

Jesus Clears the Temple

John 2:12-25

The Passover celebration took place yearly at the Temple in Jerusalem. Every Jewish male was expected to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during this time (Deut 16:16). This was a weeklong festival. The Passover was one day, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted the rest of the week. The Temple was an impressive site, on a hill overlooking the city. Solomon had built the first temple on this site 1000 years earlier, but it was destroyed by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25). This Temple was rebuilt in 515 BC. And it has been 46 years since Herod the Great had begun remodeling, and enlarging the Temple we read about here.

Read & Discuss John 2:12-25

v.12- During His ministry Capernaum is Jesus' home town; this was about 18 miles north of Cana (the location of the wedding in 2:1-11), and 70 miles north of Jerusalem.

v.14 – The Temple area was always crowded during the Passover feast with thousands of out-of-towners who had made the pilgrimage. The Temple tax had to be paid in local currency, so foreigners had to have their money exchanged. And the money changers would often charge exorbitant rates. The people were also required to make sacrifices for sins; so animal merchants did great business in the court yard.

The religious leaders rationalized this practice as a convenience for the worshippers. The court yard became so full of greedy and dishonest merchants that the act of worship became secondary (or worse); and worship was the main reason for visiting the Temple. The purpose for God's house of worship had been forgotten.

v.15-16 – This chapter begins with a miracle of conversion (changing water into wine). It then shows Jesus with a work of cleansing (the cleansing of the temple). This is always how Jesus works in His people: conversion, then cleansing. Look up: 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

v.16 -18- Jesus' authority is based on His identity. Jesus' actions are based on His relation to God as His Son.

Certain authority is granted to some, but not to all. The authority to use weapons and restrain people is granted to police officers, but not to the general public. The authority to imprison people is given to judges, but not to individual citizens. Jesus had God's authority. While we should strive to live like Christ, we should never try to claim His authority where it has not been given to us.

v.17 - This remembrance of the disciples puts the actions of Jesus in their proper perspective. These words are originally written by David who was scorned by those who did not share his devotion (Psa 69:7-9). This text from Psalm 69 is especially appropriate in view of Jesus' work on the cross.

v.19-22 - This statement about destroying the temple tests their hearts. By associating his own body with the temple, which is His Father's house, Jesus again points to his own special relationship with God. Here Jesus does not give the leaders an answer to their question, but revelation to His questioners. Even the disciples did not understand Jesus' words until after He had risen from the dead.

Believers are the "Body the Christ". Jesus is the head, and with the indwelling Holy Spirit we are His physical body here on earth which God wants to use to achieve His good works. Look up: 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 2:10

v.23 – This is one of the reoccurring themes of the Gospel of John. Throughout this book we will read over and over again how with each of Christ's teachings and miracles "*many believed in His name*". Notice however that it does not say "they all believed". The followers of Christ will grow, and so will the number of those threatened and resentful of His message. Just as today, Jesus and His teachings are divisive. Look up: John 9:16

v.24-25 – All their faith was immature until after He was glorified (His work on the cross, resurrection and ascension) and the Holy Spirit arrived. Jesus' love and power throughout His ministry cannot be adequately understood and responded to until after the resurrection. Jesus knows that even the disciples' faith is inadequate at this point in His ministry (John 16:29-32).

Jesus' reason for not entrusting Himself to these people goes deeper still. Jesus only takes His direction from His Father. In this sense Jesus does not entrust Himself to anyone. He is available to all with God's love, but His undivided devotion is not shared by these individuals. Look up: John 12:42-43