

## 8. The Cleansing of the Temple

### John 2: 12 - 25

**Chronology.** From a chronological viewpoint the wedding in Cana would be better in chapter 1 -- all the same week. Now we move forward in time to the first of three Passover visits Jesus made to Jerusalem.

**Festivals.** Each Jewish man was required to attend three annual feasts at the Holy City: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16). The feasts mentioned in the Gospel of John are Passover (John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1), Tabernacles (John 7:2), and Dedication (John 10:22)

**History.** The other gospels put this incident at the end. It is not at all improbable that Jesus may have cleansed the temple twice, two Passovers apart, and that the second so enraged the hierarchy that their animosity toward him exploded into drastic action. Interfering with their privileges once was impudent, twice would be inexcusable.

**Verse 20** --"46 years". The temple was begun in 19 BC, so this is AD 27

**Verse 14** --"Temple" (*hieron*) means "holy building", but verse 19 (*naos*) means the "dwelling place" of deity. As also in 1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19.

**Verse 19 --22** From the gaining of his ministry Jesus had the end of it in view.

**Verse 23 -- 25** They believed in Jesus, but Jesus did not believe in them. Do miracles lead to Faith? See after the feeding of the 5000 in John chapter 5 What is a shallow faith? Perhaps it is best to think of it as a faith that exists only as long as its object fits our expectations.

**Jesus 'Anger.**

From the wedding at Cana, to the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem we see a different side of Jesus. We see his righteous anger at the sin and corruption of the temple authorities. And that also is part of God's character -- to hate sin and evil.

We sometimes fall into the trap -- when we try to make God in our own image -- of just going for the God of all love and compassion. We forget that God must also be a righteous God -- who hates the sins we commit. We need to balance our view of God -- as one who loves us so much that he wants to change us -- to overturn -- not tables -- but the bad habits in our lives. We have a holy God who won't turn his face the other way and ignore or condone our sinfulness.

### Why Was Jesus Angry

He acted as he did because God's house was being desecrated. How can we desecrate our church building?

The temple (church) can be abused by...

- forgetting what worship is all about.
- misusing the facilities and buildings of God's house.
- ignoring God's holiness and forgetting one's duty to reverence God.
- allowing questionable, non-worshipful activities.

But something else -- What did Jesus say?

Mark has an addition Mark 11:17 *"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."*

All this buying and selling was going on in the first court -- the Court of the Gentiles which was the only place into which a Gentile might come. The Temple authorities and the Jewish traders were making the Court of the Gentiles into a place where no one could pray. The conduct in the Temple court shut out the seeking Gentile from the presence of God.

Is there anything in our church life which keeps the seeking stranger out? If there is, let's remember the anger of Jesus against those who made it difficult and even impossible for the seeking stranger to make contact with God.

If Jesus came to our temple ?