

John 2:12-25 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. (13) When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (14) In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. (15) So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. (16) To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (17) His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." (18) Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" (19) Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." (20) The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" (21) But the temple he had spoken of was his body. (22) After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. (23) Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. (24) But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. (25) He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Let us pray: Father, we thank you so much for Christ, we thank you for salvation. We thank you for the tremendous privilege of serving you and living for you, and I pray that your spirit will speak to each of us about our relationship with you today, in Jesus name, amen.

As we get into this portion of Scripture, we see that he has been in Cana for a wedding where he turned water into wine, which was the first miracle John recorded to prove that he was. After that he went down to Capernaum.

Capernaum became his home base as was written in *Matthew 4:13* Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—. Sadly, the people of Capernaum never recognized Jesus as Lord, and some day they will pay for it. *Matthew 11:21-24* "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. (23) And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the

depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. (24) But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

At one time The Passover had been called the Lord's Passover as can be seen in *Exodus 12:11* *This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the **LORD's Passover***. However, by the time John's gospel is written (almost the end of the first century) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John says it's the **Jewish Passover**.

When John says they go up to Jerusalem, he is referring to the elevation, not the direction on a map, which would actually be south. (Jerusalem was the highest elevation in Israel, so all journeys to Jerusalem were termed as going "up," and journeys away from Jerusalem were termed as going "down" from Jerusalem.)

Every Jewish male 18 years of age and older was required to go to Jerusalem three times a year unless they had a very good reason not to. These events were Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, (also known as the Feast of Booths and several other names). All were to be celebrated under God's specific instructions

John 2:14 *In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.*

This was happening in the court of the Gentiles. The temple was huge and consisted of many parts. The most sacred place within the temple was the Holy of Holies where the high priest went once a year on the Day of Atonement to offer a sacrifice to God for the sins committed over the past year. Outside of the Holy of Holies was the Holy Place where the priests conducted rituals to honor God every day. The Holy Place was separated from the Holy of Holies by a four-inch-thick veil. Further out was the Court of Women, which was as far as a woman could go. Beyond that was the Court of Gentiles, which was a large area surrounding the temple. A wall separated the temple from this area and signs were posted prohibiting Gentiles from going inside the temple wall under penalty of death.

In fact, some Jews seized and beat the Apostle Paul for allegedly taking a Gentile into the temple area. (Acts 21:27-36) If he hadn't been rescued by a Roman commander and his soldiers, he would have been killed. To a Jew, a Gentile was a dog, (which they despised) and a person was either a Jew or a Gentile.

Once a year everybody had to pay a half shekel temple tax, which was collected when they made their Passover visit to the temple. It has been estimated that there could have been over a million people in Jerusalem during this time! The animals to be sacrificed were brought to the Court of the Gentiles and we can only imagine what kind of a mess that would have been. Visualize what millions of animals, their feed, (and manure,) flies, would be like. It was supposed to be a place for Gentiles to worship, but there really wasn't much room left for them.

God had made provisions for the Gentiles, but the Jews didn't care about them. God loves them, but the Jews didn't. *Isa 56:7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.*"

The story of Jesus' first visit to the temple is found in Luke 2 when he was but 12 years old. You may remember that his parents lost him. When they finally found him, he was in the temple area, and this is what he said: *Luke 2:49-50 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (50) But they did not understand what he was saying to them.* He had called the temple, his father's house, and now we have it again in John 2:16: *"Get these out of here, how dare you turn my Father's house into a market."* Since he was the son of God, His father, so it was also his temple. The temple should have been a place to worship God and to study His word but it has greatly changed and needed cleansing.

Near the end of his ministry, he runs them out again as reported in *Matthew 21:12-13 Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. (13) "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"*

The reason he called them robbers is because Annas, the Jewish High Priest, had devised a way to exploit the people coming to Jerusalem to worship. Although Annas had been disposed by the Romans in 7 AD, he was still the virtual head of the priests in Jerusalem.

The priests by and large were Sadducees who didn't believe in resurrection of the dead, angels and spirits, and had the conviction that humans can expect nothing beyond this life, so we should make all the money we can, and enjoy life now, because there is no tomorrow. Pharisees, on the other hand, believed in life resurrection of the dead, angels, and miracles which resulted in constant conflict with the Sadducees.

Everybody that came to the Passover had to bring an offering. In past days animal merchants sold the animals to be sacrificed across the Kidron Valley which was away from the temple. Annas got the idea that it would be more convenient if people could purchase their sacrificial animals in the Court of the Gentiles and also exchange their money there. If a worshipper brought his own animal, it would have to be inspected by a priest. The priest would always find a flaw on every animal, and the animal's owner would be told that they would have to bring another animal. The priest would then offer to buy the defective animal for a fraction of its value and sell them an acceptable animal at an exorbitant price. They might take a dove that was worth 15 cents and sell it for \$15. When they went to pay for it, the priest would tell them that they could only use the temple money and there would be a very unfair exchange rate. All of this stuff was making Annas and his family very, very wealthy.

Christ, right after he cleansed the temple for the second time near the end of his ministry, says in *Matthew 23:38-39* *Look, your house is left to you desolate. (39) For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'*" This time he doesn't refer to the temple as "his" house, but "their" or "your" house.

The Jewish people had no choice in whether or not to exchange their Roman money for temple money. We see why in *Luke 20:22-25*. *Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (23) He saw through their duplicity and said to them, (24) "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?" (25) "Caesar's," they replied. He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."*

They couldn't use coins that had an image of a person because they were concerned about idolatry in the temple area. the only coins acceptable for use in the temple were coins that had no image on them.

When exchanging coins, they were allowed to take 1/24 of 1% of the value of the coin to account for the coin's wear. In that day a coin was only worth what the metal was worth. If it was supposed to weigh an ounce, and it only weighted three quarters of an ounce, it was only worth three quarter as

much. In our day, a worn coin is still worth its face value because the value of the metal it's made from is insignificant. But they were actually charging 10 to 30 percent extra for the exchange of money.

They were so worried about money not having an image of any kind on it they put the treasury in the women's court. If a Gentile wanted to give money, he had to find a Jew to give it for him, because he couldn't go to where the treasury was. So with that in mind, with all this stuff going on, all this money changing hands, all the people, all the racket, all the animals, and maybe bartering over how much it was going to cost to exchange money,- Christ sees this and it just about does him in. What is supposed to be a relationship with God had turned into a circus.

Folks, that didn't only happen in the first century. Watch some religious programs on television and you will see that they're all about money. They're not about God. Sager Creek Community Church, by God's grace is not a circus and will never become one.

John 2:15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

This doesn't sound like the Jesus the world wants to portray him, does it? He had people on the run. They were more afraid of him than their love of money. He drove the animals out. He drove the money changers out and he threw the money into the dirt. He caused quite a ruckus. Think about something for a moment. Say you're a disciple that Christ has just chosen within the last few weeks, and he has talked about love, honor, loving God, but now all at once you're in public with him, and he's mad! He's got people on the run, and being with Christ is kind of embarrassing, isn't it? I know that there are times you've been embarrassed about being a Christian. Perhaps you went on a witnessing campaign. You were with some other people, and you were supposed to take this block, and they would take the next block. So, you go and ring a doorbell and hope it doesn't work. You knock on the door so lightly that you can't even hear it, and then you leave before it can be answered. At the end of the block, you tell the other people "Yeah, we covered our block, but nobody was home." Or at work, someone says something, and you know that you should take a stand for Christ, but you don't. Or maybe you go out and eat in a restaurant and you know you should pray for the food, but you really don't want to do that in public so you just kind of bow your head while you're taking a bite. That'll work. We know what it is like to be embarrassed. I'm telling you, that these disciples didn't know what was going on - they hadn't seen him act like that before and they were shocked. I think they were scared, and I think they were embarrassed and they didn't know what to do.

John 2:16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

He has just declared he was the Messiah. They understood what he said when he said, "*My Father's house.*" The Sanhedrin will use this statement when they put Jesus on trial for blasphemy, which is recorded in the following passage

Mark 14:58-62 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" (59) Yet even then their testimony did not agree. ." (Of course, that's not what he had said in John 2:19) (60) Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" (61) But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" (62) "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven

Christ's patience had run out and he cleared out the Court of the Gentiles. Have you ever thought about that? His patience wore thin. What would it be like to stand in front of God if his patience ran out? Men are going to find out.

Psalm 76:5-7 Valiant men lie plundered; they sleep their last sleep; not one of the warriors can lift his hands. (6) At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both horse and chariot lie still. (7) You alone are to be feared. Who can stand before you when you are angry?

Naham 1:5-6 The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. (6) Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.

Our God is an awesome God. Our God has patience and love. He loves the world. But do you know something? His love never saved anyone. Jesus Christ's blood is what saves people. His patience with the world will run out someday, and when he comes back the whole earth will shake and tremble at his coming.

You don't know what you've missed if you've never seen what lightning can do when it strikes a rock column or a chimney. As a former brick mason, I've seen it a few times. I remember a man calling me and saying: "Come back and fix this rock pillar you put in, because the rocks are coming loose." So, I went there, and the rocks weren't coming loose. They were split in

half. I told him, "I don't think this is my responsibility, I don't guarantee lightning strikes." When lightning strikes a rock column, it shatters the rocks. I want you to know that Christ is coming back and he's going to shake things up. His patience will run out, even with his own. For some of you (I don't have any idea who) who are believers, that he loves to no end, his patience is running out. There is a pay day someday. And there is a chastisement. For those who God loves he chastens. If he doesn't chasten you, he doesn't love you. You're not his own. Keep that in mind.

*John 2:17-18 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." (Quoted from Psalm 69:9 - This was a prophecy that Christ's zeal for his Father's house will bring about his death.) After Jesus' resurrection the disciples finally would **understand** and believe what Jesus had said) (18) Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"*

The Jews were always wanting some kind of sign from Jesus. In fact, First Corinthians 1:22 says they're still looking for a sign.

1Corinthians 1:22 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

They always wanted to see something from God. Jesus fed 5000 men plus women and children and there was left over bread, but the Jews still said, "Can you show us a sign to show us who you are!" They said, "So what, Moses fed everybody for 40 years. That's no big deal. We want to see a real sign." Jews demand miraculous signs. We're not Jews. We're the world, we are the Greeks, and Greeks look for wisdom. We preach Christ crucified, which is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Have you ever watched TV stars, movie stars, news commentators, politicians? They say that Christianity is a bunch of foolishness, and it's silly. They think the world was made from nothing and it just happened. A bunch of nothing turned into a bunch of something and here we are.

1Corinthians 1:23-25 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, (24) but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (25) For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

Don't let the world intimidate you. The foolishness of God is wiser than anything any man will ever come up with. Think how *"smart"* it is to think that nothing became something and organized itself to the point where it is now. They say the universe is so far across that they don't even know if it has an end to it. And that all came from nothing? How silly is that!

The Jewish leaders walked up and said, "we want a sign." How about the healing of the deaf and dumb, or what about the man raised in the dead? They really didn't want proofs, because they didn't want a Messiah. They were making plenty of money as it was. After all, what more is important in life than making a lot of money?

John 2:19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

I love this verse. The word *destroy* is translated from the Greek word "*luo*" which means to loosen. I love that. I watched the first Star Wars movie, and when I saw the guy with a robe and he said, "*you kill me, and I'll be more powerful than you ever knew.*" And I thought, right, then I remembered this verse – "*destroy (luo) this temple, turn me loose, destroy my body and turn it loose, and I'll raise it again in three days.*" When Christ was here the first time, before he died, if he wanted to go through a door, he had to open it. But after the resurrection, he didn't need to open that door, he could just walk right through it. The laws of physics didn't apply to him anymore because he'd been turned loose. Someday, if you're a believer, you're going to be turned loose and all the aches and pains you have now, all the limitations you have now will be gone. If you put your trust in Jesus Christ you'll be turned loose.

Then he said, "in three days, I'll rebuild it." Notice that he didn't say somebody else would raise it up or rebuild it. Very pointedly he said, "**I** will rebuild it." A Jehovah's Witness came to me one time and said that what I believe was all wrong. I asked, well, where was Jesus when he died? And she said, He was dead. I said, Really? How could he raise himself from the dead if he was unconscious, dead and gone? She said he couldn't do that. I showed her this verse. I'm not exaggerating. God is my witness. She almost ran out of the house and down the road to her car. She said, I'll get back with you. She never did. It shook her theology all the way to the core. When Jesus Christ died, he didn't become unconscious, he was still who he was. When he came back and he took part in raising his own body from the dead along with his father, and the Holy Spirit.

John 2:21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

Jesus wanted to be sure they understood that God doesn't dwell in a building. This room we are meeting in is not a sanctuary. This is an auditorium. You are the sanctuary. God dwells in you. He doesn't dwell in a building, he dwells in you. He dwelt in Christ.

1Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; (20) you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.

John 2:20-22 The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" (21) But the temple he had spoken of was his body. (22) After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

The Jews were referring to Herod's temple, which had been under construction for forty-six years, and it still wasn't complete. It actually took thirty more years to finish.

Jesus explains that he was talking about his body, not the physical structure that they were standing in. While Jesus was on earth, his disciples couldn't understand what Jesus was going to do, but they finally believed what Jesus was saying after his resurrection from the dead.

Remember when the disciples were walking with Jesus in the temple area (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21) and they said, "Lord, look at all this. Look at all this stuff. Look at how massive and magnificent it is. It is so beautiful." Jesus answered them as written in *Mark 13:2 "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

The reason we have a building is because we need a place to meet. That's it. There really isn't another reason, except it's cold outside, and it's real warm inside. I want you to know you're the temple. Those of you who look at porn, I want you to know that you're taking the Holy Spirit there with you. Those of you who use profanity, that's God's tongue. He's indwelt in there somehow when you do that. I just want to say one thing - God's patience does run out.

Now look at the last three verses, because they conclude this chapter and they're hard to understand.

John 2:23-25 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. (24) But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. (25) He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

The original language reads that he **kept** on doing miraculous signs **more and more**.

Verses 23 and 24, are a play on words. In verse 23 it says many people believed (entrusted) in his name. ("believed" is the Greek word "entrusted".) In verse 24, it says Jesus would not entrust himself to them. What's he saying here, are those people not really saved? Some people will tell you that's what that means, but it does not mean that!

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

This verse answers what it takes to be saved. To believe in Jesus Christ, even believe in his name, you become a child of his. They literally did entrust themselves to his name. But he didn't entrust himself to them. Do you know why? Because he knew who they really were. He knew that there would be very few in the crowd that he would entrust himself to. He entrusted himself into the 11 of the 12 disciples.

Let's assume everyone in here is saved. Why then, will a handful of you live for Him with reckless abandon, and the rest of you just live? You're going live for yourself, you're going to go to work, you're going to go through the day, if you make money, you're happy. If your family's healthy, you're happy. You don't live for Him with every fiber of your being. What makes one person do that, and not another one? I don't know, but Christ knows. Because even though that crowd entrusted their self to him, he did not entrust himself to them because he knew what was in each man. He didn't need any man to testify about a man. It comes down to this, (which I don't understand). There are some people who just recklessly abandon life and follow Christ. And do you know something? He will entrust himself to those individuals. We see this over in John 1:16. *John 1:16* For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. (NAS95)

God's grace is there today, if you're stretching in your Christian life, with grace in the next minute, and more new grace in the next minute and new and more grace in the next minute. You need his grace because you're reaching out to live for Him. Some of you will never know what it is to stretch spiritually for Christ. You will leave here and run off like water. Yes, you're saved, but you'll never find what Christ talks about in *1Corinthians 2:9-13* However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"— (10) but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (11) For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (12) We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. (13) This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words

Some people will never know what it is that the mind cannot conceive of, and their heart can't wrap itself around things God has prepared for those of us who love him. Some will know, most will not. He did not entrust himself to them. I don't understand why some entrust themselves to him and others don't. If God is my witness, if I could have any one thing today, it would be for everyone in this room, to reach out and grab all that God has for you and live for Him until your dying day. I promise, you will never regret it. I don't know what it would mean for you, but I can tell you it would mean more than you can possibly imagine. Listen to what it says. *No mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.* You can't know ahead of time. You have to reach out and take everything God has and pull it to you and live for Him by faith. That's the kind of person I want to be with when I'm in trouble in a spiritual foxhole.

Psalms 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

All over Jerusalem on the day before the Passover, everybody was going around and cleaning all the leaven (leaven represents sin). They cleaned out every little nook and cranny of the house to get all the yeast, the leaven, out of the house because it was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It became a game; orthodox Jews would hide leaven in the house for the kids to find. But while they were doing that, the very epitome of what was supposed to be holiness, the temple was full of sin. The religious leaders were full of leaven. Leaven was everywhere in the temple. Cattle were inside mooing and baying and bleating and doing whatever they did, while others are trying to worship.

Folks, I want to tell you something. You can go through this life, and you can leave the leaven in the house. You can live life as a believer, and you will die as a believer, and you

will go to heaven as a believer, but you're never going to know what it is to have all God has for you until you're really ready to reach out and turn loose of everything you have and grab hold of everything God has for you. I want to encourage you to be all God wants you to be and nothing less. That's what he means in Romans 12:1

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

If you're reading this without Christ, you need him as your Savior. Without him you cannot survive eternally. Turn to Him and He will save you where you are. But for the rest of us I pray that we might live for God like we've never lived for him before. That you might start fresh, that you might draw a line in the sand and cross over and say from this point on - *"God with your help and your power, I'm going to live for you as I get in the word and find out what you have for me."* *If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Don't leave here with leaven in your life.

Let's pray. Father, how we thank you for all you've done for us. Oh, how we thank you for the love you have for us. I pray that your spirit will speak to each individual here for your honor and glory in Jesus name. Amen.