

## Scripture Reading:

**Luke 19:45-48** “45 Then [Jesus] went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, 46 saying to them, 'It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " 47 And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, 48 and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.”

# *"Jesus Enters the Temple"*

Our passage from Luke is very short this morning, but it raises the intriguing issue of Jesus, the Son of God, entering the Temple. This is our 73<sup>rd</sup> message from the Gospel of Luke, give or take one or two...

- Does anyone remember what we studied before we started the trip through Luke & Acts?

**That's right: It was Ezra & Nehemiah!** As we studied these books the central themes were the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple: Again and again we were reminded that this had to be accomplished so that Jesus could come at His appointed time to be THE sacrifice for sin.

- We have studied how Jesus entered Jerusalem and now we see Him entering the Temple

There are 323 references to ‘temple’ in the Scriptures, leaving out the ones about Sisera having his temple pegged by a woman

- This does not include references to sanctuary or tabernacle which are closely related and these would give us almost 450 MORE verses to study!
- As we consider the importance of Jesus entering the Temple this morning, these references help us to see the BIG picture:

A picture of God dwelling with His people in a place of safety & blessing is the theme that runs from Genesis to Revelation...

- Genesis 2:15 “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”
- Rev 21:3 “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”
- Another important aspect of the BIG picture is that the writers of the New Testament clearly refer to individual Saints AND the church as being the Temple of God!

**In I Corinthians 3:16 Paul declares to the entire Church of Corinth**

**“do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Or as he tells the Saints at Ephesus, “19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”**

- **Paul also tells the church at Corinth that we as individuals are the temple of God as well:**

**In I Corinthians 6:19 he asks,**

**“do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”**

- **Since we are individually and collectively considered as the Temple of God, we can see once again the importance of knowing the WHOLE Word of God:**

**There are almost one thousand references to temple, sanctuary and tabernacle that can help us better understand what it means for us as individuals and as a gathered body of believers to be the Temple of God.**

**Before we look at some very obvious applications for our lives when we think about Jesus visiting the Temple in this fuller context, I think it is also important to remember that this is not the only time we see Jesus entering the Temple, and more broadly God entering the Temple.**

- **Again, all of this should remind us of the reality of God the Holy Spirit indwelling us and His Church**

**In Genesis we are given just a glimpse of how things could have been when we read about God walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, but Adam had broken covenant with God and had to hide from His presence.**

**By the end of the Bible this garden sanctuary has matured into a garden-city where God and man dwell richly together in God’s presence**

- **In between we have God graciously showing us pictures of this coming reality with the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the Temple at Jerusalem, and now as His Saints & as His the Church.**

**In each case we have dramatic images of God being with His people:**

**After Moses had built the Tabernacle according to very specific instructions because it was modeled after God’s own throne room, we read in Exodus 40:34:**

**“Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”**

**After Solomon had completed the Temple, again according to all the detailed instructions we read in I Kings 8:10 “And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, 11 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.”**

**And finally, we see the Temple after which these were modeled in Revelation 7:15: “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.”**

- **What we see in these few verses in Luke this morning is one of a series of visits that Jesus, the Son of God, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity, makes to this earthly temple and then eventually to the Temple in heaven:**

**Luke 2: 22 “Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."**

**Luke 2:46 “Now so it was that after three days they found [Jesus] in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.”**

**John 2: 13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. 15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. 16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews 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 of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”**

**Luke 19:45-48 “45 Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " 47 And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to**

destroy Him, 48 and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.”

**Revelation 5: 1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."**

- **God initial command for man to be fruitful and fill the earth will be accomplished in the end!**
- **In the mean time there were obviously serious problems in the Temple at Jerusalem!**

**Of course, the BIG problem, as we saw last week is that they missed the first couple of appearances of Jesus at the Temple where Simeon proclaims Him to be the Savior of Israel and Jesus even as a young man confounds the teaches of Israel!**

**So just as the priests would come to inspect a house that was suspected of having leprosy, Jesus as the Great High Priest now comes to inspect the Temple: He did so near the beginning of His public ministry as we are told in John’s account and now he comes again near the end as recorded in Luke.**

- **The leprosy has returned and the time has come for the temple to be destroyed**

**Just as we are considered the Temple of God individually and collectively, we need to understand that this is how Jesus comes to judge the Temple on these two visits:**

- **Each dishonest merchant was being held accountable for his sin..**
- **But Jesus is also confronting the nation with its sin**

The words that Jesus chose would have haunted the religious leaders of the day who would have been VERY familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 7: 1 “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, [stand at the gate of the Temple as Jesus did] and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!' " 3 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'”

- Just as God was not pleased with just the outward sign of circumcision, He is not pleased with outward signs of religion, even if it is at His Temple!]
- God is looking for real fruit & not a show: The kind of fruit the prophet now mentions...

5 :For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, 6 if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, 7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. 8 "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit.”

Jeremiah then has some words for those who think they can live [and vote] as they please during the week and then come to Church on Sunday: 9 “Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10 and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? 11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the Lord.”

- Yes, most of those religious leaders present that day went on to harden their hearts, even going so far as to crucify the Lord of Glory, BUT those words of Daniel about a den of thieves would surely have haunted them!
- So what does all of this mean for us as we now live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century since this coming of Jesus to the Temple?

First I hope it would broaden your understanding of the Scriptures, helping you to see much more in all those passages that speak of temples and tabernacles and sanctuaries! Secondly, and certainly more importantly, I think we should see that Jesus continues to visit His Temple:

- He visits each of us as individuals
- And He visits us as His Church

**He comes to inspect His work and to see if there is any leprosy! When He finds some, which He often will this side of glory, He does the work of the priest in removing the problem. We see this each week in our worship as we confess, individually and corporately our sins before the Lord seeking His forgiveness. We must learn to rejoice in the knowledge of our forgiveness and hear the words that Jesus said so often to those He healed, ‘go and sin no more.’ We must come with heartfelt confession and know real forgiveness which changes the direction of our lives and prevents the return of that leprosy. Otherwise we can become hardened even in the midst of much religious activity crying with those in Jeremiah’s day, “the Temple of the Lord the Temple of the Lord!”**

**As we reflect on what this means, let me again use the examples of Kings Saul and David to help us see the contrast: Both had allowed some leprosy into their walks with the Lord:**

**David had what we would consider a major case that included adultery, deception and finally murder**

**Saul had been overly zealous to do God’s work, offering sacrifices himself rather than waiting for Samuel and deciding for himself how the spoils of war would be dedicated to God: Things we might consider minor by comparison to David’s!**

- **In both cases they are visited, or inspected by God’s prophets, where they expose the Leprosy**

**In David’s case he is broken as we see in Psalm 51, repents and turns from his wicked ways to become that man after God’s own heart!**

**Saul on the other hand is quick with excuses and empty repentance sliding further and further into his sins until he leaves the Table of the Lord to seek the table of death where he dines with the witch of Endor. The leprosy has returned and the house of Saul is destroyed.**

**As we begin this New Year let us remember that we stand in the righteousness of Christ and that we should live accordingly... Let us each day & each week seek to heed the command for righteous living given by the Prophet Micah:**

**Micah 6: “With what shall I come before the Lord, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?**

**8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”**

**If we do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God, we will rejoice in knowing that Jesus will often visit His Temple!**