

Conflict Commences in the Temple Courts

John 2:13-25

October 11, 2026

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Soon after the start of His earthly ministry, Jesus cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem thus inciting ongoing hostility from the religious leaders.

I. The Jewish religious leaders had allowed merchants to invade and profane Yahweh's Temple. (v. 13-14)

II. Jesus responded to this sacrilege with righteous anger. (v. 15-16)

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. (James 1:19-20)

“In your anger do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26a)

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. (Malachi 3:1-4)

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching. (Mark 11:15-18)

On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty. (Zechariah 14:20-21)

III. The Messiah's fervor for God's honor was prophesied in advance. (v. 17)

...for zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who insult you fall on me. (Psalm 69:9)

IV. The term “the Jews” in John’s Gospel frequently refers to the hostile to Jesus religious leaders. (v. 18)

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom... (1 Corinthians 1:22a)

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”

He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. (Matthew 12:38-41)

Then they brought Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ²³ All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew 12:23-28)

V. Jesus prophesied His death and resurrection here at the very outset of His ministry. (v. 19-21)

“Go to Bethel and sin;
go to Gilgal and sin yet more.
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tithes every three years. (Amos 4:4)

‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?’ (Haggai 2:3)

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. (Revelation 21:22-23)

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” (John 10:17-18)

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

VI. The resurrection is the greatest reason to have faith in the Good News of Jesus. (v. 22)

VII. The miraculous signs He performed were additional reasons to have faith. (v. 23)

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:11)

“Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.” (John 4:48)

At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?” (John 7:30-31)

Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. (John 14:11)

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

VIII. John closes this account with a statement describing Jesus’ divine omniscience. (v. 24-25)

But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10:16-17)

“The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7b)

Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” (Acts 1:24-25)