

## John Chapter 2 Continued

Verses 13-17: The first way John demonstrated Christ's deity in the narrative of the temple cleansing was to show His passion for reverence. God alone exercises the right to regulate His worship.

**John 2:13-14 "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem," "And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:"**

This is the first of 3 Passovers which John mentions (verse 13; 6:4; 11:55), Jews selected the lamb on the tenth of the month and celebrated Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar month of Nisan (Full moon at the end of March or beginning of April). They slaughtered the lamb between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. on the night of the feast. Passover commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt when the angel of death "passed over" Jewish homes in Egypt whose "doorposts" were sprinkled with blood.

"Jesus went up to Jerusalem". Jesus' journeying to Jerusalem for the Passover was a standard annual procedure for every devout Jewish male over 12 years old. Jewish pilgrims crowded into Jerusalem for this greatest of Jewish feasts.

Because many traveled large distances, it was inconvenient to bring their sacrificial animals with them. Opportunistic merchants, seeing a chance to provide a service and probably eyeing considerable profits during this time, set up areas in the outer courts of the temple in order for travelers to buy animals.

The money changers were needed because the temple tax, paid annually by every conscientious Jewish male 20 years of age and older had to be in Jewish or Tyrian coinage (because of its high purity of silver). Those coming from foreign lands would need to exchange their money into the proper coinage for the tax.

In the outer courts, a market had been set up to sell animals for sacrifice and there was a place to exchange the weary travelers' money for the half-shekel suitable for the temple. No coin which had an earthly ruler on it could be used in the temple.

The money changers charged a high fee for the exchange. With such a large group of travelers and because of the seasonal nature of the celebration, both the animal dealers and money exchangers exploited the situation for monetary gain (Robber's den). Religion had become crass and materialistic.

This place was not only located in a place that God called a place of prayer, but these animals were not the quality the Lord required. These merchants were really not honest.

Verses 13-15: John used this section where Christ cleared the temple in righteous indignation to reinforce his main theme that Jesus was the promised Messiah and Son of God. In this section, he highlighted three attributes of Jesus that confirms His deity which were:

1. His Passion for reverence (13-17),
2. His power of resurrection (18-22),
3. His perception of reality (23-25).

**John 2:15, "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;"**

A scourge was a whip. This whip was usually made with strips of leather and had knots tied to make it hurt worse. This is the only time in Jesus' ministry that we ever see Him violent and striking out. He was usually very humble and would not even protect Himself.

This is supposed to be the special place of worship. Jesus believes this shows disrespect to the Father. Our churches today should take special note of this. The Lord is very strict about what goes on in His house.

This tells me that there is a time to show anger. When the name of the Lord (or anything pertaining to Him) is violated, it is correct to be angry about this.

When the holiness of God and His worship was at stake, Jesus took fast and furious action. The "all" indicates that He drove not only men out but also animals. Yet, although His physical action was forceful, it was not cruel.

**John 2:16, "And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."**

Because of this very Scripture above, I feel it is wrong to sell any type of merchandise in the church. Our generation has taken God far too casually. He is not casual. He is exact. He never changes. If He said this was His Father's house, then all sanctuaries everywhere are His Father's house.

In (Matthew 21:13), we find that Jesus said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer". We should enter the sanctuary with reverence, retain this attitude while we are there, and leave the same way.

Jesus made a strong demand that they stop their current practice. God's holiness demands holiness in worship.

"My Fathers", John gave a subtle hint of Jesus' divine Sonship as well as His messiahship with the recording of this phrase.

“House of merchandise (business)”: Jesus may have intended a play on words here. The word used pictures a trading house filled with wares.

**John 2:17, "And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."**

The Scripture the disciples are remembering is from (Psalm 69:9).

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."

When David wrote this psalm, he was being persecuted because of his zeal toward God's house and his defense of God's honor. The disciples were afraid that Jesus' actions would precipitate the same type of persecution.

These things said before the disciples are just sinking the message deeper and deeper that Jesus is truly Messiah. The Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, say the same thing. It is the same God that wrote it all.

In verses 18-22 the second way John demonstrated Christ's deity in the account of the temple cleansing was to show His power over death through resurrection. Only God has this right.

**John 2:18, "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"**

Here these Jews are really asking Jesus by what authority He has coming in and doing all these things in the temple. Now they actually are saying if you have the authority, prove it to us. They thought He would do some miracle that would be undeniable.

Their demand of a sign reveals that they had not grasped the significance of Jesus' rebuke that centered in their need for proper attitudes and holiness in worship. Moreover they were requesting from Jesus a crass display of miracles on demand, further displaying their unbelief.

In a sense, what these people were doing was destroying the meaning of the temple. God does not like anything associated with Him to be merchandised. Such as when God was angered when Simon tried to buy the gifts of the Spirit (in Acts 8:14-25). God's blessings are not for sale.

There are so many beautiful spiritual meanings to glean from this. The temple contaminated by any sort of worldliness God will not dwell in. He is a Holy God. The Lord Jesus spoke to the disciples and in so doing to us also and said He would dwell within us and we in Him.

This cannot be if there is sin in our life. He wants a holy house to dwell in. The building we call our church where the Christians meet is like our body. It must be pure and holy, or the Lord will not meet with us there.

**John 2:19, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**

At his trial, the authorities charged Jesus with making a threatening statement against the temple, revealing that they did not understand Jesus' response here. Once again John's Gospel supplements the other gospels at this point by indicating the Jesus enigmatically referred to His resurrection.

Jesus' cryptic statement most likely was destined to reveal the truth to His disciples by concealing its meaning from unbelievers who questioned Him. Only after His resurrection did the disciples understand the real significance of this statement.

John believes in this that Jesus is speaking of His own body, which they did destroy and which was raised up on the third day. There are many ways to destroy the temple, and I believe a great deal of temple destruction is going on now.

Importantly, through the death and resurrection of Christ, temple worship in Jerusalem was destroyed and reinstated in the hearts of those who were built into a spiritual temple called the church.

**John 2:20, "Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"**

This was not a reference to Solomon's temple since it had been destroyed during the Babylonian conquest (in 586 B.C).

This was the second temple which the captives of Babylon under Zerubbabel and Jeshua began rebuilding. Encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews completed the work in 516 B.C. and in 20/19 B.C. Herod the Great began a reconstruction and expansion.

Workers then completed the main part of the project in 10 years time, but other parts were still being constructed even at the time Jesus cleansed the temple.

Interestingly, the finishing touches on the whole enterprise were still being made at its destruction by the Romans along with Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The famous "Wailing Wall" is built on part of the Herodian temple foundation.

The problem is the Jews did not know that they were speaking to the Creator of the world. Here is another time when people are looking with their physical eyes and comparing what they (mere men), could do with what the Lord can do.

With men, this would be impossible, but with God all things are possible.

**John 2:21, "But he spake of the temple of his body."**

We see here that John believes Jesus is speaking of His crucifixion and on the third day His resurrection.

**John 2:22, "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."**

It is always much easier to understand what something meant by looking back to it than by looking forward. Jesus told them numerous times of His crucifixion and three days later His resurrection, but until after it happened, it did not take roots in them.

They panicked and ran at the crucifixion, and many of them did not believe He was raised from the dead until they saw Him in person.

In verses 23-25 we see the third way John demonstrated Christ's deity in the account of the temple cleansing was to show His perception of reality. Only God truly knows the hearts of men.

**John 2:23, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did."**

The Passover is eaten on the fourteenth of Nisan. The purifying of the houses and vessels takes place on the thirteenth. This is overlapped by the Feast of Unleavened Bread which is part of the same. It lasts eight days.

Jesus was in and around the streets of Jerusalem for an extended time. He was preaching, healing, and delivering all that time. The miracles were undeniable. The blind could see, the leper was cleansed, the deaf could hear, the dumb could speak, the lame could walk. There was no end to the miracles He performed.

John 14:11 says, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Let Jesus' works speak for Him. It appears they spoke so loudly here that many believed He was Messiah.

This verse subtly reveals the true nature of belief from a biblical standpoint. Because of what they knew of Jesus from His miraculous signs, many came to believe in Him. However, Jesus made it His habit not to wholeheartedly "entrust" or "commit" Himself to them because He knew their hearts.

**John 2:24, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,"**

Faith that is based upon things you can see is not really faith at all. It takes no faith at all to believe a miracle you see with your own eyes. Jesus knew that the faith of these people was

shallow and not the kind that would stand up in tribulation. Their faith was not in the giver, but in the gift. This is a dangerous type of faith. When the gifts stop, so does the faith.

Jesus did not bare Himself to them, because He sensed this. A faith that is based on getting from God and not giving will not hold up in tribulation.

John 16:33 says, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Jesus looked for genuine conversion rather than enthusiasm for the spectacular. This verse also leaves a subtle doubt as to the genuineness of the conversion of some. This emphatic contrast between (verses 23 & 24), in terms of type of trust, therefore, reveals that "belief into His name" involved much more than intellectual assent. It called for whole hearted commitment of one's life as Jesus' disciple.

**John 2:25, "And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."**

Many believed in Jesus when they witnessed His miracles, but Jesus did not entrust His fate to their hands, for He knew what was in man. The same word, *pisteuo* ("believe or commit"), is used (in verses 23 and 24). Jesus knew men's hearts. This is illustrated by His subsequent interviews with Nicodemus, the woman at the well and the nobleman.

The Lord can look right into your heart and know whether it be good or bad. Our thoughts are no secrets to Him as well. We are His creation, and He knows everything about us.

Sometimes, like these here who believed, the Lord can see through and know it is a front. What we feel in our heart about something is even more important than what we do and say. Jesus knows the truth anyway. It is no good to lie about how we feel about Him.

## **John Chapter 2 Continued Questions**

1. Why did Jesus go to Jerusalem at this time?
2. What did He find in the temple that displeased Him?
3. What was really going on?
4. Why did they need money changers?
5. What did Jesus make of the cords?
6. What is that?

7. What did Jesus do that showed His anger?
8. When is the only time anger is permitted?
9. What were they doing with doves?
10. What did Jesus tell them to not make His Father's house into?
11. In Matthew, God's house is what?
12. Where was this action prophesied in the Old Testament?
13. What did the Jews want Him to prove?
14. Where did Jesus say He would dwell?
15. What did Jesus say He would do in three days?
16. What did John believe He was speaking of?
17. How long did it take the Jews to build the temple?
18. Why could these Jews not understand what He said?
19. When did the disciples remember this saying?
20. Why did many believe Him?
21. What was wrong with their belief?
22. Passover is eaten on what day?
23. What other Jewish celebration overlaps Passover?
24. Why did Jesus not commit Himself to them?
25. We learn in John 16:33 that in this life we will have \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Why did Jesus not need someone to tell Him about these men?