



# The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

## Part 5

### Introduction

Chapter 2 of John begins what is called the Cana cycle. Two weeks ago our pastor preached on Jesus' sign of turning the water into wine at a wedding in Cana. Chapter 4 ends with Jesus healing of the son of an official in Cana. In between Jesus goes to Jerusalem, which is in Judea, then Samaria, then back to Cana, which is in Galilee. In this cycle we see Jesus interacting with a Jew, Nicodemus, a Samaritan, the woman at the well, and a Gentile, the official in Cana. John 2:13 through John 3:21 give the account of Jesus in Jerusalem. We are going to look at the first part of that today, which shows Jesus clearing the temple.

### Cana to Capernaum

Capernaum is about 16 miles (26 km) to the northeast of Cana and could easily be reached in a day's journey. They went down to Capernaum because it is besides the Sea of Galilee, which is below sea level.

### Temple History

- In the beginning God dwelt with his people in the Garden of Eden. Once Adam and Eve sinned God could not dwell with them. As we saw a couple of weeks ago God came to Jacob in a dream and Jacob called that place, Bethel, the house of God. Once the Israelites leave Egypt God shows Moses the pattern for the tabernacle, which is a tent that moves with the people.

*Exodus 25:1-9 – The Lord said to Moses, 2 “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. 3 And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, 4 blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, 5 tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, 6 oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 7 onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. 8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may **dwell** in their midst. 9 Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.*
- Once the people are settled in the land, eventually King David wants to build a temple for the Lord. God reveals to David that David will not build him a house but God will build David a house (2 Sam 7:1-17). So David's son Solomon builds the temple.
  - *1 Kings 8:12-21 – Then Solomon said, “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. 13 I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” 14 Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. 15 And he said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, 16 ‘Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there. But I chose David to be over my people Israel.’ 17 Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 18 But the Lord said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. 19 Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who*



## The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

### Part 5

*shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’ 20 Now the Lord has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and I have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 21 And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”*

- *1 Kings 8:27-30 – But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! 28 Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, 29 that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. 30 And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.*
- Solomon’s temple was destroyed when Judah was taken captive to Babylon. The temple was rebuilt after the exile. The rebuilt temple signifies that Jerusalem is again the center of worship of the Lord. This began the period of history called “Second Temple Judaism” which lasted until the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. As we will see later Herod the Great rebuilt and expanded the temple.
- The temple was central to the nation and Jewish identity.
  - *John 11:45-48 – Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” (Our place refers to the temple.)*

### How Many Cleansings?

There is some controversy concerning John’s account of the clearing of the temple. The Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have a clearing of the temple just before Jesus is crucified. For example, in Mark 11 we read

*Mark 11:15-17 – And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 16 And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”*

Some say that John placed the temple narrative at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry instead of at the end for theological reasons. That is, John was more concerned with theology than history. I agree with Dr. Kostenberger, though, that this is no solution. Scripture does not misrepresent history for theological



# The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

## Part 5

purposes. The obvious solution is that there were two temple cleansings, one at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and one at the end.

### Jesus Cleanses the Temple

- **John 2:13 - The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**

This is the first reference to Passover in John. There is a second Passover in chapter 6 and the final Passover in chapter 12. Of course Passover is the Jewish festival that celebrates the Israelites deliverance from Egypt. The death angel passed through Egypt and all firstborn (animals and people) died, all those without the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts.

*Exodus 12:24-27 – You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. 25 And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. 26 And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ 27 you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.*

The reference to Passover most likely refers to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread that immediately followed Passover.

*Luke 22:1 – Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. Acts 12:1-4 – About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword, 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.*

The period referred to here is 7 to 8 days. This required a lot of animals for sacrifice since sacrifices were required each day.

*Number 28:16-25 – On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Lord’s Passover, 17 and on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast. Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, 19 but offer a food offering, a burnt offering to the Lord: two bulls from the herd, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are without blemish; 20 also their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil; three tenths of an ephah shall you offer for a bull, and two tenths for a ram; 21 a tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs; 22 also one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. 23 You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a regular burnt offering. 24 In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. It shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. 25 And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work.*



## The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

### Part 5

- **John 2:14 - In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.**

In this temple cleansing there is no mention of corrupt business practices. However, the circumstances must have been similar to the second temple cleansing where Jesus said they were making his house a “den of robbers.”

*Matthew 21:12-13 – And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 13 He said to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.’*

The sellers would overcharge for the animals. They would charge up to \$4 for a pair of pigeons worth 5 cents. You could bring your own animals, but the animals had to be inspected before they could be offered for sacrifice. Typically the inspectors would reject animals brought in so the pilgrim would have to purchase from the temple sellers. Many people had to travel long distances to get to Jerusalem and would purchase animals for sacrifice.

The people had to pay the half-shekel temple tax in Jewish currency.

*Exodus 30:11-16 – The Lord said to Moses, 12 “When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for his life to the Lord when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. 13 Each one who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the Lord. 14 Everyone who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the Lord's offering. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the Lord's offering to make atonement for your lives. 16 You shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the Lord, so as to make atonement for your lives.”*

This Temple-tribute had to be paid in exact half-shekels of the Sanctuary, or ordinary Galilean shekels. When it is remembered that, besides strictly Palestinian silver and especially copper coin, Persia, Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman money circulated in the country, it will be understood what work these money-changes must have had. From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> Adar they had stalls in every country-town. On the latter date, which must therefore be considered as marking the first arrivals of festive pilgrims in the city, the stalls in the country were closed, and the money-changers henceforth sat within the precincts of the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (McLean, Virginia: Macdonald Publishing Company), Book I: 367-368



## The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

### Part 5

We know from Jewish literature from that time that much of the profits went to the sons of Annas the high priest. As we'll see later in John that Annas, who was a high priest, was the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. The business owners had to pay to set up shop in the temple and the priests got a share of the profits. In the second temple cleansing Jesus said the Jews had made the temple a "den of robbers." Josephus, the Jewish historian, said of the son of Annas that he was "a great hoarder up of money." Also, Josephus said that he was very rich and stole from the priests their official revenues.<sup>2</sup>

- **John 2:15-17 - 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."**

The ultimate significance in this temple cleansing is not that business, whether corrupt or not, occurred but that business occurred in the temple, specifically the court of the Gentiles. Instead of allowing Gentile God fearers to worship, the Jews had a marketplace.

Is the "all" in verse 15 all people, all animals, or both? R. C. Sproul believes, because of the whip, "all" only applies to the animals. However, the wording of the ESV and the second temple cleansing shows "all" to mean people and animals. This does not mean, though, that Jesus actually hit a person with a whip. Note that in verse 16 he "told" those who sold pigeons to leave.

My Father's house - this is the same phrase he used when Jesus' parents found him in the temple.

*Luke 2:49 – And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"*

Zeal for your house will consume me. Consume means "a devouring flame." Other places it is translated devour.

*Psalm 69:9 – For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.*

Psalm 69 is a psalm about a righteous sufferer.

### Jews Demand a Sign

- **John 2:18 - So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"**

The Jews ask for a sign, but the cleansing of the temple was the sign. Just as the changing of the water into wine was a sign, so the cleansing of the temple is a sign. However, it is not a miraculous sign. It is a sign in that it fulfills what was predicted in the Old Testament and testifies that Jesus is the Messiah.

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 372



## The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

### Part 5

*Malachi 3:1-3 – Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. 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. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.*

Asking for a sign shows the wickedness of the Jews. The need was to repent. They do not stop to consider whether clearing the temple was the right thing to do. Basically they wanted to justify their sin by questioning the authority of the one who pointed it out. Sin is sin no matter who points it out. We like to shoot the messenger instead of acknowledging our sin. Also, they were asking for a miraculous sign on their terms. They did this at other times.

*Matthew 12:38-40 – Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." 39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

*Mark 8:11-12 – The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."*

God does not perform on command like a circus animal. Asking for a sign when God has already revealed everything we need for repentance shows our wickedness.

*Luke 16:27-31 – And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him (Lazarus) to my father's house—28 for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"*

- **John 2:19-22 - 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.**

Herod the Great rebuilt the temple beginning in 18 B.C. The temple proper was completed in 2 years but all the work on the whole temple area continued until a few years before the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.

This statement evidently was used against Jesus at his trial.



## The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

### Part 5

*Mark 14:57-58 – And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”*

Note, though, Jesus did not say in John that he would destroy the temple. He told the Jews to destroy the temple.

Jesus’ statement was misunderstood by not only the Jews but by the disciples. Only after the resurrection did they understand (vs 22).

*John 1:11 – He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.*

Jesus is the true temple. This is seen in John’s gospel and throughout the New Testament.

*John 1:14 – 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.*

*John 1:51 – And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*

*John 2:11 – This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.*

*John 4:21, 24 – Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

Because we are the body of Christ we also are the temple of God through the Holy Spirit.

*1 Corinthians 3:16-17 – Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

*Ephesians 2:19-22 – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

*Hebrews 10:19-22 – Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

*Rev 21:22 – And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*

Jesus’ death and resurrection meant that the physical temple had no more relevance. The veil was torn from top to bottom (Matt 27:51). Jesus rose from the dead but the temple is still scattered rubble.

*Hebrews 8:13 – In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*



## The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

### Part 5

R. C. Sproul says, “Many evangelical Christians are waiting eagerly for the Jews to build a new temple, seeing that as a sign of the end of the age. They fail to understand that the temple already has been rebuilt. Christ is the temple, the locus of the living presence of God in the midst of His people, and the rebuilding of the temple took place on the day of His resurrection.”<sup>3</sup>

The resurrection is the ultimate sign of the person and work of Jesus.

*Acts 17:30-31 – The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.*

---

<sup>3</sup> Sproul, R. C. *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary - John* (Reformation Trust Publishing), 30