

The Cleansing of the Temple: The Promise of the Seventh Sign

John 2:12-25

June 26, 2022

1. The House of God and a House of Business (12-17)

- a. Jesus and His brethren left the wedding in Cana and travelled down to the seaside village of Capernaum, which served as a home base for Jesus during his 3-year ministry (12; cf. Matthew 9:1).
- b. Jesus begins and ends His public ministry with the Passover, spanning 3 Passovers (13).
- c. Jesus enters the Temple and finds merchants and money changers conducting their business within the temple precincts, most likely the court of the gentiles (14).
 - i. In dishonoring the temple the merchants were dishonoring God Who possesses the temple.
 - ii. The word that the narrator uses for the temple here is 'ieron,' which refers to the entire temple precinct, including all the buildings and courts.
- d. Jesus fashioned a whip and drove out both the merchants and their merchandise (15).
- e. Jesus rebukes the Jews for making His Father's house a house of business (16).
 - i. Jesus's rebuke is focused on the dishonoring of the place.
 - ii. Jesus makes a claim to His authority by referring to the temple as His Father's house.
- f. Jesus's statement was a prophetic fulfillment of Psalm 69.
 - i. The Psalmist prays that those who wait on God would not be ashamed (69:6).
 - ii. The Psalmist states that he is bearing reproach for God's sake (69:7).
 - iii. The Psalmist says that he has become a stranger to his brethren (69:8).
 - iv. "The Psalmist is declaring that the people were reviling God by their worship, and his public protest has caused them to begin to revile him as well." (Edward Klink III)
 - v. This Psalm prophesies that Jesus, like the Psalmist, would rebuke the Jews for dishonoring God, and in doing so, He would be shamed by the Jews and even His own brethren.
 - vi. "God in the person of Jesus has just entered his temple, declared it unclean, and has prepared to receive its shame *himself*" (Edward Klink III).

2. A Challenge of Temple Authority (18-20)

- a. The Jews, likely the temple authorities, demand to know the basis of Jesus's authority for doing His actions (18).
 - i. The Jews see Jesus's actions and statement as a direct affront to their authority.
 - ii. They demand a sign from Jesus to authenticate His actions.
- b. Jesus declares that the sign of His authority is the destruction of His temple (body) and its resurrection in three days (19).
 - i. The sign is the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - ii. "The death and resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate temple cleansing, and the temple of his body is a full replacement of the temple of the Jews" (Edward Klink III).
- c. The Jews misunderstand the Jesus's statement respond with contempt (20).
 - i. They respond to Jesus with what they believe to be an irrefutable rebuttal to Jesus's sign; the temple took 46 years to rebuild, making Jesus's promise to rebuild it in 3 days a preposterous claim.
 - ii. They believe they have all they need to dismiss Jesus's words and actions.
 - iii. Tragically, the Jews are defending the wrong temple.

3. The True Temple, the Body of Jesus (21-22)

- a. What no one realized at the time was that Jesus was referring to the temple of His body (21).
 - i. Jesus's cleansing and rebuke rebuked the Jews authority and shamed them publicly.
 - ii. When Jesus did not respond to the Jews rebuttal, He was shamed in the eyes of the Jews as well as his brethren and disciples.
- b. No one came to Jesus's aid, so the narrator lets us know that Jesus was speaking about His body, not the temple that He just cleansed.
 - i. When the Jews demanded evidence, Jesus offered evidence that was still future and could not be proven until it happened.

- ii. Jesus accepted the shame for cleansing the temple just as He would accept the shame to purchase our cleansing.
 - iii. Jesus's body is the perfect replacement for the Jewish temple.
 - c. It wasn't until Jesus rose from the dead that His disciples remembered what He had said when He cleansed the temple (22).
 - i. After Jesus rose again, the disciples finally understood the significance of Jesus's cleansing of the temple and the sign He offered.
 - ii. They remembered the Scripture, likely Psalm 69, and what Jesus said, and they believed.
 - iii. Jesus bore the shame of this confrontation which came to its climax on the cross as Jesus bore the shame of the entire world.
 - iv. When Jesus rose again, His disciples finally recognized Him for Who He was and believed upon Him.
- 4. Jesus's Witness to the Nature of Humanity (23-25)
 - a. As Jesus continued to perform signs and miracles, many believed on him, but what they believed was not yet fully accurate (23).
 - b. Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew them and their misguided beliefs as to His person and purpose (24).
 - i. They believed Jesus to be a healer and political deliverer.
 - ii. Jesus would not confirm those insufficient beliefs by committing Himself to them.
 - iii. Many believed in Jesus, without truly believing in Jesus, and so it is today.
 - c. Jesus did not need the witness of these shallow believers; He knew that they were still in need of His light and life (25).

Conclusion:

1. Jesus's cleansing of the temple demonstrated that Jesus has completely replaced the temple; we now have access to God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Are you trying to get to God through a temple or church, or have you come to God through Jesus?
2. What do you believe about Jesus?
3. Jesus willingly subjected Himself to the shame of rejection by men and by God to purchase your redemption. Are you willing to subject yourself to the shame of living for Him boldly?