

a deeper dive

INTO YOUR FAVORITE BIBLE STORIES

7 - Daddy Doesn't Pray Anymore – Jesus Clears the Temple

“¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer,” but you make it a den of robbers.’”

Matthew 21:12-14 ESV

The Big Idea: Prayer and presence is a vital part of humanity's connection with God.

Because of sin the Glory of God's presence was removed from His people – beginning with Adam and Eve.

The Eastern Gate Significance

Adam and Eve were banned from the Garden of Eden with Cherubim guarding the *eastern* entrance – exiling man from paradise.

We see this again after the Israelites entered Canaan, the people set up the tabernacle of God in Shiloh. In that tabernacle would sit the ark of the covenant, where GOD'S GLORY dwelt as first commanded in Exodus.

Exodus 25:20-22 ESV

²⁰ The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. ²¹ And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark, you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. ²² There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

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The Ark and its mercy seat (a type of lid or covering) represented the presence of the holy God. The Ark was kept behind a veil in the tabernacle (and later the temple) in a room known as the Holy of Holies, which was only accessible through an eastern entrance.

The Holy of Holies could only be visited once per year, on the Day of Atonement, and only by the high priest.

After 100 years in Shiloh, the Glory of the God left the people due to their sins while they resided in Canaan (1 Samuel 4:22; Ezekiel 11:22-23).

The Eastern Gate was shut

Ezekiel (44:1-2) prophesied:

*Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east. And it was shut. ²And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it. Therefore, it shall remain shut. ³**Only the prince** may sit in it to eat bread [commune] before the LORD. He shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate and shall go out by the same way."*

Jesus' Enters Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate

Only the prince may enter through the Eastern Gate!

Not only did Jesus make his Triumphal entry into Jerusalem through the Eastern gate but according to Luke's account, Jesus would have left Jerusalem through this gate *every evening* following his triumphal entry to get to the Mount of Olives, and returned again *every morning* through the Eastern Gate to teach in the Temple.

This continued until the evening of the Passover, when, after the Last Supper, he went out through the Eastern Gate for the last time to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. There he was arrested and entered Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate for the last time as a prisoner.

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Jesus cleansing the temple.

Jesus' mission was to restore man's relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Cleansing the temple was God acting through His Son, Jesus *physically restoring His authority* – God's glory WILL dwell with His people. As if to say, "I mean it! Stop making a mockery of our time together!"

So, God reveals His passion about His place in the lives of those worshipping.

1. **The first cleansing** took place in the spring of A.D. 28, at the beginning of His early Judean ministry (John 2:13–17).

When Jesus heard the noise and saw the bargaining in God's dwelling place (Exodus 25:8), He rushed to cleanse the temple and took a "whip" and drove "those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business" (John 2:14,15). And He said, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" John 2:16.

Jesus earnestly desired that His Father's house should be used exclusively for worship (Ex. 25:8, 9; Matt. 21:13). When the temple officials confronted Him immediately asking Him for a sign to prove His authority, He gave them the undeniable sign of His resurrection from the death.

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² When therefore 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.
John 2:18-22 ESV

2. **The second cleansing** occurred three years later at the end of His public ministry, at the fourth Passover just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem the last week of His life (Matt. 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48.)

Matthew 21:12

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¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹³ He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," but you make it a den of robbers.'

Jesus spoke of the temple as “my house” (Matt. 21:13). But when the leaders rejected His final appeal the following day, He referred to it as “your house” (Matt. 23:38).

There’s a distinction between people who refuse the dwelling of God and those who welcome the presence of God in their lives!

Isaiah 56:7 points to the fact that Gentiles were to be called to the temple to know the true God, *“for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”*

Those who earnestly seek to make their Father’s house a “house of prayer” (Matt. 21:13) should not make it a place for unholy thoughts, words, or actions. Rather, they should cleanse the temple and be reverent in His holy presence (John 4:23, 24) and worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

The Eastern Gate was Opened Once More

Jesus died on the cross something miraculous happened!

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.”

Matthew 27:50 -53 NIV

His death caused the veil to rip wide open in the temple!

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The doorway that had been blocked by the cherubim and flaming sword, was now opened. Recall that the veil had images of cherubim sewn into it (2 Chronicles 3:14)!

This was identical to the picture seen of cherubim standing at the east threshold of the temple when the glory of God left the structure.

The veil blocked the single way into the Holiest of holies, and that entry faced east!

God's glory, all the people of the earth were outside the garden - outside the temple - where they belonged.

But Jesus did something about it!

You see, as the ark of the covenant, where God's glory dwelt, opened the barrier of the Jordan river that Israel might pass westward into Canaan, the promised land (Josh 3:15-16).

Jesus removed the veil that gives us access to enter into a place of peace and tranquility! The Promised Land – as children of Abraham.

As children of God!

Jesus establishes His place in the true temple of God.

Jesus was referred to as “**Shiloh**” in Genesis 49:10, the same name that was given to the first location in which the tabernacle was situated at Canaan!

*“The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
until He to whom it belongs [or “Shiloh”] shall come
and the obedience of the nations shall be His.”* **Genesis 49:10**

The word, Shiloh literally means "tranquil."

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Jesus establishes an inner peace that would resemble the peace of the Garden of Eden.

As prophesied in **Malachi 3:1**.

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

1. We don't need buildings to house the Glory of God!

Jesus said to the religious leaders, *“I tell you, something greater than the temple is here”* **Matthew 12:6**.

The Apostle Paul pronounced, *“²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man...”* **Acts 17:24**.

2. We are God's Holy Temple – He dwells in us!

*¹⁶ Do you not know that **you** are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in **you**? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and **you** are that temple.*

1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

- Jesus wants to establish His purposeful place in your heart.
- He wants to be the most important thing that resides there.
- He will turn over, or cast out the tables of disrespect and sin that are there now to establish His authority in your life.