

Pt 12 Jesus Cleanses the Temple – John 2:13-22

A sermon series in the Gospel of John, by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church www.pbcknox.com

John 2:13-22

- 13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:
15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;
16 And said unto them that sold doves, **Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.**
17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.
18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?
19 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**
20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?
21 But he spake of the temple of his body.
22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

We pick up following the steps of Jesus' earthly ministry. It is difficult to say how much time passed between the marriage in Canaan that we studied about last time and where this picks up at the Jewish Passover. It most likely was a year into his public ministry and Passover would have been around April 14th.

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

There are 7 main Jewish feasts outlined in the Bible. We can find them in the order they are observed, in Leviticus Chapter 23:

1. **Passover** - Leviticus 23:5, 14th Day of the first month in the evening. This is when the Jews remembered when the Lord promised He would passover them if they painted their door posts with the blood of an unspotted lamb.
2. **Feast of Unleaven Bread** - Leviticus 23:5, 15th Day of the first month and lasted 7-days. This was in remembrance of the Jews exodus from Egypt. They can only eat unleavened bread during the 7-days and no work was to be performed.
3. **Feast of Firstfruits** - Leviticus 23:9, the beginning of the harvest. This is when the Jews brought the first fruits of the harvest to the priest for an offering. This offering was called a "wave offering" because the priest would wave it before the Lord.
4. **Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)** - Leviticus 23:15, Began 50 days after the Firstfruits feast. (Pentecost means fiftieth) There were several sacrifices made during that time.
5. **Feast of Trumpets** - Leviticus 23:24, The first day of the seventh month. This is when they would blow trumpets as a holy convocation and they did no work but would make a an offering by fire unto the Lord.
6. **Day of Atonement** - Leviticus 23:27, The tenth day of the seventh month. This is the day they would repent of their sins bring a lamb for a sacrifice to the priest

who would go into the holy of holies sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat and make an offering for the sins of Israel. Work was strictly forbidden on that day.

7. **Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths)** - Leviticus 23:34, The fifteenth day of the seventh month. They would offer sacrifices for 7-days and live in huts they built with palm branches.

In our opening text, we are told the **Jews' passover was at hand**. Every Jewish male 12-years old and up, would travel to Jerusalem every year for the Passover.

Jesus' parents were devout Jews and made this journey to Jerusalem every year. We also know that Jesus went as well when he was 12-years old.

Luke 2:41-43 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

During the Passover, as we said, all devout Jews would travel to Jerusalem to observe it. This means that many people came from what we would consider "foreign" countries. It would have been way too difficult to bring an animal sacrifice with them on their travels so they would purchase one in Jerusalem. This was big business and there were men would setup places for people to come and buy oxen, sheep, and doves – which were used in the sacrifices.

With all of the people traveling in from foreign countries, there was a need for them to exchange their money for the type of money used in Jerusalem. They needed money to pay the Temple tax. It would be like us going to Germany and trying to use American dollars to purchase something. We would have to exchange our dollars for Euro dollars. This isn't free. The money exchangers charge 2 or 3 percent interest. That would add up after a while and the men who did this business in Jesus' day were notoriously crooked.

In Jesus' day, the animal sellers and money changers were setting up their booths in the Temple and making a profit from everyone who bought animals or exchanged money. There was nothing "religious" about any of this.

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

Here we find Jesus' righteous indignation. His holy wrath. He makes a scourge of small cords to use as a whip. That is what scourge means "a whip." This is the first of two times we read about in the Bible where Jesus does this. He does it here at the start of his earthly ministry and again at the end of his earthly ministry. The synoptic gospels give the account of the second time. (**Matthew 21:12-17, Mark 11:15-18, and Luke 19:45-46**)

Notice that no one fights against this. The reason is because they know what they are doing is wrong. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus describes himself as "**meek and lowly.**" Don't mistake that for being weak and vulnerable. They were probably all scared to death of him.

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

Jesus is not going to just turn over the tables and run, he's going to command them with authority to stop what they are doing: **Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.**

By claiming the owner of the house (Temple) to be his Father, this is showing his deity and makes a declaration that he is the Son of God. He has the authority to run them off because it is his house.

Listen to what is written in **Malachi 3:1** 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.

Now we have seen that come about here in the first two chapters of John.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

As Jesus' disciples witnessed this, they (being very familiar with the Scriptures), immediately think of **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.

I think this shows just how important the House of God is. The place of worship should be a holy place. Too many churches today have turned God's house into a place of merchandise. I wonder how many "money changers" the Lord would run out of Baptist churches today?

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

Since Jesus made claims to his deity by indicating the owner of the Temple was his Father, this causes the Jewish authorities to come out to question him. That is most likely who "the Jews" is referring to, maybe the High Priest, or those of the Sanhedrin. They want him to show a sign that he is who he says he is and has the authority to run people off and make demands on what they can or cannot do in the Temple. They most likely were looking for some kind of miracle to be performed to prove himself.

When we get to John chapter 5, we will see that the Jews don't ask for a sign when Jesus lays claim to the Father – they just make plans to murder him.

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Jesus really knocks these Jews for a loop. The answer he gives them almost seems like a parable or a riddle. Since we have the Bible, we know what he is talking about but these Jewish leaders are clueless as we see in the next verse.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? **21** But he spake of the temple of his body.

The Jews think he is referring to the Temple they were standing in – the bricks and mortar. The Temple at that time had been going under renovations for the past 46-years. There had been a lot of time and hard work put into building what was there. They think Jesus is out of his mind thinking that he could rebuild the Temple in only 3 days.

Of course, we know he was referring to his resurrection. Over the course of Jesus' public ministry he referenced these three days many times. Most of the time those he spoke to did not understand it.

These Jews do not have Spiritual discernment and they do not understand it. All they can understand is the physical aspect. They are so far away from God that they are unable to connect the dots. The disciples connected them but not entirely. They wouldn't understand fully until after his resurrection – as we see in the last verse.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Jesus never spoke an unnecessary word. Everything he spoke had meaning. Sometimes the disciples understood it but most of the time they were puzzled. Can't you just see the light come on in their heads when they put all the pieces together and understood?

We are not much different from the disciples. Fortunately for us, we have the full Canon of Scripture which reveals to us so many unknown things. However; none of us knows the answers to everything and probably never will until we reach heaven. But that doesn't mean we stop trying. The more we study God's Word and pray and meditate upon it, the more we will comprehend.

We will stop here and finish those last three verses next time.

