

Jesus and the Moneychangers

Scripture Reference: [John 2:12-17](#)



Suggested Emphasis: Love God deeply and show him respect.



Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



Review Questions



Songs



Learning Activities



Other Online Resources

Story Overview:

The temple in Jerusalem represented the holiness of God to his people. Jesus came to the temple during the yearly Passover celebration only to find that the area had been turned in to a busy marketplace where people were concentrating on money instead of God. His deep love and respect for God led Jesus to take dramatic public action to show everyone the real purpose of God's house. He cleared the tables with a whip and turning them over.

Background Study:

In the Gospel of John this story follows immediately after Jesus' first miracle at the beginning stages of his ministry. The other gospels record the event as having taken place later in Jesus' ministry.

- [Matthew 21:12-13](#)
- [Mark 11:15-19](#)
- [Luke 19:45-48](#)

As recorded by John, Jesus had gone to Capernaum, the city that became a sort of headquarters for his ministry. Then he went to Jerusalem just before the Passover.

Jesus' mother and brothers accompanied him, along with his disciples. We read in [Mark 6:3](#) that Jesus had both brothers and sisters. These would have been Joseph and Mary's children born after Jesus. They could not have been older siblings because Joseph and Mary did not sleep together until after Jesus was born ([Matthew 1:24-25](#)).

Another thing that we notice is that Joseph (Mary's husband) is not mentioned. Many scholars believe that he probably died before Jesus' ministry began. As the oldest son Jesus would have had responsibilities towards his mother's care. This would explain why, on the cross, Jesus felt a need to ask his close friend John to take care of Mary ([John 19:25-27](#)).

John records this event at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The other Gospel writers record the cleansing of the temple during the last week of Jesus' life. Either there were two separate events (one at the beginning and one at the end of Jesus' ministry) or perhaps John placed the event at the beginning of his gospel to show the hypocrisy of the Jews. It also shows that the way of Jesus was in total contrast to that attitude.

All Jewish men were required to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. People from far

away were coming to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration and needed animals for the required sacrifices. It seems that the temple leaders were allowing this exchange to take place in the temple area. This area was reserved for worship of God. Jesus expected to see reverence for God and not a bunch of animals and money like a downtown market. He was outraged.

Jesus' anger was righteous because it was based on His love for the Father. He didn't care that His actions could get Him in trouble with the religious leaders. His example is one we should follow whenever we are faced with situations in which we have a chance to stand up for the right in the face of opposition.

-  [What happened before this story?](#)
-  [What happens after this story?](#)
-  [List of all Bible stories and themes on this website.](#)

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Way to Introduce the Story:

Before class place several different types of coins (foreign coins as well as the more familiar) on the table. As the children arrive show them how to make coin rubbings. Place a coin under a clean piece of paper and rub a crayon over the paper. The impression of a coin will appear. The children will probably make a lot of these impressions on their papers. "I have a question to ask you. Which is more important, worshipping God or having lots of coins? Of course worshipping God is more important than having lots of money. In today's story we are going to learn about some people that were supposed to be worshipping God. Instead of doing that they just started buying and selling things to make money. They forgot all about worshipping God."

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The Story:

Jesus and his disciples travelled from place to place teaching people about God. At the time of the special Jewish feast of Passover they traveled to Jerusalem to worship God and take part in special ceremonies at the temple. Mary, and some of his brothers went along too. They all looked forward to a special time in Jerusalem. They thought about the beautiful temple. They thought about how people would be worshipping God at the temple.

Ever since he was a young boy Jesus had been taught by his parents that the temple of God in Jerusalem was a very important place. This was a place where people came to worship God and offer sacrifices. At the temple everyone was supposed to be thinking and talking about God.

But when they arrived at the temple it did not seem as if people were there to worship God at all. The people were not treating the temple like a special place of God. Instead, the temple looked like a big market! Animals were making loud noises. Jesus heard cattle, sheep and doves. Some people were exchanging money and trying to cheat people. The people were not thinking about God at all.

Jesus was very sad and angry at the way people were treating God and God's special place. Jesus is the son of God so the temple was his Father's house. He loved his father and he loved his father's house! Jesus knew he needed to do something very drastic so that everyone would understand how serious this was.

So Jesus did something that shocked everyone. He tied cords of rope together to make a whip to swing around. Then he began swinging the rope and turning over the tables that people had put in the wrong places in the temple. He shooed the birds and animals away and caused the money that people were cheating with to fall all over the ground. Jesus said, "Get those things out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

Before this everyone was thinking about money and the market. Now, at last, people had time to stop and think about what Jesus had been teaching. It was time to love and respect God at his temple just like Jesus did.

By the time Jesus left many people were talking about him. Some had learned to love God more because of what Jesus said. Some got angry and began to say bad things about Jesus.

What would you have done if you had been there that day?

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here to download the pictures to print](#). Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. Why did the Jews go to the temple at Passover? To worship God
2. Jesus was angry because the people had turned God's house into what? A market
3. What did Jesus do to when he saw that men had turned the temple courts into a market place? He made a whip out of cords and drove out all the animals, scattered the coins of the moneychangers, and turned over their tables.

Song Suggestions:

- [Building Up The Temple](#)
- [He's Got the Whole World in His Hands](#)
- [My God is So Big!](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Bring some toy animals and money to class today and let the children put on a play to show the story.
- The moneychangers were distracting all the people from the worship of God. Discuss ways that we might distract worshipers today during Sunday assemblies. How can we help people worship God?
- Older children can look up the temple in a bible encyclopaedia and find out which areas of the temple were areas restricted to worship.
- Discuss situations where children can stand up for what is right.
- Discuss the kinds of things that make us angry and compare to the kinds of things that made Jesus angry.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "Jesus and Moneychangers" printables to print on A4 size paper](#)

[Click here for "Jesus and Moneychangers" printables to print on Letter size paper \(USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and worksheets about Jesus cleansing the temple \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Video to show children: "Jerusalem Temple at the Time of Jesus" by "Messages of Christ". Youtube video just under 2 minutes.](#)
- [Video to show children: Virtual Reconstruction Of Second Temple Temple Mount \(7 minutes 46 seconds\) from youtube](#)
- [Video: "Jesus Cleanses the Temple" by Messages of Christs. Youtube video just over 7 minutes in length. Explains deeper meanings of the event.](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/jesus-ministry/>

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