

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

εἰπον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἔξι ἔτεσιν
said Then G3588 the Jews Forty and six years
G2036 G3767 G2453 G5062 G2532 G1803 G2094

ἀκοδομήθη 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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