

“Going To Church With Jesus”

John 2:13-25

February 2, 2014

- Week #1: THEOLOGICAL (1:1-18)
- a. Jesus is the eternal God.
 - b. The crucified Christ is also Creator-Christ.
 - c. v.12 = the gift of the blood-bought Gospel.
 - d. v.14 = the Word became flesh... “God-man”
 - e. v.17 = “grace & truth came thru Jesus Christ”

- Week #2: CHRISTOLOGICAL (1:19-34)
- a. Who are you?
 - an adopted vagabond
 - a trophy on the mantle of grace
 - “a blossom in a mud puddle”
 - b. What do you say about yourself?
 - A voice in the wilderness... make straight the way of the Lord!
 - Repent and believe!
 - c. Who is Jesus?
 - The Word...
 - Creator & Sustainer Christ
 - King Jesus Christ
 - Gracious giver of royal adoption rights
 - d. What do you say about Him?
 - Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. – John the Baptist
 - Teacher, Son of God, King of Israel – Nathaniel
 - e. Are you sure?

Week #3: EVANGELICAL (1:35-51)

- a. What do you want?
- b. Come and see...
- c. Follow Me.
- d. You ain't seen nothin yet!
- e. You WILL see!

Week #4: SUPERNATURAL (2:1-12)

- a. From the promise to the party.
- b. Jesus using Judaism's events & environments...
- c. Old bad wine vs. abundant new wine metaphor
- d. All designed to reveal His glory & start transition
- e. Some see but remain blind.... (servants)

Temple Context:

- What do you want?
 - Fame & fortune...
 - Checklist "carwash"
- Come and see...
 - Jesus is showing them the true Temple (Him)
 - TRUE "ekklessia in koinonia" is critical
- Follow Me
 - BE the Church!
 - Bring others to Him (fishers for men)
- You ain't seen nothing yet!
 - "...in 3 days I will rebuild it..."
- You WILL see
 - The vale was torn; top to bottom
 - The tomb was empty
 - Jesus, the Christ defeated death
 - The risen King walked amongst His people
 - The descended Missionary ascended as Messiah

*** “If you don’t understand why Jesus descended, you cant understand how He ascended.” - JDP

T/S: Between the party & the purging... (v.12 Capernaum)

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

T/S: Are you ready for this...

Let’s go to church with Jesus. Jesus Cleanses the Temple

13 *Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

14 *In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. **15** And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. **16** And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.” **17** His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”*

- v.14 = He Found**
- v.15 =**
- a) He made a whip**
 - b) He drove them all out...**
 - c) He poured out & turned over the money-changer's coins & tables**
- v.16 =**
- a) He told them to take these things away...**
 - b) He rebuked them for turning His Father's house into a "house of trade."**
- v.17 =**
- a) He fulfilled the prophecy**
 - b) He demonstrated "zeal for His Father's house"**

Definition of zeal by Puritan, Thomas Watson.

" Zeal is a mixed affection, a compound of love and anger ; it carries forth both love to God and our anger against sin in an intense degree. Zeal is impatient of Gods dishonor; a Christian fixed with zeal takes a dishonor done to God worse than injury done to himself."

18 So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" **19** Jesus answered them, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" **20** The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" **21** But he was speaking about the temple of his body. **22** When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

v.18 = They Distract

v.19 = He Declares His Deity!

v.20 = They Disrespect

v.22 = Disciples Remembered & "Believed the Scriptures"

Jesus Knows What Is in Man

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. **24** But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people **25** and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Preliminary Considerations:

1. **Note: Jesus was not at all hesitant to totally disregard/disrupt (turn upside down) the tradition**
2. **Introduce / Launch: www.ThatAintChurch.com**
3. **Qt: “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” - Desmond Tutu**
4. **Qt: “It is madness for sheep to talk peace with a wolf.” - Thomas Fuller (Puritan?)**
5. **See in the Temple purging... BOTH “the Lion & the Lamb.”**
6. **See BOTH sin’s sacrifice and the sinner’s SAVIOR both in their majestic (Tie in the link between this, His first showing, & His now foretold last. In conjunction with Him being named the Alpha & the Omega... Here we see the war’s greatest causality & it’s unchallengable Conquerer).**
7. **Qt: “The same hand that was nail pierced on the cross was whip wielding in the Temple!” - JDP**

8. **The Lamb is the Lion!”** - Kent Hughes
9. Don't miss **the injustice associated with the location within the Temple...** By setting up in the Gentile court (outer area considered less important to the traditional Jew), the hypocritical religious leaders were making it hardest on those who knew the least about God to come to Him... How similar this is to cocooning and self-centered Churches today...

When are you going to get angry enough to do something outrageously obedient (to God) and overtly offensive (to the God-haters)? - JDP

Note: the **Good Samaritan** is an example... **Phineas** is an example... **Matthew's party**... Peter walking on water... **Jude's letter**/message... **Stephen's death**

*** Also see **Jesus with the Pharisees. & hypocrites**

Worship is war! - JDP

- **the enemy is constantly making war against me**
- ie. **Grammy Awards gay-marriage**
- ie. **Anti-biblical churches are worse!**

(Look for: WorshiplsWar.com)

v13 = those things that Jesus found there were justifiable in their presence... BUT were NOT acceptable due to their perversions. What Jesus found in the Temple was "bad wine!"

*** Note:** don't focus on the driving out of the livestock & birds... Look closely... "He made a scourge/whip of cords, and drove THEM (pointing back to "those He found in the Temple")...

Key to see: **He DROVE them OUT..."**

QUESTION: is "driving someone out" of the church 's structure or building even imaginable to you -- let alone acceptable?

RESPONSE: It was for Jesus!

Question: why it isn't acceptable to us???

RESPONSE: ...because we don't place the same value on God 's presence, God's place, or God's people that Jesus did or Jesus DOES! (cf. "Zeal for Your house will consume me.")

New QUESTION: Do you have an outrageously odd & obvious ZEAL for God's house?

The "new wine" brings with it a truly transformative "new joy" and passion for the purity & prominence of God's house.....

Key clarification: Don't miss the "Why" behind this... Zeal for His house stems primarily from devoted love.

Expand upon "destroy this temple" & link it to the degradation that Jesus found there (in an inverted way, Jesus is again saying: "you ain't seen nothin yet!") only this time, Jesus is addressing both sides of the extreme...

**THE CROSS REPRESENTS THE TWIN PEAKS OF
BOTH SIN & SALVATION... OF LOVE &
LOVELESSNESS...**

See the religious leader's response:

Key to take away - **YOU CAN GET THE FACTS RIGHT...
AND MISS THE POINT ENTIRELY!!!**
(repeat for emphasis)

NOTE: when we are told that many believed in His name,
God is giving us a lesson on love & discernment here...

**"Where & when believing comes with a
"but," it's NOT "biblical" believing!"** – JDP

In v24-25 Jesus shares with us that even those who describe & defend their "belief" in Jesus are NOT truly trustworthy much of the time...

5 HELPFUL & PROGRESSIVE DISCERNMENT TESTS

1. ***Faith.*** (begets)
2. ***Follow.*** (begets)
3. ***Fish.*** (begets)
4. ***Fruit.*** (begets)
5. ***Finishing*** (well)

In seeing Christ's zeal for His Fathers house...

Think about the concept of
“deadbeat children”

To those who say Jesus went a little “over the top” at the Temple:

"Jesus is never overly anything. He is, by definition, in everything that He does - perfection personified." - JDP

Go to Ezra (under Zerubbabel) and note the people taking care of their own homes while ignoring God's house!!!

Ask people if they see themselves called to be Lamb or Lion-like!

Proof of Lion-like call:

- Christian = Christ's one (Christ-like)
- Put on the FULL armor of God
- ...they will hate you too
- "salt & light" = confrontational
- "Ambassadors"= represent Him vs. yourself

Lamb-only Jesus is a lie! - JDP

A Lamb-only Jesus is a lukewarm lie and a blasphemous idol of post modern moralism... Such a perversion of Jesus has been reduced down to a politically correct sandwich-maker vs. a Passionate Christ, Savior, & Messiah! - JDP

Imagine us as a humble pride of lions... Ranging from new cubs to battle-tested, war-scarred adults... ONLY, this pride of lions doesn't attack the weak, it protects them from predatory attackers... This fairy tale portrayal IS a portrait of Christ's family of faith... His Church! Amen & Amen - may it be so! - JDP

See two stages of disagreement in the Temple:

1. Confrontational countereits vv.18-21
2. Casual Counterfeit vv.22-25
 - A. Confused
 - B. Comfortable
 - C. Complacent
 - D. Cunning
 - E. Cultural

Many look like Christ...
but, neither love nor live like Christ!

Examples:

- ***Teachers*** who, by chasing facts vs living by faith prove they've never really learned what they now claim to teach...
- ***Soldiers*** who fight against their King rather than for Him, evidenced by their quick trigger finger & adrenalin anchored enthusiasm to engage the enemy
- ***Managers of moralism*** who claim Messianic motivations but who speak & demonstrate little (if any) awareness of one's need for THE miracle that only One Messiah can give as a blood-bought gift of grace, that, once received, will result in a life ON MISSION as minister of reconciliation (vs managers of recreation!)

Beware the whore-houses that call themselves Gods house. - JDP

Jesus did not tolerate the talkers & takers... But he was there for the troubled

5 Justifiable reasons to go to the Temple in Jesus' day:

1. It is a place between heaven and earth
2. God's presence is in the holy of holies (mediator point)
3. Come to meet with God
4. Sin was atoned for there thru animal/blood sacrifices
5. Worship (imagine the contrast from small Synagogue & daily living)

Ironside's Commentary:

Context:

Capernaum

- A. "His own city" – see other references to this quote
- Note Capernaum's extreme privilege
 - Ditto... responsibility
 - * > Privilege = > Responsibility
 - * > Responsibility = > Privilege!
- *** See Ironside's Qt...
- Ditto... consequences
 - Ditto... warning to all of us!
- B. See the tactical transition this stop makes in the story...
Transition between "Party & People"

“Passover of the Lord”

- A. **Note: the O.T. refers to “the Passover of the Lord” BUT the N.T. usually calls it “the Jew’s Passover”**
- B. **Similarly: O.T. “feasts of the Lord” are referred to as “feasts of the Jews” in the N.T...**
- C. **In both cases... the issue is:**

***** Ritual & formality overtook FAITH!**

***** “Good & necessary was replaced with God-less & narcissistic sin.” - JDP**

- cf. last week’s message...
- “They were drinking BAD wine!” – JDP

***** The obvious question rises....**

“How much bad wine is too much?”

Answer: When one’s heart is not for God.

Purging of the Temple

- A. **In the purging... “Jesus declared Himself Lord of the Temple.”**
- B. **His actions spoke for Him...**
- C. **See the Malachi prophecy: “And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly (think Rapture!) come to His Temple”**
 - See the immediate context to Christ
 - See the coming contest to Christ (rapture)

D. “Make not My Father’s house a house of business”

- **Herein Jesus declares Himself the Son of God**
- **See Nathaniel in 1:49**
- See the sin in modern churches
 - BRIDGE = “always free”
 - Freely given... freely give
 - Explains why biblical stewardship is such a big deal

E. “My house is a house of prayer...”

- **Is that the case in our churches?**
- **Answer: No!**
 - Look at the contrast Christ calls out...
 - “you made it a den of thieves!”
 - Hear Christ’s tone of authority
- Jesus is declaring Himself the Temple’s Lord
 - this is HIS Temple
 - HE is the object of Temple worship!
 - Jesus is fulfilling another prophecy: “The zeal of they house consumes Me.”

F. Opposition / Protest begins:

- **Note: there is NO DENIAL of sin...**
- **Yet... they go on offense... as a defense.**
 - **NOTE: Like John the Baptist, Jesus does not cater to their questions/demands.**
 - **You don’t have to answer hard-hearted questions & ploys**
 - In your life... this may look/sound like:
 - *** “What gives you the right?”
 - *** “Who do you think you are?”

GO BACK TO 5 CORE QUESTIONS...

G. “Destroy this Temple & in 3 days... raise it up”

- Note the pattern here:
 - Truth comes...
 - Blind guides reject the truth...
 - **Anger comes next:**
 - *** **Righteous anger from Jesus**
 - *** **Religious anger from the Jews**
 - Jesus does NOT clarify here...
- **Qt: “Men get into such a state that there is no use trying to make clear spiritual realities to them.”**
 - **See “face like flint” and hard-headed “gifts” given to Ezekiel for this very reason!**
 - **See the Christ-likeness of “un-catering,” uncompromising Christianity! - JDP**
 - **At the same time... Jesus is ALWAYS warm to the seeking & neutral, BUT (by contrast) He is consistently fierce & fired up to the hard-hearted & hypocrites.”**
- **Don’t miss this... Jesus is sowing ministry seeds that come to harvest AFTER His resurrection!**
 - **See 2nd Timothy 2 for “application”**
 - **Ministry = Farming, Olympic, WAR!**
 - **Note: see Jesus’ prophetic confidence**
 - **See Jesus again declare His deity!**

vv.23-25 “conversation/perspective”

- A. It is noted that many who see His signs “believe”
- B. Qt: “A faith that rests upon miracles is not a saving faith.”**

- * Proof: remember the servants / wine
- * They had no doubt... & no change.
- * *You can get the facts and miss the point!* – JDP
 - > **Solution: Share the FULL Gospel!**
 - > **See Romans 1:16 & Matthew 28:19**
 - *** **God works thru His Word.** – JDP
 - *** His Word is a double edge sword.

“Beware... when the miracle is sought more than the Messiah.” - JDP

You can acknowledge the miracle & even the miracle-Maker... BUT, notwithstanding one’s acknowledgments, NOT bring repentance & saving faith to Jesus.

“Believing without believing...” – JDP

“Many believed in Him but He didn’t believe in them.” - Ironside

KEY: “Jesus did not have faith in their faith.”
- Hughes

AGAIN: Go back the 5 Questions!

Illustration/Application:

See Christ's model of "Discernment Ministry"

- a. **You are called to Discernment...**
- b. **You may "get discerned" by others!**

"Don't get mad if you look like a duck, sound like a duck, & walk like a duck... and then get treated like a duck!" - JDP

*** See Matthew 10:16 proof

*** "the heart is deceitful & desperately wicked... I, the Lord search the heart."
--- Accept the tension.
--- "the narrow road"

"Going to church < coming to Christ." - JDP

If ever you doubted this truth... Look at the people that are REJECTING JESUS IN the TEMPLE!

NIV Commentary:

The temple story. We dare not miss the importance of what Jesus has done in Jerusalem. When we begin to realize the significance and the grandeur of the Jerusalem temple in Jesus' day, we will begin to feel the magnitude of what he tried to do. **The temple was the organizing center of Jewish life in the first century. It was the center of government (brokered at this time by Roman authority), judicial law, religious life, and taxation. It set the moral, religious, and political tone of the country.**

The temple was the basis of Jewish religious and national pride. When we add to this Herod's rebuilding program that lasted over eighty years, it is no wonder that when the Galilean disciples of Jesus arrive in Jerusalem, they exclaim about the wonder of the place. "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" ([Mark 13:1](#)). The Jerusalem temple dazzled visitors. When the Roman Titus's troops stormed the temple in A.D. 70, he was so amazed at the splendor of the place that he tried to preserve it from looting and destruction. But his soldiers, having fought a vicious, lengthy battle for the city, discovered its riches, and the temple was doomed. Burned to the ground in A.D. 70, it has never been rebuilt.

Jesus' activity was not merely upsetting, it was outrageous.

Jesus makes a disturbance and acts out the core of his prophetic message. But it is not the power of the whip that makes his message succeed. It is his moral power; the truth of what he says strikes to the heart of these people's consciences. **It is interesting that in the concluding conversation, no one argues with Jesus about what he has done. No one objects, saying that such activity is inappropriate. Instead, they ask about the basis of his doing it.** In other words, many likely know that Jesus is right and that the temple has turned into a noisy

market. Its services have been compromised. They sense too something of God's divine and righteous anger at work in Jesus, something of God's impatience with a people who have misused the sanctity of his house.

...the Christological message of the narrative.... On a historical level, Jesus is confronting the chief religious institution of his day. Implicit in his ironic, closing statement is that something will be destroyed (the temple? his body?) and something again will be raised in three days. **Jesus is pointing out the deficits of the institution of the temple; he is confronting its misdirection and its brokenness, and in the process (as happens throughout the Gospel) he indicates that the real activity of God, the real temple, is Jesus Christ himself. In other words, the focal point of Jewish religious affections must be replaced by someone new. And that replacement will undergo a violent and miraculous death and rebirth.**

When I examine the timeless meaning of this story, I see here the struggle between God's desire to be worshiped and the religious institutions humans frequently build and edify in order to facilitate that worship. The two are not always the same. Religious institutions sometimes pursue financial interests or social agendas when all they are designed to do is facilitate our relationship with God and set us loose in the world to change it.

Disruptions in Jerusalem. The cleansing of the temple is a troubling and important story. If left on the historical level, it is easy to stereotype the temple as corrupt (which is not entirely true) and to see Jesus as rebuking its players (which is only half the story). Much more is going

on here. The closer I come to applying the story and the closer I come to seeing the courage and daring of Jesus' act, the less comfortable I begin to feel.

Jesus came to the center of Jewish life, and he was outrageous. It was a center where in that day politics, religion, and law were virtually inseparable. He made a harsh judgment on what motivated the people who lived at that center. Of course, I am aware that there are significant differences today and that I cannot move simply from Jerusalem to Washington. Our society has intentionally separated church and state, and their domains appear completely distinct. Yet it is not so simple. For one thing, secular society does indeed promote an innocuous sort of religion that is a brew of patriotism, self-sacrifice, tolerance, and openness. **Any visit to Washington's National Cathedral will at once show how a country can baptize its national interests in religious rhetoric. "Aren't churches supposed to promote good things like this?" argue the priests of that temple.**

I cannot fear the public arena or the specter of political entanglements if I am zealously pursuing God's passions in the world. When my society (or government) does something that is wrong, such as promoting an unjust war, an unjust economic policy, or discriminatory practices, or something that penalizes the church for pursuing its mission, I have to be willing to move to action. **The prophetic voice is directed not only to believers but to the powers of the state as well.**

Evangelical Christianity is not often outrageous. We speak with boldness in the pulpit and narthex, but rarely envision ourselves speaking with boldness on the Washington Mall Yet Jesus went to Washington. He was outrageous. Jesus and Christians are at odds

with the world. His kingdom is at odds with the kingdoms of this world. - NIV Application Commentary

In the Synoptic account, before Jesus enters the temple, he finds and curses a fig tree, a prophetic symbol of God's judgment on that temple that was bearing no fruit. In this respect, the passage forces us to reflect on our religious institutions and the extent to which they serve interests that would earn Jesus' outrageous rebuke.

the church is a human institution (as well as a spiritual one) that is not free from the shortcomings of human society. The church is a fallen institution, filled with sinners, which aspires to goodness but which sometimes succumbs to programs and agendas that have little to do with the kingdom of God.

[John 2:13-25](#) asks that I look with some care at the life of my own religious house. It asks me to imagine what would happen if Jesus were to come for a visit. Would he be outraged... Is there a chance that he would interrupt things? (see “My Jesus”)

[John 2:23-25](#) assures us that Jesus knows entirely what is going on inside of us and our churches. Thus, we cannot rest comfortably thinking that his ire was reserved for the Jewish temple or for the liberals next door but not for us.

I can't help but think about John's letters to the seven churches in [Revelation 1-3](#). Here we have congregations that were founded by apostolic leadership and enjoyed many strengths. Yet John's letters, inspired by the vision and voice of Jesus, provide a seriousness and severity no different than what we have here in [John 2](#).

John expects that at the end of chapter 2, we will pause and reflect on both this story in Jerusalem and the story of Cana. In each episode, similar themes challenge us, and we are invited to contrast them. Cana is in the north (Galilee); Jerusalem is in the south (Judea) Cana offered stone jars (for purification) and now Jesus has challenged a stone temple (for sacrifice). Cana was out of wine and the temple was likewise filled with the wrong thing. Jesus' solution in each case is to provide an alternative: He will be the giver of new wine and will become a new temple. In each case, we are given the suggestion that the event to watch is "the hour" ([2:4](#), [21](#)) in which Jesus will die and return to life. However, Galilee and Jerusalem offer different responses to Jesus' work: In Galilee Jesus finds receptivity and faith; but in Judea, while some believe ([2:22](#)), Jesus is suspicious.

Throughout this Gospel, Galilee and Jerusalem play out as virtual metaphors of response. Through them we are challenged to reflect on how we will respond too, should Jesus visit a wedding or a temple today.

- The NIV Application Commentary

MacArthur Commentary:

There is no question more important than, "Who is Jesus Christ?" Its implications are profound and its significance unparalleled. Simply posing it immediately evokes a vast array of emotions—from outright hostility to fervent adoration. Merely contemplating it is not enough—it is a question that must be answered. **And answering it incorrectly, no matter what the excuse, ultimately leads to eternal devastation.**

Jesus' reference to God as His Father was a reminder both of His deity and His messiahship; He was the loyal Son purging His Father's house of its impure worship (an action that prefigures what He will again do at His second coming [[Mal. 3:1-3](#); cf. [Zech. 14:20-21](#)]). MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – John 1-11.

Watching in amazement as their Master dispersed the temple merchants, **His disciples remembered that it was written in [Psalm 69:9](#), "Zeal for Your house will consume me."** Jesus' resolute passion and unwavering fervor was clear to all who saw Him. His righteous indignation, stemming from an absolute commitment to God's holiness, revealed His true nature as the Judge of all the earth (cf. [Gen. 18:25](#); [Heb. 9:27](#)). R. C. H. Lenski notes,

The stern and holy Christ, the indignant, mighty Messiah, the Messenger of the Covenant of whom it is written: "He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness," is not agreeable to

those who want only a soft and sweet Christ. But John's record here... portray [s] the fiery zeal of Jesus which came with such sudden and tremendous effectiveness that before this unknown man, who had no further authority than his own person and word, this crowd of traders and changers, who thought they were fully within their rights when conducting their business in the Temple court, fled pell-mell like a lot of naughty boys. (*The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* [Reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998], 207)

Like David, who penned the messianic [Psalm 69](#), Jesus' zeal for pure worship found expression in His concern for God's house.

Interestingly, although they challenged His right to do what He did, the Jewish authorities did not arrest Jesus. Taken aback by His bold display of authority, they may have wondered if He were a prophet, like John the Baptist. Their demand for a sign, however, was foolish; the messianic act of single-handedly cleansing the temple was itself a clear sign that God had a message for them. **In their hard-hearted unbelief, the Jewish leaders repeatedly asked for such signs, yet they never accepted the ones they were given. As John later wrote, "But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" ([John 12:37](#)).**

Jesus' enigmatic reply, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," baffled the Jewish authorities (and, for the time being, His own disciples as well, [v. 22](#)). **Like His parables (cf. [Matt. 13:10-11](#); [Luke 8:10](#)), this veiled statement judicially concealed the truth from hostile unbelievers, whose spiritual blindness resulted from their own unbelief and rebellion against God. (Unbelievers' failure to understand Jesus' message is a**

theme that runs throughout John's gospel, e.g., [3:3-4](#); [4:14-15](#); [6:32-35](#), [51-52](#); [7:34-36](#); [8:51-53](#), [56-57](#); [10:1-6](#).)

Jesus was speaking of the temple of His body. The sign He would give them would be far greater than simply reconstructing a destroyed building:

An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ([Matt. 12:39-40](#); cf. [16:4](#))

He was raised from the dead that His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

His death as the ultimate sacrificial Lamb would render the Jerusalem temple obsolete (cf. [4:21](#); [Matt. 27:51](#)); and His resurrection as the triumphant Lord would lay the foundation for a new, spiritual temple in its place—namely, the church ([1 Cor. 3:16-17](#); [2 Cor. 6:16](#); [Eph. 2:19-22](#)).

([2:23-25](#))

These three verses serve as a bridge between the account of the cleansing of the temple and the story of Nicodemus, which immediately follows. Though brief, this section has profound implications concerning the nature of saving faith.

But such faith was shallow, superficial, and disingenuous. It was not true saving faith, as John's play on words indicates. Believed in [verse 23](#) and entrusting in [verse 24](#) both come from the same Greek verb, pisteuō. Though they believed in Jesus, Jesus did not believe in them; He had no faith in their faith.

Jesus "regarded all belief in Him as superficial which does not have as its most essential elements the consciousness of the need for forgiveness and the conviction that He alone is the Mediator of that forgiveness" (R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 65).

Although many claimed to believe, Jesus knew that mere intellectual assent proves nothing; even the demons have such faith ([James 2:19](#)). Like the seed that fell on rocky and thorny ground, those who possess such faith hear the Word, and initially receive it with joy ([Matt. 13:20](#)). But because their hearts are never truly changed, they fall away when affliction comes ([v. 21](#)), or when worldly riches beckon ([v. 22](#)).

***** Link “zeal for your house” / “deadbeat children” / & parable of the soils... (contrasted against the truth of (real) “mustard seed faith”**

Without question, the difference between spurious faith and saving faith is crucial. It is the difference between living faith and dead faith ([James 2:17](#)); between the wicked, who "go away into eternal punishment" and "the righteous [who enter] into eternal life" ([Matt. 25:46](#)); between those who will hear, "Well done, good and faithful slave.... Enter into the joy of your master" ([Matt. 25:21](#)) and those who will hear, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" ([Matt. 7:23](#)).

Jesus did not embrace the false faith manifested by those who witnessed His signs, because **He knew all men, and therefore did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.**

He knows the true state of every heart. He saw in Nathanael the heart of an honest, true seeker ([1:47](#)); He saw in these people a superficial façade—a mere outward attraction to His spectacular signs (cf. [6:2](#)). **Genuine saving faith goes far beyond that. It demands wholehearted commitment to Jesus as the Lord of one's life ([Matt. 16:24-26](#); [Rom. 10:9](#)).**

***** Contrast Nathaniel & those “in” the Temple...
“real & outside” > “phony within”**

([vv. 12-25](#)) underscore His deity with unmistakable clarity. As God He single-handedly cleansed the temple with messianic zeal; as God He accurately predicted His own resurrection; and as God He truly knew the contents of men's hearts.

At the same time, these three accounts also picture the process of salvation.

- 1. The first scene, the cleansing of the temple, graphically depicts God's hatred of sin and impurity.**
- 2. The second scene, the discussion of Jesus' resurrection, reveals that God provides new life in Christ, who "was raised because of our justification" (**Rom. 4:25**).**
- 3. And the final scene, the shallow belief of the people, reveals that God's provision of salvation comes only through genuine saving faith.** -
MacArthur New Testament Commentary,

Kent Hughes Commentary:

...a great truth of our faith—the Lamb is the Lion. **In biblical terms, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.** Qualities we consider to be lamb-like—gentleness and meekness—are indeed in Christ, but so are the regalness and ferocity of a lion. The book of Revelation speaks of "the wrath of the Lamb" ([6:16](#)).

Passover, and there was a spirit of expectancy across the land—probably very much like what we experience during the Christmas season. The Jewish tradition required an entire month for preparation. The roads were repaired, the bridges rebuilt or shored up, the sepulchers rewhitened. The entire land bustled with the spirit of Passover. Jerusalem, although not a big city by ordinary standards, would have as many as two and a quarter million people crowded into its confines at Passover.

Furthermore, the sellers and inspectors in the temple sold all the sacrifices.

Rabbinical literature tells us that inspectors spent eighteen months on a farm to learn to distinguish between clean and unclean animals. They even learned to identify an animal that would one day become unclean, even if it was clean at the time!

The inspectors had a good thing going. If they did not approve an animal, it would not be approved. Extortion was common in the temple confines. To make things worse, Annas, the high priest, was behind the whole thing!

Sarcastic commentators in those days dubbed the temple the "Bazaars of Annas." They knew the high priest actually sold franchises for money-changing booths and animal sales.

So when our Lord came to the temple, he found a religious circus!

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is a concept that has been so overworked that many today preach and follow a Christ who has no resemblance to the Christ of the New Testament. That Jesus is an idol, drained of his deity—a weak, good-natured deity whose great aim is to let us off the hook.

I am sure the Pharisees in the temple saw nothing of his gentleness, meekness, and mildness when he said, "You are like whitewashed tombs" ([Matthew 23:27](#)) and "You snakes! You brood of vipers. How will you escape being condemned to hell?" ([Matthew 23:33](#)). The scene described in our text is a wild scene!

Jesus was as Godlike here as he was when he hung on the cross. - Hughes

He was revealing as much of God on this occasion as he did at Calvary.

He was displaying a great underlying truth: Love presupposes hatred. A love for the downtrodden, the poor, and the oppressed also brings about a hatred for the conditions that caused their suffering. That truth has been evident in the lives of Shaftesbury, the Wesleys, Fox, and other great men of the church down through the centuries. Men and women of great love have always also been people of great hatred. In fact, you can tell as much about a person by his hatreds as by his loves.

So what has been revealed through Christ's anger is very important. What are the hates and loves of God? In particular, what is the root of Christ's hatred and anger in this passage? And how should it affect our lives?

Christ's anger was rooted in his reaction against the religious irreverence of the Jews toward God the Father.

But we must first realize the significance of the setting in this passage. [First Kings 8:10-11](#) describes the **great temple of Solomon**

To glorify God was the very purpose of the temple. Therefore the sin of the money changers and the religious authorities lay in the fact that while they loudly proclaimed the holiness and otherness of God, they denied it in practice. Our Lord's whip opposes anything that detracts from the communication of God's glory, especially in worship.

Many have made a valid attempt to present the humanity of Christ so men and women can see him as a God who relates to them, but this attitude has sometimes been carried to the extreme. It has been so perverted that Jesus has been effectively and functionally emptied of his deity. For many, Christ has become a pop Jesus who lies back with his headphones in place, reading *Sports Illustrated*. It is easy to fall into a flippancy that an angel would never be guilty of. The result is contemporary idolatry that at its core is a distortion of God into man-made and mental images. **Our irreverence reflects an idolatrous concept of God. The flip phrase "the Man Upstairs" is an idolatrous statement, born out of ignorance and a wrong understanding of God. "The Big Man in the sky" is not the God we worship. No wonder Jesus was so indignant about the irreverence he saw!**

When the loss of the knowledge of who God is settles in, an irreverent spirit begins to take root in our lives, and such an attitude restricts our ability to worship. A. W. Tozer, in the preface of his wonderful book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, explains why he wrote that book:

Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. **The words, "Be still, and know that I am God," mean next to nothing to the self-confident, bustling worshiper in this middle period of the twentieth century. Our hearts can become like that outer court of the temple of Jerusalem. Even while we sit in church,** the bazaars of suburbia can be spinning through our heads. **We may be thinking about the next business deal we are going to close, athletic events that await us, shopping trips, or bridge parties. Solomon said it all when he said in [Proverbs 5:14](#), "I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly." It is possible to be almost in "utter ruin" even while we are part of a Bible-based church.**

When we become sufficiently desensitized to the greatness and holiness of God because of the irreverent spirit and the idolatrous concept of God affecting our lives, our manner of service is also affected.

Since in our view God is impotent, effete, and obsolete, we rationalize that we need to bring in the things of the world to help him out.

The authenticity of our reverence is important because it indicates what we think of God. It affects what happens in our worship, and ultimately it affects what we do in our service for God. No wonder our Lord was indignantly passionate!

More important, the ultimate source of our Lord's anger was love—the love of God. As his disciples were standing there dumbfounded at their Lord, possibly while he was still breathing hard after driving the men out, the whip still in his hand, the Spirit brought [Psalm 69:9](#) to the mind of one of the disciples. That Psalm is about David but had prophetic fulfillment in Christ. "His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me'" ([John 2:17](#)). The word "consume" in Greek means to be eaten up. When Martin Luther tried to explain this text to his congregation he said, "You know how it is when something is eating us." The Germans must say it just like the English! The Hebrew word for "consume" means "in a flame." Jesus was consumed with zeal for God's glory and his house. The full meaning of this word can be seen in the second half of [Psalm 69:9](#): "And the insults of those who insult you fall on me." David and our Savior identified so closely with God that when someone defamed the Lord, they too were defamed. What a wonderful thought for all of us—to be so identified with God

and so in love with him that when his name is defamed or his glory somehow tarnished, we feel it and experience that same holy anger.

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.

— Corrie ten Boom

It is a pity that we have been so tamed by our culture. Today we believe a fallacy—namely, that thoughtful and intelligent people are supposed to discuss the most outrageous matters without emotion.

We should be passionate people!

Application for Our Own Lives

What other significance does this passage have for our lives? For one thing, **corporate worship is important. The way we worship reveals what we think about God.** In the temple a Gentile could come to the Court of the Gentiles, the outer circle, to pray and consider the true God of Israel. **If a Gentile had entered and saw what Jesus saw, what would**

have been his understanding of God? Perhaps a prosperity gospel or some other misconception of God.

Irreverence toward God is only a symptom of an idolatrous image of God that is man-made. Dry ritualism indicates that our God is far away and dead. Joyless performance reveals an arid Deity. But on the other hand, reverence for God indicates our belief that he is great, awesome, and powerful. Joyful worship makes known the living God.

But there was also a secondary meaning. Our Lord, like no other man, was the temple of God. [Col. 2:9](#) says, "In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." He was full of Deity like no other temple has ever been. Christ has now gone into heaven, but he has left us here on earth, and the following verse in Colossians says, "And you have been given fullness in Christ" ([John 2:10](#)).

For **we are the temple of the living God.** As God has said, "I will live with them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." ([2 Cor. 6:16](#))

What a glorious thought!

With this second meaning in mind, the significance of what happened in the temple is even more apparent. Some of us are not cutting it, are we? There was once a time when there was such a fullness in our lives that we were excited and overflowing—like the holy of holies, filled with *Shekinah* glory. We had awesome visions of God. But something happened. Instead of our hearts being temples, they became something

else. A savings and loan? Perhaps a playhouse? A recreational vehicle? Or perhaps a library full of arcane, irrelevant thoughts? A sty of sensuality? The fullness is gone. It happens so easily.

The glorious truth is, Jesus cares about his temples and comes with a whip in hand. [John 2:12-22](#) looks at the first cleansing of the temple, but the other Gospels tell us that he came back to the temple to cleanse it again, toward the end of his earthly ministry. Likewise, he comes again and again to cleanse our lives if they are not what they are supposed to be—temples giving glory to him. When he comes, we should praise him for his whip and his wrath toward the sin in our lives.

The hand that was stretched out on the cross and had that nail cruelly driven through it is the same hand that grasped the whip—the Lamb and the Lion.

- Preaching the Word – John

Quotes from: ***“The Barbarian Way”*** (Erwin McManus)

Opening line of the book: ***“But then the worst thing happened that could happen to any fighter, you go civilized.”*** - Mick to Rocky (Rocky III)

“Christianity has moved from a tribe of renegades to a religion of conformists.”

“This is the simplicity of the barbarian way... If you are a follower of Christ, then you are called, at the cost of everything you are and everything you have, to FIGHT for the heart of your King. It is a fight fought with the unconventional weapons of faith, hope, and love, while fueled by passion – a passion for God and a passion for people.”

***** Personal Application:**

1. Parents – what do you encourage your children toward?
2. Individuals – what “considerations” do you live your life by & set your “boundaries” by?

“The barbarian way is about love, intimacy, passion, and sacrifice. Barbarians love to live and live to love. For them God is life, and their mission is to reconnect humanity to Him.”

Primal Leaders: *A barbarian invasion is taking place even now... Just as with those who crossed paths with Jesus here on earth, those who are the most “religious” will be the most offended and indignant. Barbarians are not welcome among the civilized and are feared among the domesticated. The way of Jesus is far too savage for their sensibilities. The sacrifice of*

God's Son, the way of the Cross, the call to die to ourselves, all lack the dignity of a refined faith. Why insist on such a barbaric way? Why a reckless call to awaken the barbarian faith with us at the risk of endangering this great civilization we have come to know as Christianity?

Answer: Because Jesus did not suffer and die so that we could build for ourselves havens, but so that we might expand the kingdom of His love. Because invisible kingdoms are at war! ...The irony is that barbarians are driven away in times of peace – (they only disrupt our communities, traditions, and sensibilities). It is only in the most desperate of times – times of war or conflict – that these outcasts are welcomed or even invited to return. ...(sadly) the very ones who are unwanted and driven from among us are the ones we most need to lead in times of war... We live in such times... And we are NOT ready.

“Jesus is being lost in a religion bearing His name.”

It is time to hear the barbarian call, to form a barbarian tribe, and to unleash the barbarian revolt. Let the invasion begin...

T/S Application: Look at biblical barbarians...

1. John the Baptist
2. Noah
3. Abraham
4. Joseph
5. Daniel
6. Shad, Me, Benny
7. Elijah (vs Baal)
8. Elisha (eternal eyes)

9. Prophets...
10. Paul
11. Peter
12. James
13. Jude.....
14. Scripture is FULL of countless example (for some true inspiration, see the nameless description of those found in the second half of Hebrews 11)