

## “CLEANING THE HOUSE OF GOD”

John 2:12-22

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### INTRODUCTION

Here we see Jesus transitioning from His private ministry with family and friends to His open and public ministry at the center of Jewish religious life.

First, He spends a few days with His family and His disciples. Then he goes to manifest Himself at the chief of the religious festivals of the Jews. At once, He shows the true purpose of His ministry and the true nature of His person.

However, as usual, the Jewish leaders are blind to the “signs of the times” and take offense instead of standing in awe and giving thanks for God’s mercy to them.

There are those who do understand what is happening; his disciples remembered and believed the Scriptures, and they later remembered the words of Jesus and believed them also.

It can be frustrating when the world around us and even the religious leaders are “thick-headed” and “hard hearted.” But the Lord goes on with His program; He gains disciples and trains them. He strengthens their faith while at the same time He lays His rightful claim to His Father’s House and business.

Years before Ezekiel had seen a vision of the “Glory of the Lord” departing from His temple—leaving it stand desolate. Now suddenly, the Lord returns to His temple just as He had predicted in Malachi 3:1-3. The Lord is beginning the process of purifying His temple and His servants. If the religious leaders would but read and know their Scriptures they should recognize what Jesus is doing—that His actions are a sign. Instead they “stupidly” ask for a “sign”; He gives them but one.

When you reject and kill me—the true temple of God, I will rise up from the dead triumphantly within three days. You reject Me, and by rejecting Me, you bring about the one true “sign” that proves who I am—my resurrection from the dead. This sign at the same time will bring about the cessation of the very temple sacrifices and rituals that were the object of the present quarrel, and rejection of this sign will eventually bring about the very destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem.

By rejecting Jesus they were rejecting their very LIFE; He had come to His own place, and his own people did not receive Him. But, as John said in 1:12, “as many as received Him, to them he gave the right to become the children of God—even to those who believe in His name.”

Even today the Lord has the right to come to His house (**your body**—I Cor. 6:19; **the church** (I Cor. 3:16) and to cleanse it. HOW WILL YOU RESPOND—In *faith* and *submission* or in *rebellion* and *unbelief*.

I. THE \_\_\_\_\_ AT CAPERNAUM (12)

A. His companions

- a. Mother
- b. Brothers Jesus' brothers are always treated and spoken of as just that—brothers. Jesus is also spoken of as having at least two sisters. The idea of the “perpetual virginity of Mary”, although popular in the second century and beyond, has absolutely no Scriptural authority.
- c. Disciples (six of them at least)

B. His city—later this city became Jesus headquarters (Mt. 4:13; Mk. 3:20-21)

C. His time of stay—“a few days.”

II. THE \_\_\_\_\_ AT PASSOVER (2:13)

John the Baptist had referred to Him as “The Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29; cf. v. 36). Since the Passover feast was “at hand,” Jesus must go up to Jerusalem and present Himself as the “Lord of the Temple” of Malachi (ch. 3:1-3) and as the Messiah and “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah (ch. 53)

A. Jewish Passover

B. Jesus went Up to Jerusalem

C. Disciples evidently stayed in Galilee—for later Jesus found them again at the shores of Galilee.

III. THE \_\_\_\_\_ IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE (14-21)

How do we explain this incident in John at the beginning of Christ's ministry, and that of the other gospels at the end of His ministry? There were **two** such incidents. Much is different in the accounts.

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ in the Courts of the Lord

1. The selling of animals
  - a. Oxen and sheep—for sacrifices
  - b. Doves—for the offerings of the poor
2. Moneychangers—for both the sale of the animals, and for the temple tax.

B. The Chastisement of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the House (15-16)

1. The use of a “scourge”
2. The driving out of “all”
3. The overturning of the tables and pouring out of the coins.
4. The command to dove sellers (birds within cages).

Why would no one try to stop Him?

*His moral authority.      Their guilty consciences.*

C. The Opposition to Commercialism

1. Take everything away—all of the above including the birds.
2. Stop perverting the purpose for the Temple
  - a. It is His Father's House—to be used for sacred purposes.
  - b. It had been turned into a place for commercial purposes

[The Accomplishment of Jesus' Action]

1. Attacked the secularizing spirit of the Jews
2. Exposed their graft and \_\_\_\_\_
3. Assailed their "anti-missionary spirit" (Westcott). This court was for the Gentiles.
4. Fulfilled Messianic prophecy.

D. The Consumption of the Master (17)

1. The Instant memory of the Disciples
2. The Scripture fulfilled—Ps. 69:9
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ for the House—A burning Jealousy
  - a. For Holiness of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God
  - b. For Holiness of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God
  - c. For the Honor of God Himself

What kind of "consumption" does he mean here?

- a. Total dedication to the cause. His Messianic actions.
- b. A wearing out of the person with the zeal by the opponents of the Lord.

E. The \_\_\_\_\_ (18-21)

1. Of the Jewish leaders (18) —They wanted to see a \_\_\_\_\_—I Cor. 1:22. This request, though typical of Jewish leaders (Mt. 21:23; Jn. 6:30; Mt. 12:38-39; 16:1ff), was still "wicked," "stupid", and "unbelieving".

They realized that One taking such actions claimed some kind of Messianic authority. He came to His temple, cleansed it, yet they refused to admit their \_\_\_\_\_, their *graft*, and their \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Of Jesus (19-21)

- a. Destroy this Temple
- b. I will rebuild it within \_\_\_\_\_ days
- c. Jesus clearly referred to His own \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 21).

When He refers to "three days" it is almost always a reference to the time when He would arise from the dead.

3. Of the Jewish leaders (20)

Took it to be a \_\_\_\_\_ reference to the Jewish temple of Herod.

Had been under construction for 46 years (from 20 B.C. to the present time—27 A.D. spring). How could He possibly raise it up in a mere three days.

The primary reference has to be His death and resurrection, not the cessation of sacrifices, nor the destruction of Jerusalem—though ironically all of this was the result of the one sign Jesus gives them—and they bring it all to pass! This sign is the same Jesus later said he would give them—the “sign of the prophet Jonah” who was “three days and nights in the heart of the earth”.

Note, that at Jesus’ trial, this accusation was thrown at him again (cf. Mt. 26:59-61), and even later at His crucifixion (Mt. 27:40). Even the first martyr faced a similar accusation (Acts 6:13-14). They continually misunderstood Him, yet sensed a veiled reference in Jesus’ statement that would have dire implications upon their temple and city.

#### IV. THE DISCIPLES’ \_\_\_\_\_ (22)

A. The Time—After Jesus’ Resurrection

B. The Memory—compare v. 17; there *immediate* memory of Scripture, here *later* memory of the statement of Jesus along with its meaning.

C. The Faith

1. In the \_\_\_\_\_—either a specific passage (the usual usage for the singular), or a general reference to all the messianic fulfillments in Jesus.

2. In the Word Spoken by \_\_\_\_\_

#### CONCLUSION

Are we a bit surprised and shocked at Jesus’ behavior in this passage? **Did Jesus “lose His temper?” Did He display anger?**

Yes, He was very angry—in fact, **smoking hot!** But He never “lost” His temper. He was right to be angry! His *blazing anger* was His real weapon here. **One of the greatest evidences of wickedness in this age is the inability of God’s people to become righteously indignant at the moral corruption of our society and its leaders! Our faculty of indignation has become “starved and chilled.”**

The Jewish leaders tragically rejected the Messiah who had come to cleanse the temple of His Father; they wanted it to be their temple on their terms.

What about you? Will you permit him to cleanse the temple of your body?

Will we permit Him to cleanse the temple of our church?

He has the right, and the consequences of refusal are tragic indeed!