

**Subject: *When Jesus Cleaned House***

**Scripture: *John 2:13-25***

Jesus often did things and said things that shook people up. He was plainspoken and He was a man of action. He was not politically correct. You will remember when He asked His disciples on one occasion: “Whom do men say that I am?” They said, “Some say you are John the Baptist, some say Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” All of those men were plainspoken men and men of action.

We are looking at the occasion when Jesus entered the Temple and cleared out the people who corrupted this holy place with their money-making operations. This was not the only time that Jesus would clean out the Temple. The other three Gospels tell of Jesus cleansing the Temple at the close of His ministry, but John tells us that Jesus also began His ministry with this drastic action that showed His divine authority. In this text we see three things take place and Jesus used all three to reveal His deity as the Son of God.

### **SERIOUS CONFRONTATION WITH CHRIST (vs. 13-17)**

This confrontation erupted because the Jews were desecrating the Temple and Jesus called them out for it. This was the time of Passover, the greatest of all Jewish feasts. All Jewish men were required to go to Jerusalem and so the crowd has been estimated at well over two million people. The Passover was established in the days of Moses about 1,400 years before Christ. We read about the institution of Passover in Exodus 12, when God passed over the homes of Israel when He saw the blood of the lamb over the door and on the side posts of the door. In those days it was called “the Lord’s Passover,” but here it is called “the Jews’ Passover” (vs. 1) which seems to indicate that it had become a ritual without much meaning to the people.

Large numbers of people came to celebrate Passover and they needed two things: animals to offer as sacrifices and money to give as offerings for the Temple. Since it was hard to bring an animal sacrifice on such a long trip, temple merchants made it convenient to buy sacrificial animals on the Temple property. Since Roman money had the image of Caesar stamped on it and Caesar had proclaimed himself to be a god, it was not accepted in the Temple. So money-changers set up shop and made the proper coins available. These businessmen seized the opportunity to make a big profit, so you get the picture. The special religious feast of Passover and the sacred house of worship, the Temple, had become a place of business.

Jesus saw all this and He took action and rebuked them for making “my Father’s house” an house of merchandise (business). Later on, Jesus said, **Matthew 21:13** *It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.* His actions and His words proved that He was a man’s man and He was God’s Son. Everyone knew the Temple was God’s house, but in saying God was His Father, Jesus made Himself equal with God. The disciples remembered what the Scripture said in **Psalms 69:9** *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

Zeal is a mixture of enthusiastic love and righteous anger. Zeal includes both an intense love for God and intense anger toward sin. Zeal is a passionate concern for God’s honor and glory. Zeal puts the glory of God ahead of personal acceptance and safety. Jesus was more concerned that God be respected even if that meant He would be disliked. Jesus knew this was a stand He must take and it was a hill worth dying on.

When Jesus drove out the business men and cleansed the Temple, He was making a clear statement that He was the Messiah. The people knew the prophecy of **Malachi 3:1-3**<sup>1</sup> *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*<sup>2</sup> *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:*<sup>3</sup> *And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.* Christ is going to show up unexpectedly and when He shows up, He is going to clean things up. Here is the point that John makes:

- ✓ Only the Son of God can prescribe and regulate worship

They knew the implications of what Jesus said and did, so they asked Him to show them His credentials (vs. 18).

### **SPIRITUAL CONFUSION ABOUT CHRIST (vs. 18-22)**

The first temple was Solomon's temple. The next was Zerubbabel's temple, rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity. This temple was called Herod's temple because he funded the project and it took 46 years to build (vs. 20) and was still a work in progress. Jesus gave them an answer, but they misunderstood what He said. Later on, Jesus' enemies brought up this statement as a charge against Him, **Matthew 26:61** *And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.* And they used it to mock Him on the cross, **Matthew 27:40** *Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.* Even the disciples didn't understand the significance of what He said until after the resurrection. Then they remembered, they believed the scripture, and what Jesus said.

The only sign Jesus ever gave to confirm He was the Son of God was His resurrection, **Matthew 12:39-40**<sup>39</sup> *But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:*<sup>40</sup> *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Paul wrote about the significance of Christ's resurrection in **Romans 1:4** *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* Here is the point that John makes:

- ✓ Only the Son of God can raise Himself from the dead

### **SHALLOW COMMITMENT TO CHRIST (vs. 23-25)**

These verses take place at that same time and reveal the impact Jesus made on those who saw Him and heard Him. Many believed when they saw His miracles, but He did not commit Himself to them. Believe (vs. 23) is the same word as commit (vs. 24). They believed in Him, but He did not believe in them because He knew their hearts (vs. 25). Their faith was shallow and superficial. They believed in Him as a miracle-worker, but that's as far as it went. They did not believe on Him as Lord and Savior. They admired Him, but did not submit to Him and follow Him. Someone said, "Hell is full of people who admired Jesus." Here is the point that John makes:

- ✓ Only the Son of God can read men's hearts

He knows if our faith is real or superficial. He knows if we believe in Him only when He does something for us (healing, getting a job, or some special blessing) or if we are fully committed to Him as our Lord and Savior.

### **HOW THIS MESSAGE APPLIES:**

- ✓ This message presents a challenge for our church

The church is the temple of God, **1 Corinthians 3:16-17** <sup>16</sup> *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* <sup>17</sup> *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* In the Old Testament God had a temple for His people, but now He has a people for His temple. What happens in the church really matters to God. Things may go on in the church for years and everybody may be good with it, but the question must be, what does God think and how does He feel?

Is there anything that dishonors or displeases God? We may be asking the wrong question. Instead of asking, what's wrong with this? We should be asking, what's right with it? Does this glorify God? Does this represent what the temple of God should be and what it should do?

- ✓ This message presents a challenge for every believer

Every believer is the temple of God, **1 Corinthians 6:19** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?* What you do in your body matters to God because you represent Him in this world. Are there some things in your life that need to be thrown out and cleaned up? It's time to clean house.