

XIV. Personal Evangelism in Biblical Perspective  
*iShare–Encounters with Jesus in John’s Gospel*  
“The Encounter in the Temple”

John 2:13–22

Dr. Harry Reeder

May 20, 2012 – Morning Sermon

Our study is in John 2 in our encounters with Jesus sharing the Gospel and learning from Christ. John 2:13-22 says [13] *The 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.”*

[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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may this His Word be preached for you.

We are in our iShare series taken from I Thessalonians 2:8 which says [8] *So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.* We have been focusing on personal evangelism and we’re in a second area of study looking at the particular encounters of Jesus in the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John has a very clear purpose and in fact it’s stated repeatedly in the Gospel of John. John says “We write these things so that you might believe and in believing you might have eternal life.” In the Gospel of John it says that Jesus has come into the world and we have beheld His glory which is the glory from the only begotten Father full of grace and truth. The Gospel of John is there to display the glory of Christ. It is done two ways.

Two thirds of the book of John deals with the last week of Jesus’ life and ministry, as He goes to the cross, saves us from our sins and is raised in victory. The first third of the book of John is devoted to showing how in the encounters Christ progressively reveals glory of Himself to those who are around Him. So we have been following that pattern of what Christ has done and from that we are learning how we are to see the glory of Christ. We have seen Him share His glory with two disciples, two students, Andrew and John who come to Him and trust Him. Then they do their iShare and bring their brothers. We then see Phillip come to Him and then a skeptic student, Nathanael who is invited to come and see and then he begins to trust in the Lord. So we have watched this unfold.

John shows us various ways he talks about the glory of Lord. In fact, it’s really interesting to see what the Holy Spirit led him to do in revealing this. For instance, he

uses seven miracles to show the glory of Christ and we've already looked at one which was the changing of the water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana. Secondly, he takes the seven "I am's" (I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Bread, I am the Life, etc) to display the glory of Christ having come in the flesh, God among us. He uses the seven prayer requests of the high priestly prayer in John 17. Perhaps the most intriguing are these encounters and in this study we come to something very intriguing.

That is two encounters that are put next to each other – the wedding feast at Cana and the encounter at the temple. I am indebted to John Calvin and others who have helped me through this thing that has always intrigued me. First there is the cleansing of the temple and this may sound familiar to many of you. The cleansing of the temple you'll find in Matthew, Mark and Luke in the last week of Jesus' ministry. In John we have just finished the first week of Jesus' ministry. So there are two possibilities. One possibility which some commentators take is that John has taken the liberty of bringing the cleansing of the temple in the last week out of its chronology and for theological reasons put it here in contrast to what happened at the wedding feast in Cana. The Gospel writers are not always framing things chronologically. They do frame things thematically and theologically in the Gospel accounts but I don't think that is what happened here.

I just think there are two cleansings which is the second possibility. I think there was one His first year of ministry and one His last year of ministry. I think the first happened at His first Passover and one happened at His last Passover ministry in His last week as He goes to the cross. Both of these cleansings are used to say a number of things. I think when you look at the timing of it, the content of it, what He did and what He said in each of them, I think it's two different cleansings. John is the only one of the Gospel writers that includes the first one. He very clearly puts it in context and in contrast to the wedding feast in Cana.

I was listening to what one pastor said on this who had some really good insights and look at the contrasts here of these two events. At the wedding feast Jesus is a party maker. The wine runs out and Jesus comes to the rescue. At the cleansing of the temple He is a party pooper. At the wedding feast He is behind the scenes and only the servants and His mother are aware of what's going on. At the temple He is making the scene. At the wedding feast of Cana He is filling tables with the wine. At the temple He is turning over tables. At the wedding He was asked to intervene. At the temple He intrudes with authority. These two events are highly contrastive yet it is my conviction that there is one message in both of these events. There is one singular message but first I'd like to walk through the temple cleansing and then I'll give it to you.

Since these two events are two sides of one coin we'll approach this similarly to the way we approached the wedding feast event. So first of all, when did this cleansing happen? This cleansing of the temple happens in the first year of Jesus' ministry. He is thirty years of age and it is in the spring. It is at the Passover and it is a moment where He has gone from a marriage feast to another feast, the Feast of Unleavened Bread or as it is called the Passover which commemorates the deliverance of God's people when it was instituted in the Old Testament. This was where God's judgment passed over His people because of the Passover lamb's blood that was put on the doorposts and it fell upon those people who were in bondage. It was celebrated year after year to remind them that the Lord was their Deliverer. So that is when this happens.

The next question is where does it happen? It happens in Jerusalem. In the space of a couple of chapters we have had quite a travel log where we can fill in the blanks. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He went to Egypt. He is raised in Nazareth. At age 30, He leaves Nazareth to begin His ministry as Messiah. A prophet or a king could begin their ministry any time but the priest had to begin his ministry at age 30 and he had to begin with a baptism. This is described in detail in Numbers 8. As Jesus leaves Nazareth He goes to Bethany over the Jordan which would be in Syria today. It is there that John the Baptist who is a priest then baptizes Him as a Priest according to the prescribed call of the Lord. Then He goes from there to go east into the wilderness to be tempted. He then comes back to Bethany by the Jordan and begins His first seven days of ministry that are chronicled by John in John 1 and 2.

The chronicle continues with the first day being where John the Baptist says "I'm not the Messiah, the Prophet or Elijah. It is Christ who is the Messiah." On Jesus' second day John the Baptist sees Him and says "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." On the third day John the Baptist preaches that sermon again in the shortened form saying "Behold the Lamb of God" and Andrew and John come to Christ. Then they go and get their brothers and bring them to Christ. The Gospel is being preached and shared in personal evangelism. On the next day He wins another student, Phillip and then a skeptical student, Nathanael. The next day is a travel day. The next day is a Sabbath Day and on the seventh day He arrives at Cana where He performs His first miracle declaring that He is the Messiah with great intensity and intention. Then the Bible tells us He left there and went down with His six disciples, His mother and His family and adopted Capernaum rather than Nazareth as His hometown. Now He leaves Capernaum on an 80 mile journey to Jerusalem which is where we find Him now. He arrives at the Feasts of the Passover.

That brings me to question three, who is there? A big crowd is there. Jews would come from all over to the Passover and since the dispersion with the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivity they were coming from all over everywhere. We are told in extra Biblical sources that Jerusalem would triple in size. The Mount of Olives would become a campsite. Not only do you have these pilgrims that have come from everywhere but you also have marketers, moneychangers. Jesus is there with the six disciples who are with Him.

Now, what happens? We see what happens in John 2:14-16 which says [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."* From this word 'trade' we get the word 'emporium' or 'arcade' or 'shopping center.' Jesus does not want it to be that for this is His Father's house.

In this text it says that Jesus does four things. First, He arrives at the temple and sees what is going on. There in the courtyard, called the Court of the Gentiles, which is an invitation room for the Gentiles is a place for prayer also called a courtyard of prayer. When He arrives He sees oxen, sheep, pigeons, an emporium or shopping center. Nobody is praying. They are bartering. Can you imagine what is going on there with all those animals? Secondly, in the language of the original text He begins to weave

patiently chords of a whip and then He begins to use it. The third thing He does is He drives out the animals from the courtyard.

The fourth thing He does is He pours out the money. People couldn't bring sacrifices from Spain or Italy but they needed a sacrifice so they would buy one when they got there. Normally these types of animals used for sacrifice were bought from the priests on the Mount of Olives but now they are not at the Mount of Olives. I can almost hear their excuses. "We do need seeker friendly worship so let's make it easier for everybody and bring it into the courtyard for now." They couldn't use Roman money for if they did they would have to exchange it and they would end up making twelve percent on the exchange. Once their sacrifice was purchased three steps later it would be handed to the priest and he would take it on to the sacrifice. It was a done deal, check the box and worship was over. That is what is happening. Jesus turns these tables over and then makes a declaration, "This is My Father's House. It shall not be an emporium."

Now why does He do it? Here are two reasons He does it. Number one is to fulfill Scripture. There are two prophecies He is fulfilling that are from the Old Testament. Prophecy number one, the disciples remembered. After He had done this they looked back and said "David's Psalm is a prophecy of the Son of David, the Messiah." In Psalm 69:9 it says [9] *For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.* The disciples will remember this event as the fulfillment of Psalm 69:9. That's not all for there is another psalm that is fulfilled. It is in the book of Malachi.

In Malachi here is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. Malachi 3:1 says [1] *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. (John the Baptist being the messenger) And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.* I want you to remember that because like many things in Scripture it has a twofold fulfillment. The forerunner will come and then the Lord will suddenly come to His temple. It is My Father's House. John 1:14 says [14] *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* This is a tough translation when John the writer takes a noun and turns it into a verb (dwelt).

We do that all the time now when we used to have friends but now we "friend" on Facebook. We used to live within a wall but now we "wall" people. It's amazing how we will turn nouns into verbs. He takes the noun tabernacle or temple and turns it into a verb meaning tabernacled/templed among us or dwelt among us. Who was in the temple and poured out His glory? The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory. He shall come to His temple. So the first reason is His fulfillment of prophecy. Now here is the other reason why.

The other reason is Jesus is angry. That is the other reason this happens. Anger is not sin. It's an emotion. You can be sinfully angry. Anger is an emotion that arises with some intensity and it arises when our objectives in life are blocked. Sinful anger is called the anger of man. It the anger that comes when my objectives in life are blocked. It is the anger that I battle almost every day when I drive Highway 280, because when I do Satan sends out messages to every possible person that has a car near Highway 280. They get in their car and head toward me. Some of them get in front of me and slow down. Others enjoy getting on my bumper and see just how close they can get to my

license plate. Others are texting in their car and just a quarter of an inch away from my side door and I get angry! Then I say “Lord, please forgive me.”

Godly anger is when the emotions of intensity arise because God’s objectives are being thwarted, attacked or assaulted. Jesus shows it three times. He shows it once at the tomb of Lazarus when He bellows to death, when He shouts aloud to death. The other is at the cleansing of the temple at the end of His ministry and at the beginning of His ministry. It is there that He manifests this righteous indignation. Why? It is because His Father’s House is being perverted. Worship is being prostituted. The temple is being desecrated. This is My Father’s House and He has guest rooms for the Gentiles, for the women and men in the covenant who are purified. He has those things in place for them. These people have made it into an emporium, a house of trade. You have desecrated and perverted the very purpose of My Father’s House.

Not only were there rooms where people were invited and God had chosen to dwell among His people, but more than that they had been designed. That court of the Gentiles was saying I will bring My people from all the nations and that’s why this is a house of prayer for all the nations. How can My people come, reflect, meditate and pray? Listen to the bleeding of the sheep, the haggling of Christ, to everything that is taking place. This was to be step one, a way to the altar of worship. Step one was to thoughtfully prepare with appropriate reflection in the gathering of people and then the next step was to be in the concert of the people and then the sacrifice that was brought with a heart focus would be brought to the Lord. That is not what is happening.

The courtyard is full of noise. Hear the haggling. See the man negotiating. It’s a done deal. They lead it off to be slaughtered and where was your worship? It’s gone and our Lord is consumed for the zeal of the House of the Lord because its very purposes were being perverted and desecrated. Its faces to invite the nations now were crowded out and they were obstructed to come to the Lord. They couldn’t make their way through the stampede of herds. The problem was not directly what they were doing there but it was where they were doing it and why they were doing it. Certainly its appropriate to provide a sacrifice for people that have travelled but when you’ve decided to merchandise truth to make money for yourself and then when you’ve decided to take what is a valid service you could offer and put it in the wrong place at the wrong time for the wrong reasons then the Lord declares, “The House of the Lord has been desecrated.” Its purposes have been perverted and worship has been prostituted. So He then drives them out.

What is the lesson that’s here? It’s the same lesson at Cana. We have just gone from one feast to another. We have gone from filling tables to turning over tables. We have gone from behind the scenes to out front but it’s the same lesson. What was the lesson back at Cana? Jesus’ mother said “Jesus they have run out of wine.” That is social embarrassment. Her concern is that the wine has run out. Jesus says to her “Woman, what does your concern of this have to do with Me? My hour is not yet come.” This miracle will ring the bell for My death. The first miracle will ring the bell of my death. Then Jesus does the miracle but not for His mother. He has used the term of respect “Woman” and He’ll use it again at the cross, “Woman, behold your son, and son behold your mother.” I have left My Father to do His Will. It is not your (Mary’s) will I’m here to do. From His baptism on to the hour on the cross the Son of God relentlessly obeys the Father who has sent Him to save His people from their sins.

So the reason He does the miracle is not for the mother's request and not to solve a social embarrassment. The reason He does the miracle is He is looking beyond that marriage feast to another marriage feast in eternity. So He conscientiously takes the six stones of baptismal waters for purification that could never purify anyone and the relentless obedience of the Son fill those stone pots up with water and the water comes to wine pointing to His hour where He will shed His blood for our sins. It is there He is declaring that baptism cannot save you for the Old is passing away and the New has come. I am the true Baptizer. I will baptize you with My Spirit as I pour Him out upon you and I will sprinkle you clean with My blood. It is My death that makes you right before God. The sacrifices and the baptisms can't do it but I have come and I will do it and My cross will secure it. My hour will secure it for you.

Then He sends that wine to the lord of the feast and the lord of the feast tastes it. He says "This is amazing! The new stuff is better than the old stuff." That's unusual because most people put the best stuff out front. Nobody cares what comes later after they've consumed 20 to 30 gallons of the good stuff. Jesus is saying "I am the Lord of the feast. I will have a supper and there will be no shortage. You will drink of Me for all eternity and I am the Bridegroom. My bride will not be put to shame at the marriage feast because of My cross that I will wash her with the blood and the water of the Word. I am the relentless obedient Son who has come to do the will of My Father." It is the same message. This is My Father's House. The Son relentlessly comes to the temple. He comes to address its desecration, its perversion and its prostitution. He is the Lord of the temple.

Can you imagine this moment? Do you know how big an ox is? Jesus uses this little make shift whip. Oxen are leaving the area. Sheep are leaving. Lambs are leaving and pigeons are flying. Money is clanging and everyone is running out. This is almost another miracle. Something is happening here. I have one illustration here in using a movie hero of mine. I know I'll sound dated on this. Clint Eastwood is my movie hero and the only movie worth seeing is The Outlaw of Josey Wales. My favorite moment in that movie is when Josey (Clint Eastwood) looks at the Indian, Chief George and says "Chief it seems every time I get to liken people there gone." The Chief looks at him and says "I noticed when you get to disliking people there gone too." I was introduced to Clint Eastwood in college and his movies were called spaghetti westerns. He would open the saloon door with his unlit cigar clenched in his teeth, his poncho thrown over his shoulder, the brow of his hat hanging over his eyes, and he would raise his eye and throw his poncho back showing his 14 pistols strapped to it and the saloon empties. The first time I saw that I went back to my college door and tried the same thing but no one left.

Here Jesus shows up and everything starts fleeing. There was Authority. This is My Father's House. They say "What sign do you give? How can you tell us this authority? By what authority do you do this? Show us a sign to prove it." It's a done deal, what do you mean show you a sign? Jesus has already declared "I'm the Lord of the temple for this is My Father's house" but now He says "I am the Temple." My Father owns the Temple. I own it Jesus says. More than that I not only own it but I am it. Destroy this temple and I'll raise it up in three days. The disciples said "Wow" because that's exactly what happened.

Jesus would come back and cleanse this temple again. In less than three years He comes back and what are they doing? They are doing business as usual. How long do

you think it took after the tables got turned over for them to put them back up? We all have a heart prone to wander. Even when Jesus turns over our tables were almost ready to put them back up without the Lord Jesus continually dealing with our life. He'll come back again and these very same people who He took their business away will invest thirty dollars to send Him to the cross. Jesus says "You destroy this temple." In other words, your blasphemy, profanity, perversion and desecration will be what destroys this Temple and that's exactly what happened. In less than 40 years after that every block of that temple would be thrown down. Why? It is because of the blasphemy and profanity of those who claim to be His people. Before that takes place they are saying blasphemy and profanity and your sins and my sins will destroy the temple of His Body as He would go to the cross, die for us and be put in a grave. The temple will be destroyed and then I will raise it up.

The Son is relentless. He will pay for our sins on the cross. Our sins are bore in His Body. He will go to that cross and die for us but that relentless Son will not only have the victory over our sins at the cross but He'll have the victory over the grave as He is raised to glory. He is relentless as our Redeemer. He is the relentless Son of God who will save His people from their sins. In other words, that Old Covenant temple will be torn down and it will not be raised up. The reason why is Ezekiel's temple has already come. It is Christ who is the Temple. He is the fulfillment. See from the East the glory of the Lord has filled up the temple of the Lord.

Revelation 21 says that a New Jerusalem shall come down. It will need no light by day or night. It shall be glorious. It shall be beautiful. There will be no pain, no sorrow, no sin or sickness. Revelation 21:22 says about the New Jerusalem, *[22] And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.* The Lord is the temple and He will be among His people. So when you share the Gospel you're not sharing a religion and calling people relentlessly obey it but you are first sharing a Son, a Savior who is relentless to do the will of His Father to save men and women from their sins. His relentlessness saves you and He is the meeting place for Gentile and Jew.

Yes, let's learn the lesson of making worship God centered and not self centered which desecrates it. Repentance must be thorough or we'll set the tables back up before the shadow of Jesus left the courtyard. Let's learn those lessons but here is what I want you to see. God has sent His Son who is relentless in His redemption of you and that's who you share with people. Christ will save His people from their sins for the zeal of the Lord's House has consumed Him, thus we are saved. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You dear Jesus, that whether it's a party at a marriage feast or the cleansing of a temple the glory of the Son is revealed who is our relentless Redeemer. God, give us vigilance that we will protect and embrace true worship, God centered worship. Give us Father, a hatred of the sin that destroyed the temple of the Lord that sent Him to the cross, our sin which He bore in His Body. God I pray now that You would fill now every person reading this with the joy of salvation for they have a relentless Savior, the One who is the obedient Son of the Father who delighted to do the will of the Father. He declared "I have come to seek and to save the lost and of those whom You have given Me I lose not one." Not only

have we been brought to the temple, the Lord, but now the Lord is in us and we are the temple of His dwelling. O God our God, glorious is our Savior. Free our lips, our heart and our mind that we would share the Good News that Jesus will save and not only the News but ourselves, in Jesus' Name, Amen.