

Cleansing The Temple: John 2:13:25

Last week. We saw Jesus give a sign by setting aside a purification ritual “of the Jews”. Today he disrupts a public festival “of the Jews” (2:13). The link between the two passages points us to his “hour” (2:4), the destruction of his body (2:19–21); the cross overshadows the Gospel from this point forward. He has come to establish His Kingdom and it will be through His promise and fulfillment of that promise by dying on the cross to save His people. The contradictions and distinctions between His Kingdom and “their” Kingdom is clearly defined in His life death and resurrection and will be eternally manifested for all to see at His return. Remember that all signs point to Him!

The festival of Passover was celebrated on the 14th day of the lunar month Nisan (full moon at the end of March or beginning of April). It commemorated the night when the angel of death ‘passed over’ the homes daubed with blood in the prescribed manner, killing the firstborn in all other homes. In the consternation and revulsion that followed, the Jews escaped from Egypt (Ex. 12). Passover was immediately followed by the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread (15–22 Nisan).

Jesus cleanses the temple. The Jerusalem temple is at the center of the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of man. Jesus a place of conflict in this Gospel. Jesus here will assault the dignity of the temple, later and encounters in the temple those who wish to kill him. He teaches in the temple, but his teaching involves conflict with the Judean religious establishment Ironically while in the temple Jesus declares himself the foundation stone of a new temple.

1. CLEANSING vv.13-16

Verse 13- The Passover, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem

Verse 14- He finds sellers and money changers seated at their tables.

The money-changers converted money to the approved currency, charging a percentage for their service. The tables of the money-changers were not set up all year round, but only around the time when the temple tax was collected

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. **Malachi 3:1, 3**

The temple itself, the focal point where God and believers meet, where God accepts believers because of a bloody sacrifice, will be superseded by another ‘temple’, another sacrifice

Verse 15- He made a scourge of cords, drove them out of the temple, with the herds, poured out the coins of the money changers, and overturned their tables.

Verse 16 He said to those selling doves, “take these things away” and “stop making my Father’s house a place of business”

2. CONSUMED v.17

Verse 17- His disciples remembered *Psalm 69:9*

“Jesus’ cleansing of the temple testifies to his zeal for pure worship, a right relationship with God at the place supremely designated to serve as the focal point of the relationship between God and man.” ~Carson

3. CONFLICT vv. 18-21

Verse 18- Show us a sign to prove Your authority to do this.

They display no reflection or self-examination over whether Jesus’ cleansing of the temple and related charges were *just*. They are therefore less concerned with pure worship and a right approach to God than they are with questions of precedent and authority.

The request for a miraculous sign demonstrates they harbor at least a suspicion that they were dealing with a heaven-sent prophet.

If the authorities had eyes to see, the cleansing of the temple was already a ‘sign’ they should have thought through and deciphered in terms of Old Testament Scripture.

Verse 19- Jesus replied “destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up again.”

“temple” denotes the shrine, the sanctuary, the very dwelling place of deity.

Anyone who could restore the temple within three days of its complete destruction must be judged to have the authority to regulate its practices.

Destruction of a place of worship was judged a capital offence in the Graeco-Roman world as we will see later when witnesses testify against Jesus. But the testimony of the witnesses in their report of Jesus’ words did not agree; John 2:19 records the words Jesus actually used, he never said, ‘*I will* destroy ...’ but rather ‘[You] destroy ... and I

will raise it again'; what Jesus was referring to had primary reference to his own body, not the physical temple.

There is irony in the fact that ultimately the Jews themselves were to be the means of bringing about the sign they asked Jesus to produce, and which they did not recognize when it came. There is further irony in that to put Jesus to death was to offer the one sacrifice that can truly expiate sin, and thus doom the Temple as a place for the offering of sacrifice

Verse 20- The Jews replied "It took 46 years to build this sanctuary and you will raise it up in three days?"

It is important to note that this temple is not the first! Both it and the tabernacle point us to Christ. The Jews are naturally incredulous that a building under construction for forty-six years could be rebuilt in three days. Their misunderstanding arises because they focus on the purely material, the natural; they miss what Jesus is really talking about.

Verse 21- Jesus was speaking of the sanctuary of His body.

It is possible to understand "his body" as the church, which in Paul's writings is explicitly called the body of Christ: **Ephesians 1:23; 4:16; Colossians 1:18.**

Jesus is pointing to His resurrection

Jesus is pointing to the actual destruction of the Temple.

In Jesus' teaching "three days" almost always refers to the period leading up to the resurrection.

It is 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 Tabernacle), the fulfillment of all the temple meant, and the centre 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.

Jesus not only cleansed the temple; under this typological reading of the Old Testament, he also replaced it, fulfilling its purposes.

4. CONCLUSION vv.22-25

Verse 22- When He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered what He said, and they believed the Scriptures and the words that were spoken.

The disciples believed not only “the Scripture” but also “the words”

Inadequate faith (2:23–25)

Verse 23- Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover; during the feast, many believed in His name, when they saw the signs that He was doing.

To exercise faith on the grounds of having witnessed *miraculous signs* is precarious. Although miracles cannot command faith, it is better to believe on the ground of miracles than not at all.

Verse 24- But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,

Jesus was not entrusting Himself to them!

Jesus wonderfully promises to entrust himself to those who truly trust him!

Jesus calls people to trust him for what he is, not because he passes the tests we set. Those who had been attracted by the miracles would have been ready to try to make an earthly king of him. But he did not trust himself to them. He looked for genuine conversion, not enthusiasm for the spectacular.

Verse 25- He knew all men, he didn't need anyone to bear witness concerning man, He knew what was in man.

1 Kings 8:39,

Jeremiah 17:9-10,