, priesthood, tithing, consecration, judgment, and the afterlife were given at the temple.

References

- D. Kelly Ogden, "Jesus and the Temple," *Ensign*, April 1991, 12–19.
- Paul M. Mortensen, "The Temple Mount: The Center for Christ's Teachings and Activities in Jerusalem," *A Symposium on the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980), 142–45.

Jesus at the Temple

Gabriel there foretold the Lord's coming	Lk 1:17–19
Jesus presented there forty days after his birth	Lk 2:22
Simeon held and proclaimed the Savior	Lk 2:27–35
Anna gave thanks for Jesus' redemption	Lk 2:38
Jesus amazed the elders there at age twelve	Lk 2:42, 46
Tempted at the pinnacle of the temple	Mt 4:5–7; Lk 4:9–12
Regularly went there for Passover	Jn 2:13
Drove out merchants and their sacrificial animals	Jn 2:14–17
Encouraged payment of the temple tax	Mt 17:24–27
Cleansed man at the temple pool of Bethesda	Jn 5:14–16
At Tabernacles declared himself God's emissary	Jn 7:14, 28
There forgave a woman taken in adultery	Jn 8:2–11
Spoke in the treasury about light	Jn 8:12–20
Drove out money changers	Mt 21:12–13; Mk 11:15–19; Lk 19:45
Walked and taught there daily	Mt 21:23; 26:55; Mk 11:27; 12:35–40; 14:49; Lk 19:45–48; 20:1; 22:52; Jn 10:23
Reasoned there with the Jewish leaders	Mt 21:23–23:39; Mk 11:27–12:44; Lk 19:45–48; 21:37
Had his authority challenged	Mt 21:23; Mk 11:27–28; Lk 20:2

Gave the parable of the two sons on obedience	Mt 21:28–32
Taught of the wicked tenants’ rejection of the son	Mt 21:33–46; Mk 12:1–12; Lk 20:9–19
Gave parable of the marriage feast on chosenness	Mt 22:1–14
Was asked about what belongs to Caesar or God	Mt 22:17; Mk 12:14; Lk 20:22
Sadducees asked about marriage and the afterlife	Mt 22:24; Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28
Pharisees asked about the greatest commandment	Mt 22:36; Mk 12:28
Pharisees asked about Christ and the son of David	Mt 22:42; Mk 12:35; Lk 20:41
Jesus warned about the pride of the Scribes	Mk 12:38; Lk 20:46
Saw the widow offer her two mites	Mk 12:42; Lk 21:2
Approved Pharisaic teaching but not action	Mt 23:3
Taught his priesthood leaders to be servants	Mt 23:11
Gave eight woes upon the scribes and Pharisees regarding their exclusivity, long prayers, misleading converts, improper temple oaths, missing the spirit of tithing, having external purity only, outward appearances, and rejecting the prophets	Mt 23:13–34
Mentioned the murder of Zacharias in the temple	Mt 23:35
Lamented over the temple’s coming destruction	Mt 24:1–2; Mk 13:1–2; Lk 21:6
Spoke of the return of “the master of the house”	Mk 13:34–35
Used imagery of “my Father’s house”	Jn 14:2
Rending of the veil of the temple	Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45
Earliest Christians continue to meet there	Lk 24:53