INTERPRETING THE TEMPLE INCIDENT

Historical Setting Factors:
- Site of incident: on or off Temple Mount?
- Timing of incident: synoptic or Johannine?
- Not instantly arrested when incident occurred
- Extent of disturbance
- Only Jesus executed, not followers
- Executed by crucifixion

What Do We Think Jesus Was?
- Observant Jew consistent with Hillel; teacher of eschatological realities
- Wisdom teacher
- Prophet of God’s Kingdom; eschatological prophet
- Reformer/restorer of Israel
- Charismatic teacher and healer
- Teacher of eschatological wisdom
- Prophet like Jeremiah
- Creatively reconfigured many strands of late Second Temple Judaism in ways not neatly categorized
  - Wandering cynic philosopher
  - Critic of Judaism

What Do We Think Jesus Thought He was Doing?
- Insisting on Temple purity (no mammon)
- Critiquing Temple Leadership or Operations
- Demonstrating the Temple’s imminent destruction
  - Condemning the Temple Cult / Sacrificial System

Gospel Factors:
- Historicity of event vs. Evangelists’ Creativity
- Mark: Overturns tables of those buying and selling
  - cursing of the fig tree
  - meaning of skeuos
  - House of prayer “for all the nations”
- Matthew: children crying “Hosanna!”
- Luke: Jesus teaches daily in Temple
  - Stephen’s Temple speech in Acts
- John: early in ministry
  - “Zeal for your house will consume me”
  - Destroy this temple, I’ll raise it in 3 days.

Relevant NT materials:
- Entry into Jerusalem
- Destruction sayings
- Parabolic critique of leaders / priests
- Absence in Paul
- Acts’ depiction of Jerusalem church in Temple worship
- Tearing of Temple curtain at Jesus’ death

Other Relevant Materials:
- Jeremiah 7:11; 26
- Isaiah 56:7
- Psalm 69:10
- Qumran
- Mishnah (though status re 1st century is a question)
- Josephus