

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) John 1:14 says that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory...” 1st Corinthians 3:16-17 says that “you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you...” What is the significance (from your perspective) of God’s Spirit living inside of the you (a temple)? Share your thoughts with your group...
- B) Jesus Christ came into the Court of the Gentiles (John 2:14-16) and He saw business and commerce, doves and cattle, money and profits. He drove all of these out of the temple area with passion and aggressiveness. Are there some areas of your life Christ needs to aggressively clean up? What have you allowed to busy your life? Is there noise and clamor in the temple of your life which have drowned out the voice of God?
- C) There are profound implications for worship in what Jesus does in John 2:13-25. If worship between God and man occurs in the temple (you and me), then that means that worship has been unhinged from being in a location (like the temple, or a church building) and is found in a Person. Does this mean that worship is everywhere, all the time? Or does it mean that worship is wherever I am, all the time? Talk about it...
- D) What effect does sin have on the temple for worship? Can there be sin in a person’s life (let’s use YOU as the example), and worship -- at the same time?
- E) It says, in John 2:24-25, that Jesus knows what is in the hearts of men. He knows what needs to be cleared out and cleaned up in your temple. But this is often not enough for us to change. James 5:16 says that if we want true healing to occur in our lives we must confess our sins to each other after we have done business with God. It provides physical accountability from Christ’s body (the church) for us. Is there something you need to share with your group this week? Maybe you can open up about one area of your life (BE AUTHENTIC!) you could use some prayer and follow-up for in the weeks to come! Don’t miss the opportunity to keep that temple clean!

Cleaning House

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 8th, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**“TAKE THESE THINGS AWAY;
STOP MAKING MY FATHER’S
HOUSE A PLACE OF BUSINESS”
~ JOHN 2:16B (NASB)**

1) Jesus Goes To Jerusalem

- A) Jesus and His disciples travel “up” to Jerusalem (John 2:13). They were actually travelling South (down) to Jerusalem from Capernaum (John 2:12), because Jerusalem was considered the place of utmost importance (because of the temple) -- you always traveled “up” to it.
- B) Jesus goes into the outer temple court, the Court of the Gentiles, where the selling for sacrifices and money changing occurred (John 2:14).

2) Consuming Passion For Purity

- A) Jesus, encountering a busy marketplace designed for making money, makes a rudimentary whip and drives out the animals and pours out the coinage of the money changers, throwing their tables over and ordering the sellers to “cease and desist” (John 2:16).

B) Jesus' rebuke to the temple merchants was not about their ethical practices*, but was directed at the location of their business practices (John 2:16-17).

C) This was a direct threat to the priestly authority system, which immediately attracts attention and questions about Christ's authority (John 2:18) from the Jewish leadership.

B) The disciples did not understand or believe what Jesus was saying at the time, but came to an understanding about Him after his death and resurrection (John 2:21-22). Once again, Jesus takes the surface meaning of a situation and explains a spiritual reality (John 2:21).

C) Jesus's body replaced the temple. Instead of the temple being the center of worship, Jesus would now replace the temple and be the center (John 2:21).

3) The Heart Of The Matter

A) Jesus gives a cryptic answer to his questioners (John 2:19), which baffles the Jews and raises their attachment to the physical edifice of the temple (John 2:20).

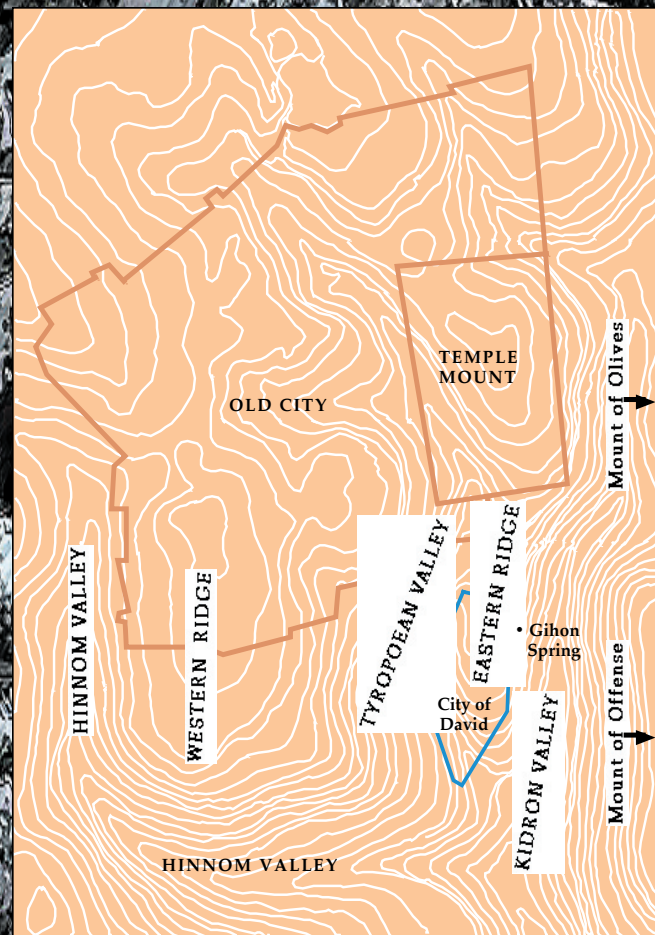
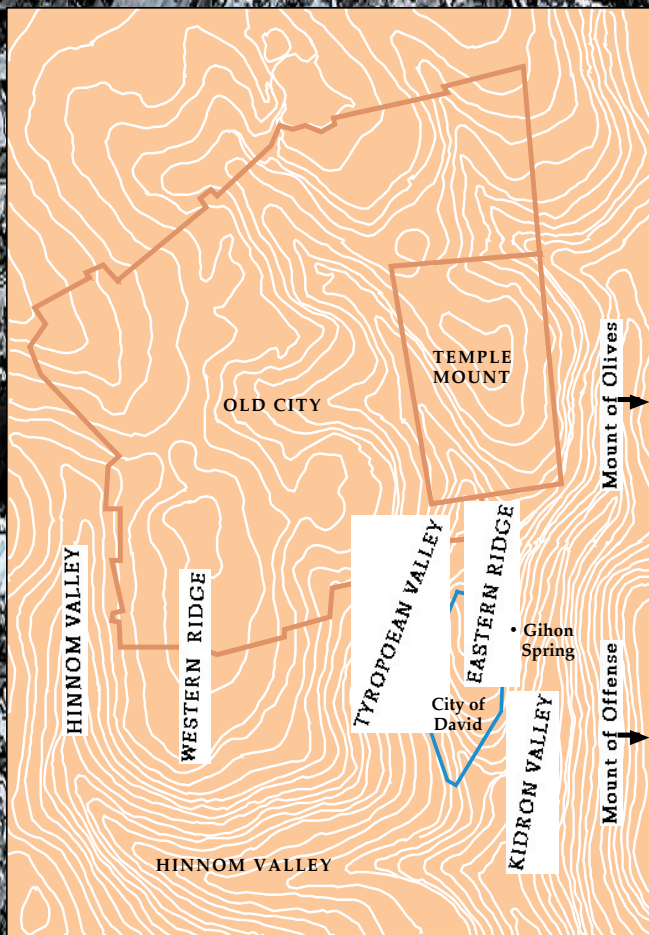
D) The temple needed to be cleansed, but it was the hearts of men (John 2:24-25) Jesus had come to clean. It is the heart which needs purification (John 2). God was in the flesh, and now would now dwell in the hearts of men (1st Corinthians 3:16-17).



* The cattle, sheep and doves were used in the sacrificial worship of the temple. Especially for worshippers coming from a distance, it was a convenience and a service to be able to purchase them on site instead of having to bring them from afar. At one time the animal merchants set up their stalls across the Kidron Valley on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, but at this point they were in the temple courts, doubtless in the Court of the Gentiles (the outermost court). Others who were sitting at tables exchanging money were also providing a service. People from all over the Roman Empire gathered to Jerusalem for the high festivals, bringing many different coins with them; but the temple tax, to be paid by every conscientious Jewish male of twenty years of age or over, had to be deposited in Tyrian coinage (because of the high purity of its silver). This annual half-shekel (to use Old Testament language) was equal to half a Tyrian stater or tetradrachm, and so two Jews often joined together to pay the tax in one coin (cf. Matthew 17:27). The money-changers converted money to the approved currency, charging a percentage for their service. The tables of the money-changers were not set up all year round, but only around the time when the temple tax was collected. In Jerusalem, this was from 25 Adar on (the lunar month before Nisan). There is no evidence that the animal merchants and money-changers or the priestly authorities who allowed them to use the outer court were corrupt companions in graft. Jesus' complaint is not that they are guilty of sharp business practices and should therefore reform their ethical life, but that they should not be in the temple area at all. This is true, even in the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) where at a later temple cleansing event, Jesus says that the merchants were turning the temple into a "den of robbers." The Greek expression does not suggest thievery, but zealotry. By setting up in the Court of the Gentiles, they have excluded the Gentiles (who might have come to pray), and have turned the temple into a nationalistic stronghold. Instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer, there is the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. Instead of brokenness and contrition, holy adoration and prolonged petition, there is noisy commerce. Jesus' demonstration in the temple was an attack on the whole of the financial arrangements for the sacrificial system, and thus was an enormous threat to the priestly authorities. (Carson, D.A., *The Gospel According To John*, Pages 178-179 plus other sources, quoted throughout).

LEVITICUS

OFFERINGS		
Type	Purpose	Offering
Burnt Offering (1:1-17; 6:8-13)	Atonement for sin in general, enabling an unholy people to approach a holy God	Unblemished bull; male sheep or goat; male or female dove/pigeon (based on wealth)
Grain Offering (2:1-16; 6:14-23)	An expression of thanksgiving and dedication to God	Flour or grain
Peace (Fellowship) Offering (3:1-17; 7:11-38)	An expression of gratitude and desire for fellowship with God	Unblemished bull/male or female sheep/goat
Sin Offering (4:1-5:13; 6:24-30)	Atonement for unintentional sins of weakness or carelessness	Unblemished bull/male or female goat
Guilt (Trespass) Offering (5:14-6:7; 7:1-10)	Atonement for specific sins; injured persons compensated for their losses	Unblemished ram



THE JEWISH YEAR

FEAST	DATE	PURPOSE
The Passover	Nisan 14 (March/April)	To remember the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage.
The Feast of Unleavened Bread	Nisan 15-21	Part of the Passover celebration. Ate unleavened bread and celebrated the beginning of the wheat harvest.
Pentecost (Feast of Weeks)	Sivan 6 (May/June)	Marked the end of the wheat harvest.
The Feast of Trumpets	Tishri 1 (Sept/Oct)	Known as Rosh Hashshanah, it was the celebration of the new year (civil year).
The Day of Atonement	Tishri 10	A day of fast set apart for national repentance and atonement for sin.
The Feast of Booths	Tishri 15-22	Also known as "Tabernacles," it commemorated Israel's wilderness experience.
The Feast of Lights	Kislev 25 (Nov/Dec)	Not found in the Mosaic Law. It was a celebration of the Maccabean cleansing and rededicating of the Temple.
The Feast of Purim	Adar 14-15 (Feb/March)	Not found in the Mosaic law. Purim ("lots") remembered God's deliverance of Israel in the days of Esther.

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JEWISH CALENDAR

ORDER IN CALENDAR		PREEXILIC NAME	POSTEXILIC NAME	EQUIVALENT	SEASON	FARMING	FESTIVALS	BIBLICAL REFERENCE	
SACRED	CIVIL								
1	7	ABIB	NISAN	Mar.-Apr.	Spring Equinox, Latter Rains	Barley harvest begins Flax harvest	Religious New Year's Day Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits	Ex. 12:2, Neh. 2:1	
2	8	ZIV	IYYAR	Apr.-May	Summer Dry Season Begins	Barley harvest	Later Passover (Num. 9:10-11)	1 Kings 6:1, 37	
3	9		SIVAN	May-June		Wheat harvest begins Early figs ripen	Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-21)	Est. 8:9	
4	10		TAMMUZ	Jun-July		Wheat harvest Grape harvest		Ezek. 8:14	
5	11	AB		July-Aug.		Principal fruit month: grape, fig, olive			
6	12		ELUL	Aug.-Sept.		Dates and summer figs		Neh. 6:15	
7	1	ETHANIM	TISHRI	Sept.-Oct.	Early Rains Seedtime	Plowing and sowing	Civil New Year's Day Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Booths	1 Kings 8:2	
8	2	BUL	HESHVAN	Oct.-Nov.		Wheat and barley sowing	Solemn Assembly (Lev. 23:36)	1 Kings 6:38	
9	3		CHISLEV	Nov.-Dec.	Winter Begins (John 10:22)		Feast of Dedication (Lights) (John 10:22)	Neh. 1:1	
10	4		TEBETH	Dec.-Jan.	Rainy Winter Months	Cultivation of Jordan Valley begins		Est. 2:16	
11	5		SHEBAT	Jan.-Feb.		Almond blossoms Oranges ripen		Zech. 1:7	
12	6		ADAR	Feb.-Mar.		Barley ripens Citrus fruit harvest		Ezra 6:15	
13			ADAR SHENI	Intercalary month: Added each year that the barley was not ripe on the 16th of Nisan. Two such years were not allowed in succession.					

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