

Revelation 1:8 reads, “**I am the Alpha and the Omega,**” says the Lord God, “**who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.**” Our God is the God of the past, present, and future. We can trust in Him in all ways, in all circumstances. We even see this in the cleansing of the temple. **BECAUSE HE CLEANSED THE TEMPLE, JESUS DEMONSTRATES HE IS THE ONE WHO WAS, WHO IS, AND IS TO COME.**

First, I. Because He cleansed the temple, Jesus demonstrates He is the one who was prophesied. Jesus said to the money changers, “**Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.**” The Old Testament prophets foretold of this event in the Old Testament. In the last chapter of his prophecy, Zechariah foretells of a perfect world that will happen when the Lord comes again. Zechariah writes in the last verse of the last chapter, “**And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the LORD of hosts on that day**” (Zechariah 14:21). Zechariah foretells of the day that God would come to the temple to cleanse it. Jesus is the one who fulfills this promise.

Malachi wrote, “**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... He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.**” Jesus fulfills this prophecy from the book of Malachi. He came to cleanse the temple of its crooked practices. He came to cleanse the temple of its crooked priests. He came to cleanse their sacrifices so that their offerings would be pleasing in the sight of their Heavenly Father.

Jesus is the one who was to come. He is the long-awaited Savior. Jesus fulfills every Old Testament prophecy. We even see that He fulfills the prophecy quoted in our text from Psalm 69, “**Zeal for your house will consume me.**” If Jesus was able to fulfill all those promises of old, trust in Him to be the one who can fulfill all His promises to you.

He promises to cleanse your hearts by His atoning death. He promises to make you new through the waters of Baptism. He promises to raise you again on the last day even as He rose again on the third day.

Jesus stepping onto the scene was the start of a new era. All throughout the Old Testament, the prophets would often speak of “that day.” “That day” was this magical time where all things would be made right, that there would be a new way of doing things, and the Lord would reign with justice and peace. This cleansing of the temple teaches us that there is a new way of doing things, that there is a new sheriff in town, and that “that day” has finally arrived in Jesus Christ. Jesus is not only the one who *was* prophesied, but He is the one who *is* in charge even now. II.

Because He cleansed the temple, Jesus demonstrates He is the one in whom all should trust.

At the beginning of the 1900s, a stable boy served a rich man feeding and caring for his horses. The stableboy's jaw dropped one day when his rich employer entered the stable with a bewitching contraption. A horseless carriage! The rich man was one of the first people to own one of Henry Ford's famous Model T's. The rich man hopped out of the car and said, "Son, forget everything you know about horses, we're going to be an automobile family!"

Still dazed and not knowing what to say next, the stableboy asked, "But sir, where do I put the oats in that thing?"

Anyone who has driven a car knows how nonsensical a question that is, but the Jews in Jesus' day found themselves in a similar situation than that of the stable boy. When Jesus was born on this Earth, part of His mission was to abolish the old way of doing things.

For centuries, the Jews got accustomed to the sacrificial system: tithing oil and grain, slaughtering livestock, and pilgrimages to Jerusalem. They had a lot invested. There was a lot riding on that way of doing things. The priests had a vested interest in keeping things the way they were.

The temple of Jerusalem was the centerpiece of the Jews' religious life. But in turning over the money changers tables, Jesus directed the eyes of the people to a new temple. Jesus replied to the Jews, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" This temple was not the temple of Jerusalem, but the temple that was His body.

In the Old Testament, the temple of Jerusalem was that place that the Jews knew they could go to and the Lord promised to be present. The temple was the place where they could go to and receive the forgiveness of sins. It was a place that they could go to and be sheltered in the Lord's all-loving presence.

Jesus is not only the one who was to come, but He is the one who is here right now. Today, Jesus is that temple for you. Jesus is the temple where the sacrifice of His life has paid for the sins of the world. Jesus is the temple where the fullness of the Godhead is pleased to dwell. Jesus is the temple who offers you forgiveness in His body and His blood at this altar. Jesus is the solid rock in whom we can shelter when life's stormy seas rage. You don't need to take a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Jesus is the one who is here even now. He is here now wherever two or three are gathered in His name, but even most especially as Christians gather around for the Lord's Supper where He promises to be truly present in the bread and in the wine. Trust in Him for your salvation.

Jesus' death and resurrection marked a departure from a worship in a temple made with hands, and instead started a worship in the person of Christ as *the* temple. Sources outside the Bible written by Jews reported that around the same

time Jesus was crucified and rose again, strange things started to happen at the temple.

In a document called the Jerusalem Talmud, Jews noted that around the time of Jesus' death, the everlasting lamp in the sanctuary would mysteriously go out. On the Day of Atonement, the high Jewish Holy Day, a cord that was crimson would miraculously turn white, but after Jesus' death, that no longer happened. After Jesus' death, they cast lots on the Day of Atonement, and the lot would always fall in the left hand which is statistically improbable, and also a sign of the Lord's displeasure. Finally, the writer commented that the doors of the Temple would mysteriously open at night, which could symbolize the departure of the Lord, or the welcoming of invaders.

In turning over the temple tables, Jesus demonstrated He is the one who was to come: He fulfilled Old Testament prophecy which shows He is the long-awaited Savior for me and you. In driving out the money changers, He pointed to Himself as the temple, He is the one who is here even now as we gather together as God's people under bread and wine to partake of Christ's body and blood.

Finally, III. Because He cleansed the temple, Jesus demonstrates He is the one for whom we should look to return. Even today, there are some who are concerned about the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps you'll occasionally read headlines or you'll read a news story about plans to rebuild the building that once sat on the temple mount so many centuries ago. Even some Christians are interested in this happening. Some Christians believe that the rebuilding of the temple is a sign that Christ will come again.

Don't be fooled into the old-fashioned way of seeing things. Our hope for the future is not tied to building plans in Jerusalem. It's not tied up into the resuming of animal sacrifices. It's not tied up into the fate of a nation-state in the Middle East. Our future lies in the hands of the one whose hands turned over those money changers' tables, and whose arms pushed over their tables.

There is no need for a physical temple. The Bible describes the Heavenly Jerusalem saying, **“And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb”** (Revelation 21:22). Even in the age to come, there will be no physical temple other than God Himself and Jesus, the Lamb of God.

So Christians, accept no substitutes. Seek to worship nowhere else than at Jesus' feet, the one who was and is, and is to come. He is worthy of your praise. He can fulfill all your needs. Even now we worship with veiled eyes, but when He comes again in glory, we will see Him face to face. Amen.