

## John 2:12-25, "Jesus Clears the Temple"

### ✚ Jesus at the Temple

- ✓ "After this, he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem." **John 2:12-13.**
- ✓ Jerusalem is about 78 miles from Capernaum by road or path.
- ✓ Capernaum is approximately 700 feet below sea level compared to Jerusalem, which is over 2,550 feet above sea level.
- ✓ It was almost time for Passover; there was a lot of time to prepare for the celebration.
- ✓ Jesus is in the Temple, which was the dwelling place of God.
- ✓ The temple is the only place where sacrifices are allowed.
- ✓ At this time in history, cleansing and forgiveness came through these sacrifices.
- ✓ The temple was the dwelling place of God, opposed to a synagogue, which was a local worship center for Jews.

### ✚ Churches are places where people gather to learn, pray, and worship together.

### ✚ This Psalmist voiced the excitement that the Jews had for the Temple: "How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!" "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere." **Psalm 84:1,10.**

### ✚ The New Testament equivalent.

- ✓ "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." **Matthew 18:20.**
- ✓ "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." **Hebrews 10:25.**

### ✚ So here is the scene that John paints for us: Jesus is going to the "Temple". He gets there, and it smells like a stockyard and looks like a circus. There is a carnival of money-making events happening where worship preparation should be taking place. They have, as we shall see, racketeering, scams, bamboozle-ing, and many shysters. Their concern was for the circle of profit going on just outside God's Holy Temple.

- ✓ "In the temple courts, He found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, he made a whip out of cords and drove them all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." **John 2:14–17.**
- ✓ The population of Jerusalem would go from around 25,000 people to 210,000 people during Passover.
- ✓ The cost of everything would go up during the Passover celebration, like the price of popcorn during ball games.
- ✓ The largest influx of people came during Passover. It was the Superbowl of Jewishness or a Taylor Swift concert of religion. The vendors have you by the throat! Their finger was on the scale to increase costs similar to hotdogs at a pro sports venue, movie theater popcorn, \$5 water, or anything on a cruise ship.
- ✓ The animals they are selling were required by God's law. These required sacrifices should not be leveraged, or worshipers taken advantage of by the "servants of God." One could argue that such people are more servants of self. Like an additional governmental tax. What probably began as a helping hand turned into a business, then into a scam! The worshiper had to purchase a "kosher" animal, when his own offering was judged as not perfect, at an exorbitant price, sometimes four or five times its actual value. When he pulled his money out of his pocket, if it were not Palestinian coinage, he would have to visit the money changer to get the proper currency. When he did, he was charged a fifteen to twenty percent fee for the exchange. It was quite a scam. Then these leaders could and would buy the unapproved animal at a "blemished discount".
- ✓ Scammers like to put fancy labels on the charges they levy. No matter what label you put on it, it costs more money. It would be similar to the VAT tax, a value-added tax added to foreign exports.
- ✓ In addition to the sacrifices, every Jew was required to submit a half-shekel temple tax annually.

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- ✓ The people attending Passover were probably glad when Jesus drove out the vendors who were selling doves, sheep, and cattle at very high prices. There was no place for these in the house of God, in the temple courts (on the property). Buy or rent a place outside the temple of God. But, as we found out, the rulers ruined that for everyone!
  - ✓ The requirements for giving had not changed. God had not changed. So, the people, at the hands of dishonest temple leadership, were cheated. Such practices should have been forbidden, especially at the House of God!
  - ✓ We, too, must separate our worship from our wealth-building, from our networking and relationships efforts to get ahead. Believers should look out for one another, but that it not the purpose of visiting the house of God, which should be a household of faith.
  - ✓ Jesus is not against a market, but a market in the Temple where religious leaders profit from a scam is not acceptable. A free and fair market outside of the temple grounds, not profiteering, should be the desired process. In their system, the purpose of the temple was stolen, coopted, and confiscated.
  - ✓ It would seem that during this time, the temple was for sale. Biblical harlotry and divided devotion were the order of the day. It had been sold to the highest bidder, cheating people just outside the doors of the worship area. This was a system that allowed, encouraged, and required most of the congregants to be cheated through overpayment right before they went into worship. The priests could do so because they had a captive audience and an exclusive venue.
  - ✚ "Love and zeal controls" and consumes, not to be confused with uncontrolled anger.
    - ✓ Jesus' zeal would indeed consume Him. Such fervor for the things of God took Jesus out of favor with the religious leaders of the day and eventually got him killed.
    - ✓ The original temple was both extravagant and beautiful, but it was built on free will offerings, not monies given under duress.
  - ✚ The two temples of the Jewish nation
    - ✓ "Then the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. For the service of God's house, they gave 185 tons of gold and 10,000 gold coins, 375 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 4,000 tons of iron."  
**1 Chronicles 29:6-7.** This was the first temple, Solomon's temple.
    - ✓ The 2<sup>nd</sup> temple spanned 46 years in the building of the structure, according to the leaders.
    - ✓ The Jews were proud of the temple building, empire, and dynasty in which they had built. Unfortunately, it was, at least at this point, maintained and built on the backs of hard-working people. Yes, the church should be nice, in some cases even extravagant, but not by pressuring and cheating its congregants.
    - ✓ The Jews were all about being freed from captivity, as celebrated by Passover.
  - ✚ Making a fortune.
    - ✓ One million sales at \$1 per sale or one sale at \$1 million dollars for big-dollar donors are hard to come by!
    - ✓ Before we get too high and mighty on these leaders, have you ever sold your soul to the highest bidder or compromised your integrity for a little more money?
    - ✓ This was not temptation and failure; this was straight-up rebellion.
  - ✚ Jesus is rebuking this temple money-making system as well as all of our own personal rebellion.
    - ✓ "To those who sold doves, He said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a market!"" **John 2:16.** Though Jesus words apply to all involved, these words were specifically to the dove sellers. Doves were the least expensive sacrifice. They were for the poor to give as sacrifices to God, so that everyone could participate.
    - ✓ "Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me." **John 2:17.**
    - ✓ "for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me." **Psalms 69:9.**
    - ✓ Jesus feels the pain of those being swindled.
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- ✓ "Church Hurt" is the new term for an old problem. We have all been hurt by different types of church leaders: distracted, hurt, immature, or self-absorbed. But what are our options? Despite bad leadership, we are still required and need to worship, fellowship, minister, disciple, and evangelize.
  - ✓ You want to please God, so you pay the price, and, in spite of the flaws of the church, you worship the flawless God.
  - ✚ Jesus is the perfect Temple, not the perfected temple. It is their time to face real Temple leadership.
  - ✓ "Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken." **John 2:18-22.**
  - ✓ The Jews asked for a sign. Jesus gave them no sign today, but not many days later, at this same Passover, we will see that Jesus did perform miracles for many people. "Now, while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name." **John 2:23**, but again, no sign for the "market keepers" and ring leaders of this "den of thieves". Their only sign was the "big picture" sign of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus gave only "this temple" as an explanation as to what he meant.
  - ✓ Jesus does not answer to the high priest because He is the High Priest.
  - ✓ By what authority does Jesus boss them and us around? The answer is the same: the Resurrection!
  - ✓ Jesus is God. God in the flesh.
  - ✓ Jesus in the Temple: He is more "Temple" than the Jewish Temple building! He is without flaws; no greed or hypocrisy can be found in Him. He is a glimpse of the perfected church!
  - ✓ After His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus clears the temple again. At the open and close of His ministry.
  - ✓ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" **Matthew 21:13.**
  - ✚ The "stealing club!"
  - ✓ No wonder they killed Jesus. He calls them out publicly for their known and obvious corruption. The purpose of the temple has been distorted and then perverted for the love of money. Did they cheat people to "promote godliness"? No, they cheated people for the love of money and status. "Look what we have built for God". Not so with Jesus. He would eliminate all chance of personal profit or earthly status for the love and salvation of people. He poured His life out completely.
  - ✓ "After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken." **John 2:22.**
  - ✓ The disciples recalled; it is no wonder they couldn't take it all in. Jesus was teaching new and foreign concepts. It must have been like drinking from the fire hydrant!
  - ✓ According to Jesus' prophetic words, the physical temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.
  - ✓ "Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person." **John 2:23-25.**
  - ✓ Entrust means faith; Jesus had no faith or trust in the people.
  - ✓ Perhaps they believed in the product of Jesus, but not in the person of Jesus. They would only follow Him for the free stuff and the free healing.
  - ✓ Jesus knew: They loved the product, not the person. They believed in the benefits, but not in the Savior.
  - ✓ "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."" **John 2:16.**
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- ↳ The new Temple is everything Jesus replaces and fulfills better than the old system of temple worship. Jesus is the God's new way for us to worship.
    - ✓ Jesus in our temple, not a temple made of stone, and not made with hands.
    - ✓ "But it was Solomon who built the house for Him. "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?" **Acts 7:47-49.** God is not confined, nor has He ever been.
    - ✓ "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews." **John 4:20-22.**
    - ✓ "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." **John 4:23-24.**
    - ✓ And after the resurrection and ascension, Jesus sent his Spirit to dwell in us!
    - ✓ "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body." **1 Corinthians 6:19-20.**
    - ✓ The temple building was the Old Testament church. Jesus is the perfect Temple. The Church (believers) is the New Testament temple.
  - ↳ Closing
    - ✓ Every believer is the dwelling place of God.
    - ✓ Jesus clears the Jerusalem Temple and revives the Temple of His body.
    - ✓ As a true believer, Jesus indwells the temple of your heart.
    - ✓ Jesus is still in the business of clearing and cleansing the temple, clearing the temple of our hearts.
    - ✓ For the stinky barnyard of your heart, Jesus is the answer. Is there a wild west rodeo going on in your heart? There are lots of "side shows" that can distract you from your real purpose! Jesus is the one who wants to clear that out for you.
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