

## Sunday August 13, 2023 | John 2:12-22

The beginning of the gospel of John shows Judaism at the time of Jesus in a very negative light. The religious leaders came to question who John the Baptist was and what authority he had. Jesus' first miracle pointed out the emptiness of the Jewish man-made traditions. They had added burdensome washings and rules. Jesus instead turned this to an overflowing abundance of wine. He was replacing burden and rules for joy. The best is yet to come. This critique of Judaism continues in chapter 2.

### John 2:11-12 ESV

(11) **This, the first of His signs**, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. **And His disciples believed in Him.**

(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.

His disciples have been growing in their understanding of who Jesus is. This first sign helped them see His glory. They believed in Him. Notice that they are now willing to follow Him and travel with Him as He goes to Capernaum. At this point Jesus' mother and brothers are also traveling with Him. As Jesus' ministry continues this connection with His family will diminish.

### Mark 3:20-21 ESV

(20) Then He went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat.

(21) And when His family heard it, **they went out to seize Him**, for they were saying, "**He is out of His mind.**"

Verse 21 literally says His own went to seize Him. As He was teaching and performing miracles His own earthly family could not make sense of what He did. They thought He had gone mad. After His resurrection some in His family will believe. From Capernaum He heads to Jerusalem.

### John 2:13 ESV

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

It was time to celebrate the Passover. The Law required everyman who was able to travel to Jerusalem. This was something that Jesus' family practiced every year.

### Luke 2:41 ESV

(41) Now His parents went to Jerusalem **every year** at the Feast of the Passover.

The Passover was very important to God and He wanted this yearly festival to remind His people of what He did in Egypt for them.

### Exodus 12:13-14 ESV

(13) **The blood shall be a sign for you**, on the houses where you are. **And when I see the blood, I will pass over you**, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

(14) "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it **as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations**, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

### Leviticus 23:5 ESV

(5) In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, **is the LORD's Passover.**

This was the Lord's Passover. The blood covered His people. They did not experience death that day because the blood of the lamb. God wanted Israel every year to be reminded that they were His people. He had brought them out of Egypt. **He had covered them by the blood which pointed to the perfect sacrifice would one day come.** Jesus is the perfect sacrifice and every year He went to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast that was about Him. The blood on the door post pointed to His perfect blood. This was the Lord's Passover. But notice how it is described.

### John 2:13 ESV

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

It is called the Passover of the Jews. This was meant to be a celebration of what God had done. It was the Lord's Passover. The religious leaders have made it about them. The true focus and heart of the Passover had been lost. The Jews continued to follow the rituals and traditions but the purpose, the reminder of what God had done was missed. As our story continues, we will see how far the Jews had fallen.

### John 2:14 ESV

(14) **In the temple** He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

The first temple, that Solomon built, had been destroyed by Babylon as Judah was taken into Exile. At the end of the exile, Cyrus the king of Persia issued a decree (2 Chronicles 36:22-23) for the temple to be rebuilt. Zerubbabel helped lead the exiles back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. As the temple's foundation was laid out there was a mix of emotions.

### Ezra 3:12-13 ESV

(12) But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, **old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice** when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy,

(13) so that the people could not distinguish **the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping**, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.

The Older generation wept because they knew how amazing Solomon's temple had been. Solomon's temple was not very large but it was incredibly ornate. The older generation saw what the exile had cost Israel. The younger generation was excited to be back in the land so they rejoiced. The temple was conquered many times after it was rebuilt to the time of Jesus. King Herod decided to expand the temple and make it beautiful again. This took many years and the entire temple area was expanded considerably. It was this expanded temple that stood when Jesus was alive. One of the major additions was the **Royal Stoa**. It was a market that Herod had added to the temple. When Jesus found the money changers and merchants selling oxen, sheep, and pigeons it most likely was in this Royal Stoa.

The money changers were present because Jews had to pay a temple tax and Roman money was not allowed to be used. These moneychangers would convert people's currency at a fee so they could pay the temple tax. **The merchants sold approved animals for sacrifices.** The religious leaders of the day were apart of this industry. The priest would evaluate the animal you brought for sacrifice and deem it not worthy. Your family has traveled many days to reach Jerusalem and now your sacrifice is unacceptable. These merchants would sell you an approved animal so that you could still offer your sacrifice. Then most likely after you left, they would take your unapproved animal and sell it as an approved animal to another family. Think about the doubt and frustration this led to. **You never knew if your sacrifice would be accepted or not.** Jesus's reaction shows how sinful all this was.

### John 2:15 ESV

(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.

Jesus was deliberate and calculated in His actions. This Royal Stoa had been there every year His family had went to the temple. I wonder how many times their animals were rejected? All those years He watched the merchants, but His public ministry had not yet started. This year after being revealed as the lamb of God, things were different. He came into the Royal Stoa, and made a whip of cords. This took time. He then began to drive these merchants out of the temple area. He flipped the tables and poured out the money.

### John 2:16-17 ESV

(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."**

He drives out the sheep and oxen using the whip. He instructs the merchants emphatically to get the doves out. He does not want His Father's house to be a place of trade. He is making a claim of relationship. This temple was where the Father was to be worshiped and sacrifices were to be made. Jesus cared deeply about His Father's house. Zeal for the temple consumed Him. The Word for consumed means **to eat up, consume, devour, swallow**. The disciples see the connection to Psalm 69.

### Psalm 69:8-9 ESV

(8) I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons.

(9) **For zeal for Your house has consumed me,** and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

Jesus is separating from His earthly family and revealing His relationship to His true Heavenly Father. The temple had become a marketplace where worshipers were extorted and left with doubt. The Temple, Passover and sacrifices were all to point to the perfect lamb of God, who was standing in the temple. The other gospels quote from Isaiah which give us further insight as to what motivated His zeal.

**Isaiah 56:7 ESV**

(7) these I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and **their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar**; **for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."**

Jesus desires for people to be able to come to the temple and find an acceptable sacrifice. Every time doubt and worry were given to a worshiper over their sacrifices it fueled His zeal. The priests were using a fake standard, to evaluate the sacrifices. Jesus uses a perfect righteous standard. **Acceptance can only be found through His perfect sacrifice.**

**Hebrews 10:19-23 ESV**

(19) 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.  
 (23) Let us hold fast **the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.**

We can have a confidence today to draw near to God because the sacrifice of Jesus was perfect. **His blood coming from a perfect sinless body is able to give us access to God.** We can have a confidence in this, and hold to our hope without wavering. Not because of us but because He is faithful. He is the perfect sacrifice.

God does not desire for us to cause people to doubt their salvation. It drove Jesus to driving people out of the temple. There is teaching in the church today that weighs people down with doubt. Doubt about if they believed correctly. Doubt about their actions or fruit after salvation. Doubt about their salvation if they still have doubts. Don't miss verse 19. We have confidence because of the blood of Jesus Christ! **As we waver, we can rest in the one who is faithful.** We would not be commanded not to waver if it wasn't possible. **We need to be reminded out confidence is in Him,** not us.

**Romans 16:17-18 ESV**

(17) I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those **who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine** that you have been taught; avoid them.  
 (18) For such persons **do not serve our Lord Christ**, but their **own appetites**, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

This perfectly describes the merchants and priest of Jesus day. They caused division and created obstacles for people. They weren't serving God in the temple but their appetites, their own wallets. Paul warns the Roman church of the same thing. It is still around today, and Jesus is still full of zeal in judgment against it.

**Matthew 18:6 ESV**

(6) but whoever causes one of these little ones **who believe in Me to sin**, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Jesus does not take leading others into sin lightly. Each year Jesus watched these merchants and waited for the time to drive them out. This zeal kept growing in Him. We must not miss that His zeal is growing again. He is watching so many things today and is awaiting a time to pour out His wrath.

#### **Revelation 6:15-17 ESV**

(15) Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, **hid themselves in the caves** and among the rocks of the mountains,  
 (16) calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who is seated on the throne, and **from the wrath of the Lamb,**  
 (17) for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

We don't often talk about the wrath of the Lamb. **The blood of the lamb was given so that we would not have to face the wrath of the lamb.** Sin must be punished, if you refuse His sacrifice then you are under His wrath. The cross shows us the incredible depth of God's grace but it also reveals the depth of punishment that sin deserves. Sin will be punished. Our world has weakened Jesus. They talk about His love but they do not see Him as someone driving people out of the temple with a whip. His love is perfect, full of grace and **righteous**. The Jews did not expect this from Jesus. They wanted to know what gave Him the right to act this way.

#### **John 2:18 ESV**

(18) So the Jews said to Him, “**What sign do you show us for doing these things?**”

The Jews want to know what gave Jesus the authority to act this way. This was His Father's temple. The sacrifices were about Him. He absolutely had the right to respond like this. Jesus did not sin in His anger.

#### **Ephesians 4:26-27 ESV**

(26) **Be angry and do not sin;** do not let the sun go down on your anger,  
 (27) and give no opportunity to the devil.

We must be careful. Most of the time we are angry it is sin. Often, we don't have the right to be angry. Our anger exposes issues in our own hearts. It might show an unmet expectation, a sinful desire, or pride. Jesus' response was righteous because it was based on truth. He will give them a sign to verify why He is correct in His actions.

#### **John 2:19-20 ESV**

(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?”

This made no sense to the Jews. Herod's temple was massive, it had been under construction for 46 years. The Jews so misunderstood what He said it will be used at His trial to try and condemn Him. Jesus was not talking about the physical temple.

**John 2:21 ESV**

(21) But He was speaking about **the temple of His body**.

The Jews would destroy His body on the cross. He raised it up three days later. He is the perfect sacrifice and it was verified when He rose from the grave. His resurrection confirmed His claims. **He has every right to purify the sacrificial system because He is the perfect sacrifice.**

Jesus changes the word used for temple as He gave His answer. Up to this point the word temple had been a more generic term that refers to the entire temple mount area. When Jesus refers to the temple of His body, He changes to the Word that means the **inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. He is the dwelling place of God in the flesh.**

**John 2:22 ESV**

(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 disciples watched Him drive the merchants out. They heard His answer to the Jews. None of it made sense yet. They believed in Him, yet still had a lot to learn. Most of what Jesus taught did not make sense until after the resurrection and more specifically until after they received the Holy Spirit.

**John 14:26 ESV**

(26) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and **bring to your remembrance all that I have said to You.**

Once they received the Holy Spirit, the Disciples were given spiritual insight. These comments of Jesus finally made sense. As we study the gospel of John, we must remember the disciples are saved but have not received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit yet. Jesus is physically in their presence. This is what makes it such a privilege for you and I to be believers in the church age. The moment we believed in Christ we received the Holy Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 6:17-20 ESV**

(17) But he who is joined to the Lord **becomes one spirit with Him.**

(18) Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

(19) Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you**, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

(20) **for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

The word used here for temple **is the same one Jesus used, referring to the inner sanctuary.** As believers we have God's presence in us. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We should not take that lightly. We are called to glorify God with how we live for Him. As God convicts us of the sin in our temple we must come back to the promise of **1 John 1:9**. We can confess our sins to Him. He will continue to be faithful to forgive us, and we can walk anew with Him.