

John 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

Analysis

The Jews misunderstand, thinking Jesus speaks of Herod's temple: 'Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?' Their literalism blinds them to spiritual meaning. The temple construction, begun under Herod the Great around 20 BC, was ongoing. The Jews' incredulity is understandable but reveals spiritual dullness—they cannot conceive of anything beyond the physical.

Historical Context

Herod began temple reconstruction in 20-19 BC. The 'forty-six years' dates this conversation to approximately 27-28 AD. The temple was not finally completed until 63 AD, just seven years before Rome destroyed it. The Jews' investment in the physical building blinded them to the true Temple among them.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does literalism sometimes blind us to spiritual realities?

2. What 'temples' do we invest in that might distract from Christ Himself?

Interlinear Text

εἶπον	οὖν	οἱ	Ἰουδαῖοι	τεσσαράκοντα	καὶ	ἕξ	ἔτεσιν	
said	Then	G3588	the Jews	Forty	and	six	years	
G2036	G3767		G2453	G5062	G2532	G1803	G2094	
ὠκοδομήθη	ὁ	ναὸς	οὗτος	καὶ	σὺ	ἐν	τρισὶν	ἡμέραις
in building	G3588	temple	this	and	thou	in	three	days
G3618		G3485	G3778	G2532	G4771	G1722	G5140	G2250
ἐγερεῖς	αὐτόν							
rear	it							
G1453	G846							

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