

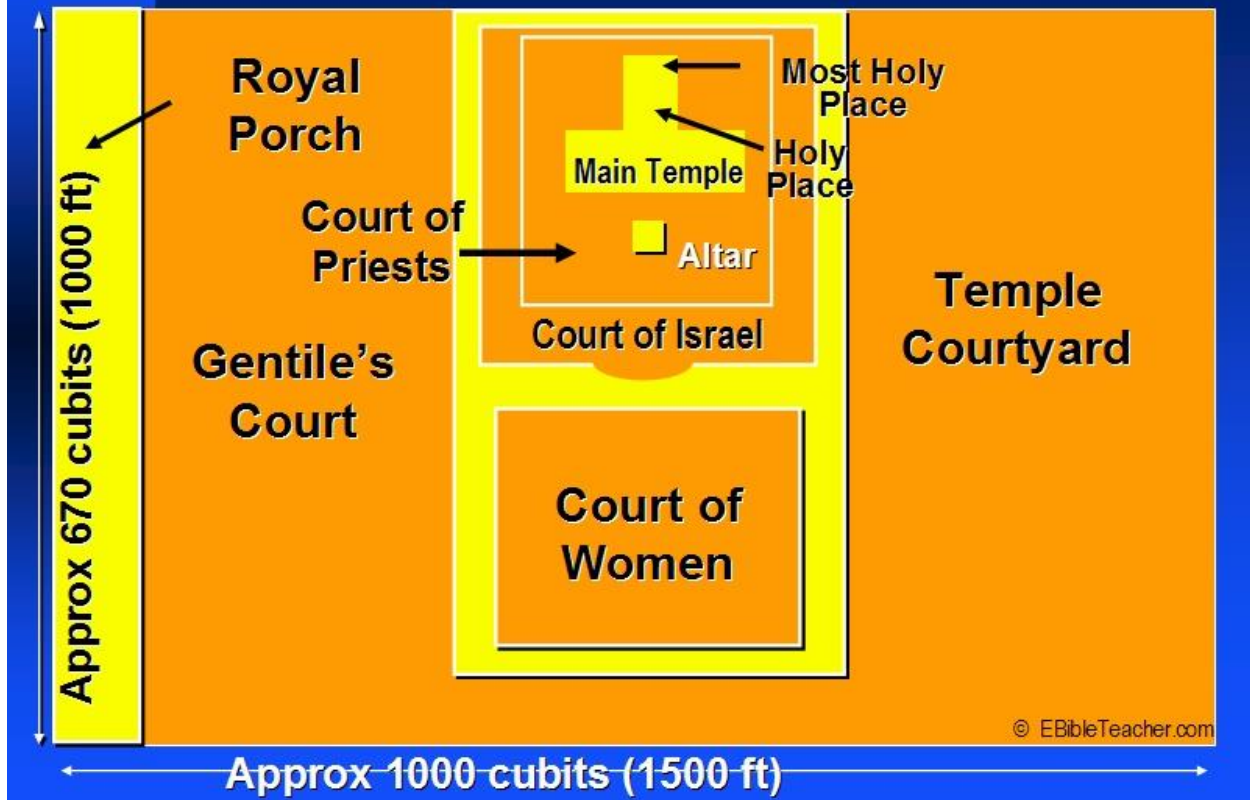
What Made Jesus Angry?

As part of our quest to experience Jesus at a deeper level, Sunday's sermon focused on the two times in the Gospels where Jesus got really angry.

1. Warm-up Question: We can learn a lot about a person from what makes them angry. What's something silly that makes you angry? What's something serious that makes you angry?
2. There are two instances in the Gospels when Jesus became furious. In the first instance, Jesus unloaded on the scribes and Pharisees. Scribes were theologians who interpreted and taught religious law. Pharisees were a denomination within Judaism that believed in strict adherence to religious law and often had contempt for people who did not (or could not) observe religious rules as rigorously as they did. Their attitude and approach made Jesus hugely angry. Read Matthew 23:1-33.
 - a. In this passage, Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites, snakes, and vipers." He even says, "How can you escape being sentenced to hell?" Based on what you read here, what are some of the reasons why Jesus was so upset with the scribes and Pharisees?
 - b. Look again at verses 23-24. Is Jesus against tithing? What negative attitude is he warning us against here? What positive attitude is he calling us to?
 - c. What does it mean to "strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel" (vs. 24)?
 - d. On Sunday, Jeff shared a viral video where a young man expressed his disgust at hearing someone cuss in Chick-Fil-A. The video has gone viral and been watched over 13 million times – not just because it makes us laugh, but because it strikes a chord. How would you describe the religious attitude on display in the video? Why is that attitude so off-putting to so many people?
 - e. In your view, once we get beyond cussing in Chick-Fil-A – ☺ – what are some of the great evils we should be genuinely concerned about in our world today?
 - f. Jeff said, "The world doesn't need any more religious snobs. People don't need to be hounded by religious scolds who are hell-bent on ensuring a bunch of religious rules are scrupulously kept. People need to see Jesus. They need to see the beauty of simple goodness." Have you seen Jesus lately in the actions of another? What happened? How did that make you feel?
3. The second great instance of Jesus erupting in anger is found in Mark 11 during the last week of Jesus' life. After the palm parade that escorted Jesus into Jerusalem, he inspected the temple and was not happy with what he saw. He returned the next morning to do something about it. Read Mark 11:1-19.

- a. How do you think Jesus felt during the palm parade that led him into Jerusalem?
 - b. Look again at verse 11. After looking around the temple, we're told Jesus left Jerusalem to spend the night in a village on the outskirts of town. How do you imagine Jesus felt that night as he anticipated what he might do the next morning?
 - c. What does verse 14 tell us about Jesus' state of mind the next morning right before he re-enters the temple?
 - d. If you were staging the cleansing of the temple as a scene in a movie about Jesus, describe how you see the scene unfolding.
4. Jesus explains his action in the temple in two statements. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations," and "You have made it a den of robbers." Many people focus on the second statement and assume Jesus' core concern was commerce in the temple. Jeff suggested that Jesus' primary concern is reflected in the first statement, i.e., the commerce taking place in the outer court of the temple was objectionable because it filled the only space in the temple set aside for spiritual outcasts to come for prayer. As such, it reflected a callous lack of concern for making space for spiritually despised people.
- a. Take a look at the layout of the temple shown on p. 3 and the notes there. What way of thinking is reflected in the rules of access described on p. 3?
 - b. As already noted, "unclean" people were only allowed in the Court of the Gentiles, which is where all the exchange booths had been set up. Immediately after Jesus cleared out all the booths, Matthew tells us that, "Then the blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple and he cured them." Matthew 21:14. What's the significance of that? What does it tell us about what motivated Jesus to cleanse the temple? What does it tell us about why Jesus was so angry?
 - c. Jeff shared the story of one of our new congregants, a Latina Lesbian named Martha Flores. Early in life, Martha felt alienated from church when she was punished for asking probing questions. Her difficult upbringing led to great pain in her teen years – pregnancy, beatings by her boyfriend, and miscarriage. For years Martha left church until she met her partner Glenda and was influenced by Glenda's faith. When they moved to Indy for Martha to do a teaching fellowship at Crispus Attucks High School, an elderly teacher there recommended Martha check out LifeJourney. When she walked into LifeJourney, Martha says, "Something hit me really strong. It felt like God had been hiding out here. Wow, has this church made a difference." Now Martha is pondering whether she is called to be a pastor or spiritual teacher. What thoughts, feelings, or observations do you draw from Martha's experience? Given all we've talked about, why do you think Jesus is raising up churches like ours?

Herod's Temple



Notes:

- All people (even spiritual outcasts) were allowed into the Court of the Gentiles.
- Only observant, orthodox Jewish men and women could proceed further into the Court of Women.
- Only observant, orthodox Jewish men could proceed further into the Court of the Israel.
- Only priests could proceed further into the Court of the Priests.
- Only certain priests could proceed further into the Holy of Holies at certain times.