

# Jesus and the Temple- John 2:12-25

## March 15, 2009 - Skip MacMillan

### Retell the scene:

Jesus alone does the purging.

What must the disciples have thought watching this? Did they know he was going to do this?

Silence, Jesus walks in and says nothing, in silence constructs a whip, cracks the whip, pushes tables, coins hit the floor, animals panicking, marketers in shock.

All this just prior to Passover; what might be at play here?

The Deliverer has come again and it won't be via a religion man has manufactured.

God is taking back His temple!

There is a time to confront and be angry, to speak up, to stand up, to risk whatever needs to be risked; this was such a time. The power of one man taking a stand.

### Main Points:

#### 1. People

Jesus receives the people at the wedding and confronts those at the Temple.

Jesus is constantly embracing the masses: teaching, healing, listening, helping, feeding.

Demonstrating God's love for people and the people embrace Him (2:23), relationship.

#### 2. Religious Establishment

Jesus is constantly at odds with the religious establishment.

Here the religious establishment is corrupting worship and questioning Jesus' authority (2:18).

#### 3. Abnormal Picture of Jesus

Not the normal way we see Jesus: angry, whip in hand and tossing tables; why is He so angry?

#### 4. Two Temple Scenes in the Gospels

John places the temple scene at the beginning of Jesus ministry, the Synoptics at the end.

The synoptic gospels put it at the beginning of the Passion week.

1. Topical not chronological order: "All four Evangelists frequently arrange their material in topical rather than chronological order" -Carson.

2. John's point is, Jesus' entire ministry was the week of Passion.

Passover at the beginning of Jesus' ministry emphasizes that "Jesus' entire ministry is the Passion Week" -Keener.

**"After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days" (2:12).**

Capernaum in Aramaic, "Village of Nahum" -Keener.

Jesus lived here, Matthew 4:13; Mark 1:21, 2:1, 9:33.

A sense of family is given here with the disciples, they are included with His mom and brothers. Mary had other children with Joseph, contrary to Catholic beliefs.

**"When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (2:13).**

#### Passover

Spring: 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, end of March or beginning of April.

Exodus 12 tells the story of Passover:

God told the Hebrews to get a lamb or goat a year old **without defect**, slaughter it at twilight and take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes.

"The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt."

The death angel swept over the area and where there was no blood the firstborn was taken.

The next morning the LORD delivered Israel out of Egypt, across the Red Sea and eventually into the Promised Land.

Passover represents:

- God's deliverance from slavery, His care and love for His people, and His power over nations.
- Jesus will be the final and complete Passover three years from now, verse 19.

**"In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money" (2:14).**

**"Selling cattle, sheep and doves"**

These animals were used in "the sacrificial worship of the temple. Especially for worshippers coming from a distance, it was a convenience and a service to be able to purchase them on site instead of having to bring them from afar" -Carson.

Should you bring your own, there was a charge to inspect your animal for blemishes by the official inspection team. Most assuredly a blemish would be found.

Inflated price to buy at the Temple. "A pair of doves could cost as much as fifteen times more inside the Temple than if it had been purchased outside" -Barclay.

"At one time the animal merchants set up their stalls across the Kidron Valley on the slopes of the **Mount of Olives**, but at this point they were *in the temple courts*. Doubtless in the Court of the Gentiles (outermost court)" -Carson. A slight to the Gentiles, making it very difficult for them to worship.

**"Others sitting at tables exchanging money"**

Providing a service of converting various currency to the approved currency of the Tyrian coinage (high purity of silver).

Every male twenty years or older had to pay a temple tax (2 days work).

The money changers converted whatever money they brought into the Tyrian coinage.

There was a charge to convert the money.

**Overall Scene:**

Business, commerce, market, money exchanging, prices inflated and profits taken.

More emphasis was on buying, selling and exchanging money than on actual worship of God.

This scene is so distant from God; worship has become something foreign to its original intent, worshipping God as deliverer.

1 Kings 8: worship, humility, gratitude and joy, nations joined together to worship God.

When God leaves, we construct a religion in our image: marketing, selling, buying.

**THE WELL RAN DRY BUT THAT DID NOT STOP THE MACHINE!**

Worship moved from God to man, from receive the Holy Spirit to guilt and give me your money, from reverence to convenience, dependence on God to constraints of a religious system.

## **Jesus Confronts - John 2:15-17**

"So he made a **whip** out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (2:15-16).

### **"A Whip"**

Jesus uses the whip to confront the corruption and disrupt the false worship (v. 16).

Non-violence?

Never says Jesus was angry, but zealous.

Never says He hit anyone, but disrupted.

He does crack the whip, turn over tables, gets in their face.

Drives out "all" (animals and people) from the temple.

Singular picture of Jesus this angry, except upon His second coming, Revelation 19:11-16.

**"Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (2:15-16).  
NAS: "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise."**

Matthew 21:13 - "My house will be called a house of prayer but you are making it a den of robbers," quoting Jeremiah 7:9-11.

Mark 11:17 - "Is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations," quoting Isaiah 56:7.

In the chorus of the prophetic voice, God has purged the Temple again and again.

Jesus does more than stand outside the Temple confronting people, as Jeremiah did. Jesus gets inside His temple.

**"His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me' " (2:17).**

Violent zeal is biblical, Numbers 25:11.

"Zealous for the honor of his God" (Num. 25:13).

"God is zealous for his holy name (Isa. 59:17; Ezek. 39:25)" -Kostenberger.

Zeal is a devotion to God's Law and His Temple.

Zeal for truth, zeal for God's will, zeal for God's mission, zeal for the ways of God.

Jesus is concerned with "pure worship and a right relationship with God" -Carson.

"Jesus has a zeal for the Father's honor throughout the Gospel (5:43; 8:29, 49)" -Keener.

"Paul encourages believers to 'never be lacking in zeal' (Rom. 12:11)" -Kostenberger.

Cost: in Psalm 69:9 a zeal for the God's house led to suffering, and so it will for Jesus.

## **Why was Jesus so angry? What was the issue?**

### **1. God**

This scene is so removed from God.

God's original intent is that He would dwell with His people, reassure them of His presence with them, bring awe, wonder and comfort; to protect, to encourage, to commune.

Passover became an opportunity to make money, not worship.

Profiteering off God and His worshippers.

Stealing from God the worship due Him.

Using God and worship as an opportunity for personal financial gain.  
All under the premise of convenience and practicality.  
"The business of doing church" had overtaken the worship of God.

Jesus could hear them arguing about pricing, disputes about exchange rates, hands filled with money, animal excrement and no worship, no reverence for God.

"Instead of solemn dignity and the murmur of prayer, there is the bellowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. Instead of brokenness and contrition, holy adoration and prolonged petition, there is noisy commerce" -Carson.

Jesus was attacking the "financial arrangement for the sacrificial system" -Carson.

## **2. Instead of a house of prayer for all people, they made it into a den of robbers, thieves!**

Taxing people to worship, inflating prices, issuing fees.

Taking advantage of people's devotion to God, stealing from people.

Social injustice, exploiting the poor and ignorant, all to heap excessive wealth for temple establishment, Kostenberger.

In 54 BC, Crassus invaded the temple to find several millions.

"It was rampant and shameless social injustice – and what was worse, it was being done in the name of religion" -Barclay.

Priority became the selling of animals and exchanging money in the temple area.  
Worship had been hijacked by illegitimate thugs – see your TV for current examples.  
Carnival Religion: cheap trinkets, high cost, sugar and sweat, and no substance.

### **Prophetic Voice**

"And on that day there will no longer be a merchant in the house of the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 14:21).

"Then, suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to His temple . . . He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver" (Malachi 3:1,3).

Jesus "Get these out of here!"

## **3. Separating God from His People**

Distracting people, preventing them from worshipping, taking all their time exchanging and buying.

They made worship a duty for the people.

Corrupting people's view of God and worship.

All the selling was occurring in the Gentile area, thus disrupting and preventing the Gentiles from worshipping.

How were they to worship with all the distractions?

Not God's plan (1 Kings 8:41-43).

God wants His house to be "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7).

We are to invite others into worship.

Jesus made a way: "Many people saw the miraculous signs He was doing and believed in His name" (v. 23). The people drew near to God through Jesus, not the temple of man.

The status quo continued the next day. People caught up in religion.

## **Jews confront Jesus, 2:18-22**

Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."  
<sup>20</sup>The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But the temple he had spoken of was his body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

### **"What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" (v. 18)**

The merchants scatter but the Jewish religious authorities confront Jesus.  
They wanted a sign: prove your authority, now!  
If they thought Jesus was crazy they would have dismissed him and had him arrested. They were at least suspicious that Jesus was something more, possibly a prophet.  
They don't defend their actions. They know it's wrong!  
Furthermore, the sign was being done for them right before their eyes, the cleansing of the Temple, fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures.

### **"Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days' (v. 19)**

Literally, Jesus says, you destroy the physical temple and I will rebuild it in three days.  
What took them 46 years Jesus would do in 3 days.  
What a sign this would be and what authority a person would have if they did.  
"No thanks," say the religious leaders.  
Jesus was asked several times by the Jews to show a sign; He denied them every time.

Jesus was ultimately inviting them to destroy Him, kill Him; and they do.

Who will destroy it?

Jesus never says He will destroy the temple, although it was claimed He did by false witnesses at His trial (Mk. 14:58; Matt. 21:23-27).  
He does say "(You – Jewish Leaders) destroy this temple . . .".  
"Jesus repeatedly predicts His death and resurrection, Matt. 16:21" -Kostenberger.

No one got it, The religious authorities misunderstand and the disciples don't get it until later.

This will be the sign of signs, the exclamation point of all signs, His death and resurrection.  
Declaring definitively that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior, the Prophet, Priest and King.  
There will be no more material temple, those days are gone.

### **<sup>20</sup>The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But the temple he had spoken of was his body.**

Their reply reveals their focus, the material temple, the natural; not the supernatural LORD.

## **The Temple**

### **A place of constant conflict for Jesus.**

He teaches, others want to kill him (8:59), this temple scene.  
He declares "I am" and He is the foundation stone of a new temple (7:37-39).

### **Other Jewish groups also saw the corruption of the Temple.**

Essenes, left the traditional Jewish worship due to the corruption.

**This wasn't Jesus' first time to the Temple. He had seen this corruption years prior.**  
12 years old, as a man attending each year.  
May explain the amount of anger, watching year after year the manipulation and corruption.

### **Jesus as the Temple**

The Temple is where God and believer meet.

Jesus is where people meet God.

Without Jesus there is only limited understanding of God; to know Jesus is to know God.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Temple.

He is the chief cornerstone.

He is the head of the body, the Temple; Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12.

"The human body of Jesus that uniquely manifests the Father, and becomes the focal point of the manifestation of God to man, the living abode of God on earth, the fulfillment of all the temple meant, and the center of all true worship. In this 'temple' the ultimate sacrifice would take place; within three days of death and burial, Jesus Christ, the true temple, would rise from the dead" -Carson.

AD 70, the complete destruction of the temple by Rome.

Jesus rose on the third day, "I am making everything new" (Rev. 21:5).

### **The Disciples**

"After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken."

The disciples remembered 17 and recalled in 22 after the resurrection:

Recalled what He has said.

Believed the Scriptures.

Believed the words of Jesus.

The resurrection generates belief in Jesus.

### **Many People**

"Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name."

The people responded to the signs of Jesus.

John 20:30 says Jesus did many other miraculous signs.

God will be with His people, there is no stopping Him.

### **Untrustworthy**

But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. <sup>25</sup>He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Jesus did not "entrust", "believe" those who believed in Him.

John is declaring Jesus' divinity.

Jesus is proved right; man would kill Him, Peter's denial, all scatter but John at the cross, etc.

Only God knows and searches our hearts, Genesis 6; Psalm 7:9; Jeremiah 17:10; John 1:42, 48, 5:42.

**Take Away:**

What do you have zeal for?

How do you approach worship?

Distracted by trinkets and the business of life?

Are you still keeping Him at arm's length?

Are you looking to be with God?

How do you prepare before arriving here on Sunday?

Worship is about God, being with God.

Sunday morning or Thursday afternoon.

What is getting in your way?

Jesus has removed all barriers:

No more far-away temple to travel to – Jesus is the Temple.

No more priest to go through – Jesus is our High Priest.

No money needed – Jesus paid it all. Drink freely of Christ.

No more sacrifices to offer – Jesus is our eternal sacrifice.

Sincerity, genuineness, truthfulness, humility – is all you need to bring.