



GET IT STRAIGHT, GRAHAM!

LESSON 132 → 2 Chronicles 5:11-14; Matthew 21:12-16

The rest of the class knew God expected them to respect His house.

The paper airplane shot through the air, then nose-dived, narrowly missing the side of Miss Mason’s face. She hesitated briefly in her reading aloud of the Answer story, and several of the students gave Graham, who had made the airplane, disapproving looks. Then Miss Mason resumed reading.

“Josias could hear the golden bells tinkling from the other side of the giant curtain. He knew that Zophara, the high priest, was still alive.”

The class sat spellbound, except for Graham who never could manage to keep still for very long.

“Behind the curtain was the Holy of Holies. Even though he was a priest, Josias couldn’t go in there. In fact, the high priest was the only person ever allowed into the room. And he could go in only once a year—on the Day of Atonement. He was in there now, sprinkling blood from the sin offering. Josias listened intently for the bells. Was Zophara still moving around? If he defied



CHURCH IS GOD'S HOUSE.

Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.
— Leviticus 19:30

God by disobeying the clear instructions God had given, he would be struck dead!”

“Wow,” Graham said as he propped his feet up on the chair in front of him. “That must have been scary, to worry about God’s killing you off if you don’t follow the rules in church. I’m sure glad it isn’t like that now.”

“What do you think has changed since then, Graham?”

“Oh, lots of things,” explained Graham. “Under the Law before Jesus came there were a whole lot of dos and don’ts. Jesus changed all that.”

“You’re partly right, Graham,” Miss Mason said. “Through the Law of Moses, God

revealed

special instructions to the Jewish people that would allow them to know Him better than any other nation. It was a great privilege for them to have the Law, and not something to treat casually. God wanted them to be an example for others, so He required that they follow the Law strictly. Why, back under the Law if you didn’t do what your father and mother told you, you could be put to death.”

“You’re kidding!” came a response from the other side of the room.

None of the class liked that idea very well. The teacher went on. “But Jesus is very concerned about how people act in God’s house. The only time the Bible tells us of Jesus’ doing anything violent was when people weren’t treating the Temple as they should. He went into the Temple and saw people buying and selling animals for sacrifices and exchanging money. What do you suppose He did?”

“Told them to leave?” Brianna questioned.

“More than that,” replied Miss Mason. “He turned over their tables and chased them out.”

“I didn’t think Jesus would do anything like that,” Miranda broke in.

“He didn’t do anything like that for any other reason,” Miss Mason explained. “That shows how important Jesus thought it was to respect God’s house.”

Graham wasn’t going to quiet down easily. “But that was in a big, fancy Temple,” he said. “All we have is a little, tiny church.”

“God doesn’t care how fancy a church we may have,” Miss Mason explained. She opened her briefcase and pulled out a picture of Solomon’s Temple. “This was the fanciest and most expensive Temple ever built. All of the stones were cut to shape before they were brought to the building site. When the men finished putting these stones together, they covered them with

gold. It took Solomon’s men seven years to build the Temple. Still, when it was finished, he told God he knew that it wasn’t good enough for Him, but asked God to please answer the prayers they prayed there. God doesn’t really care how plain or fancy our church may be. But He does care how we act in it.”

Graham wasn’t through yet. “But this is just a Sunday school room, not upstairs where we hold services. We should be able to do anything we want here.”

“It’s all part of God’s house,” the teacher responded quietly.

“Yeah,” answered Graham, “but Jesus is up in Heaven. He isn’t around checking up on us.”

The rest of the class knew better than that and they set Graham straight. “Jesus said that if just two or three people were gathered together in His name, He would be there with them,” Josie said, and the others agreed.

Graham was silent.





















“So . . .” said Josie, “you’d better shape up, Graham!”

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