

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ **The First Cleansing of the Temple**

Last time...the first miracle of Jesus Christ at the marriage feast in Cana

This time...the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus Christ

John 2:12-22

v12 down to Capernaum:

After the marriage feast in Cana, rather than returning to Nazareth, Jesus and His

- mother
- brothers and sisters
- disciples (5 Galileans)

went [map 017 A]

- east in direction
- down in elevation

to Capernaum

- “village of consolation”
- “village of Nahum”
- on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee
- near Bethsaida, hometown of 4 of the 5 disciples
- HQ for a Roman garrison
- location of a tax station on the trade route
- site of a Jewish synagogue
- to become Jesus’ HQ/base of operations for much of His ministry (vs Jerusalem)

[pictures 017 B, C]

Family notes:

- “brethren” and “disciples” are distinguished
 - brethren: children of Joseph and Mary...Mark 6:3
 - disciples: Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael
- His mother was NOT a perpetual virgin as the RCC announced in 6th Century
- Joseph is not mentioned hereafter and is presumed dead

Why did they go to Capernaum rather than Nazareth?

Why did they not stay in Capernaum very long?

v13 Passover...Jerusalem:

Jesus and His entourage of family and followers did not return to Nazareth and did not stay very long in Capernaum because

- they were on their way to Jerusalem for Passover
- they would travel around Samaria and those “Samaritans”

They travelled

- south, then west in direction
- up in elevation

Is this particular Passover of any significance?
Hold that thought

v14 found in the temple...sold...changers of money:

[pictures 017 D, E, F, G, H, I]

I need to paint a picture so that we get the full meaning of this and what is about to follow

This feast, Passover, is one of the 3 annual feasts
(Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles)
that had “required attendance” in Jerusalem for every male (Deut 16:16)

- a. Paid at Passover was the Temple tax/ransom/atonement money...
one-half shekel for every adult (20 yrs old +, per Ex 30)

Note: the priests claimed an exemption from this tax
even though Scriptures does not give them an exemption

This Temple tax must be paid exactly and only in Sanctuary shekels...
separate and distinct currency from all others

The pilgrims gathering in Jerusalem carried their own “local” coins...
Galilean, Persian, Tyrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Grecian, Roman...
that were not acceptable at the Temple

Thus, the “need” for currency exchanges...money changers

Money changers set up shop in the Temple complex...and paid very high
“rent” to the Temple rulers

- Sadducees and Pharisees
- the priesthood i.e. the family of the High Priest

Money changers charged a “service fee” for every exchange of currency into Sanctuary half-shekels...

- they charged the local currency equivalent of a half-shekel for every half-shekel exchanged

If \$1 = one half-shekel, I would be charged \$2...
100% profit for money changer

- they charged another “service fee” for “not exact change”

If I paid with a \$5 bill, I would be charged
 $\$1 + \$1 + \$1 = \3
for the half-shekel and change...
\$2 = 40% profit for the money changer

If I paid with a \$10 bill, I would be charged
 $\$1 + \$1 + \$1 = \3
for the half-shekel and change...
\$2 = 20% profit for the money changer

If I paid with a \$20 bill, I would be charged
 $\$1 + \$1 + \$1 = \3
for the half-shekel and change...
\$2 = 10% profit for the money changer

So most pilgrims minimized the service fee and optimized the exchange of currency by

- paying the Temple tax
AND
- exchanging large sums of money into Sanctuary shekels...
because that was the currency accepted without hassle or haggling by the marketplaces in Jerusalem and in the Temple (otherwise, 2 haggles – price and exchange rate)

Items sold in the Temple complex included items needed for sacrifices, meat offerings, drink offerings, peace offerings...
the prices for which were fixed monthly by the priests
(prices went up during those 3 feasts)

- b. Every “pilgrim” must come with an offering (Deut 16:16-17)

On the Mount of Olives, the path to Jerusalem for the vast majority of pilgrims, were shops, operated by local folks, where pilgrims could purchase sacrificial animals

(prices were a function of supply and demand, therefore high)

Then, the animal had to be inspected for sacrificial acceptability by a priest...who charged a fee for doing so

or

On the Temple grounds were shops operated by the priesthood that sold pre-certified sacrificial animals...

more convenient, guaranteed to be acceptable for sacrifice...

but at a higher price than charged on the Mount of Olives

This “priestly” market was known as “the Bazaars of the sons of Annas” (Herod-appointed High Priest),

These “Bazaars” were operated by Annas’

- sons – treasurers
- sons-in-law – assistant treasurers
- servants – traffic control and crowd control by beating the people with sticks

Stereotypically speaking, going to Jerusalem for the compulsory feasts by a Jewish worshipper/pilgrim was like

- a Mafia “shakedown” for “protection”
- going to buy a used car

an event made repugnant by

- dishonest and greedy traders of filthy lucre (money changers)
- unashamedly greedy and corrupt opportunists (priesthood, esp the High Priest)

With the required attendance resulting in millions of pilgrims, Passover (in particular) meant HUGE money for the

- moneychangers
- priesthood, esp the High Priest

Josephus’ description of Annas: “a great hoarder up of money”

Note: lesson learned by another false High Priest aka Pope

All of this unholy greed and avarice and economic abuse took place...
on the Temple grounds

The Temple grounds were a stench!

- greed that fueled this money-making machine
- livestock marketplace filled with...what do animals do wherever they are – empty their bowels

The merchants, bankers, and the false priesthood made a fortune on the backs of the common people coming to the Temple to worship God... they fleeced God's flock vs fed

Religion has been, is, and will always be Big Business... why there are so many counterfeits/frauds in Christianity

Jesus is none too happy about His Father's house being used as a place of commerce...dishonest and predatory commerce at that
Onto the defiled Temple grounds walks Jesus Christ, in the fullness of Divine holiness, authority, and power

v15-16 scourge...drove them all out:

In the midst of this completely wicked and corrupt scene, Jesus makes a whip and with righteous anger drives/ejects/expels out of the Temple complex

- the priestly sellers of the livestock and their livestock
- the priestly sellers of doves with their cages of doves
- the greedy moneychangers
 - pouring out and scattering their precious money
 - turning over their corrupted tables...scales, ledgers, etc

Consider Jesus

- is about His father's business...why He said what He said in Ch 2:4
He had steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem vs Cana!
This was the hour He had in mind
- not the effeminate "Sunday School Jesus"...but a powerful force!
 - one Man with a whip and a Presence and a Voice
cleared/cleansed the very crowded Temple
 - unopposed by the moneychangers and the priesthood
- attack Him – silent, meek
 - impugn the Holy Spirit – warn of the unpardonable sin
 - impugn His Father – righteous anger, holy wrath
- what He would say and do
 - in commercial Christianity (big business!)
 - to pastors/false teachers who make merchandise of the people...His people (2 Peter 2:1-3)

v17 his disciples remembered:

When?

Prophesy (Messianic Psalm, Ps 69) was fulfilled (Ps 69:9) right before their eyes.

When did they remember?

v18 answered the Jews...what sign:

The Jews...

- the Sanhedrin
- the Sadducees and Pharisees (esp the wealthy upper class Sadducees)
- the religious leaders, Temple rulers
- the benefactors of these lucrative revenue streams
- the owners of the now disrupted and scattered profit center...

muster enough courage to ask Jesus a question

Notice the non-violent approach...for now

They were afraid

- of the people, the people they regularly abused who are undoubtedly “cheering” for Jesus as He opposes the priesthood under whose heavy hand they lived, as they did the heavy hand of Rome
- of Rome, ruthless and at all times watching diligently from Antonia Fortress, esp on these 3 compulsory feasts

They do not directly challenge Jesus’ authority, they ask Him a very cunning question...looking for a sign, a demonstration for all eyes present to see

v19 Destroy this Temple and in 3 days I will raise it:

Jesus never passed up a teaching moment

But His hearers are those who

- have ears but cannot hear
- have eyes but cannot see
- have minds but cannot understand
- have hearts but are hardened by unbelief

so Jesus answers such that believers will understand and unbelievers will not understand (as He would with parables)

This evil and adulterous generation/people requested a sign...

Jesus always only gave them one “sign” – His resurrection

Jesus gives only one sign to His enemies – His resurrection

Great power was given to be witnesses of – His resurrection (Acts 4:31)

(great power = baptism of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit

The testimony of the early Church was – His resurrection

Our testimony is – His resurrection

That we know Him, and the power of His resurrection (Phil 3:10)

Resurrection: the power of God

v20-21 Forty and six years...his body:

Because of their unbelief, the Jews were not on the same page as Jesus Christ

The Temple...His Father's house, the place God resides

"This Temple took 46 years to build...

You are going to destroy it?

You are going to re-build it in 3 days?"

Jesus was not speaking of Herod's Temple...

He is speaking AGAINST Herod's Temple – it will be destroyed by God

He is speaking of His Body – will be destroyed by man but raised by God

Col 1:15-18

Col 2:9, 16-17

Heb 1:1-3

the express image of His person

Jesus would yield His body to the wrath of man and Satan

Jesus would Ch 10:18-19

The Temple of God was standing in Herod's Temple...

and He "filled it" with His Presence!

v22 He was risen...remembered:

When did Jesus' disciples remember?

After The Sign was fulfilled...after His Resurrection

Then they remembered this...and v17

Acts 2:4

John 14:26

Jesus' 1st Cleansing of the Temple...at the outset of His ministry...at age 30

Thus starts...immediately...an open conflict between the Jews and Jesus Christ that would culminate at the Cross

They opposed John the Baptist, they will oppose Jesus for Whom John was the Forerunner

Jesus Christ cleansed the Temple at the beginning of His ministry...

AND at the end of His ministry (recorded in Synoptic Gospels)

The dogs went right back to their vomit

The Jews, in particular the Sadducees and the High Priest...would quickly re-establish their lucrative and abusive profit center and revenue stream

This 1st Cleansing of the Temple happened on a Passover...a particular Passover of any significance?

Consider the history

1. Tabernacle – tent
2. The 1st Temple: Solomon's Temple
 - a. The Lord guided, provided, and occupied (2 Chron 7:1)
 - b. The Lord vacated because it had been defiled (Ezk 9-11)
 - c. Destroyed by God using Neb (on 9th Av)
3. The 2nd Temple: Zerubbabel and Joshua
 - a. Ezra 3:10-13
 - b. Haggai 2:1-9
 - c. Zech 4:9-10
 - d. When did God command this 2nd Temple to be destroyed?
 - e. Who destroyed it and on whose authority?
4. Herod's Temple
 - a. Construction began in 19BC
 - b. Construction site for 46 years...until 27AD
 - i. Is this the 1st Passover celebration in Herod's Temple?
 - ii. Did Jesus speak out against this Temple (built by a counterfeit king) on the very 1st Passover it was (literally) "open for business?" (It at the most has only been "open" 2 or 3 years... Sir Robert Anderson's 4/6/0032)
 - iii. In what Temple did Zacharias serve over 31 years previously? The 2nd Temple, of Z + J
 - iv. In what Temple did 12 year old Jesus conduct a T3? The 2nd Temple, of Z + J
 - v. Where was the 2nd Temple...and where was Herod's Temple?
 - c. The Last Passover will also take place in Herod's Temple 3 years in the future
 - i. Jesus is the Fulfillment of Passover
 - ii. John 1:29
 - iii. John 19:30
 - iv. 1 Cor 5:7
 - d. Destroyed by God using Rome in 70 AD (on 9th Av),"open" for only 44 years
5. The Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:6-9, 1 Cor 6:19-20)
6. Antichrist's Temple
 - a. another counterfeit king
 - b. will be destroyed by God...Personally (care to guess a date?)
7. Mil Temple (Ezk 40-48)...location of 2nd Temple?

Call to Action:

1. Embrace Jesus Christ for Who He is: Savior, Lord, God Almighty
2. “Stand down” and let the Presence of God drive the filth from His Temple...
your heart
3. Live life on His terms...Him filling His Temple in your heart, today and until your
last appointed day!
4. Pray that after we have been raised (1 Cor 15:49-53) and “snatched” that our
left behind loved ones will remember what we said Jesus said...and believe

Temple history

- 1st Temple: Solomon’s Temple dedicated
(957 BC)
- Solomon’s Temple destroyed by King Neb
(586 BC...foretold in Ezk 4)
 - defiled
 - destroyed on 9th Av
- 2nd Temple: Temple re-built by Zerubbabel and Jeshua
(536 – 515 BC...rightful priest and king)
- “upgraded” by Herod
(19 BC – 27 AD)
- Herod’s Temple destroyed by Rome
(70 AD)
 - defiled
 - destroyed on 9th Av