

*<sup>12</sup> After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.*

*<sup>13</sup> The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.<sup>15</sup> And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;<sup>16</sup> and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."*

*<sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."*

*<sup>18</sup> The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."<sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body.<sup>22</sup> So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.*

*<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.<sup>24</sup> But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,<sup>25</sup> and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.*

- **Worship at the Temple (v 12-13)**
- **Polluted Worship in the Temple (v 14)**
- **Zeal for Worship in the Temple (v 15-17)**
- **Authority over Worship in the Temple (v 18-22)**
- **Knowing the Heart of Worship (v 23-25)**

**Worship at the Temple (v 12-13):** After the wedding at Cana where Jesus turned the water into wine, he went to Capernaum for a few days. John does not give us any details of this visit, but we do know that Jesus did many things not recorded in Scripture.

After a few days in Capernaum, it was time for the Passover, and like all good Jews Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Passover coincided with the Feast of Unleavened Bread – one of the three feasts required in Exodus 23 for all males to appear before the Lord. Both celebrated the Jews' exodus from slavery in Egypt.

The Passover was observed in memory of the event that led to them leaving Egypt. God had told them to sacrifice a lamb for a special meal and the blood was to be put over the door and on the door posts of their houses. God was going to send an Angel of Death and any house with the blood the Angel would "Passover." The angel would kill the firstborn of any house without the blood on the door.

During Passover the population of Jerusalem would swell to many times its normal number as Jews from around the world returned. The number of sacrifices for probably more than a million people (the historian Josephus put the number at 3 million) would be staggering. Jesus and His disciples in obedience to the law had gone to the temple in Jerusalem to make a sacrifice.

**Polluted Worship in the Temple (v 14):** In verse 14 we learn what was going on in the Temple. The Jewish leaders (specifically the High Priest at the time) had corrupted the temple for profit.

The lambs that were used for sacrifices needed to be without defect, and the priests made sure only the lambs that they were selling passed. They had a monopoly, and made the most of it, "fleecing" all those who came to sacrifice.

Not only were they making a profit on the sacrifices, but they were also making a profit at the money exchange tables. All males over twenty were required to pay a temple tax each year (Exodus 30:14). The tax was paid in a specific coin, and the priests made money by charging a high fee to exchange money. Those coming from all over the world would need both animals to sacrifice and coins to pay the temple tax.

There was some real need for these services but under the supervision of the Jewish leaders it was taking place in the temple itself. This is what angered Jesus. "[S]top making My Father's house a place of business." The temple was supposed to be a place of worship. Instead of the sound of prayer, there was the sound of bartering.

**Zeal for Worship in the Temple (v 15-17)** In righteous indignation, Jesus cleared all of the merchants out of the

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temple. He drove out the sheep and oxen, He told the men with the doves to leave, and He poured the money on the ground. This is nothing short of miraculous. How could one man clear out everyone involved and the temple police not stop him?

Upon seeing Jesus' passion for what the temple was supposed to be the disciples remembered Psalm 69:9 "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." Like David before him Jesus was zealous for the House of God. He was angry for what they were doing in the temple, and He took decisive action.

**Authority over Worship in the Temple (v 18-22)** The Jewish leaders rightly saw what Jesus did as a challenge to their own authority. They saw themselves as the rightful authority over what took place in the temple. They asked Jesus for a sign to show He had the authority to do what He had just done.

Jesus response was to tell them "you destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again." Misunderstanding what He meant (the disciples did not get it until later) they scoffed at Him. The current temple had been under repairs and expansion by Herod for 46 years. It would not be completed until AD 63 (and destroyed in AD 70). The Jewish leaders found it laughable that one man could claim to build something so big and grand in three days.

However, Jesus was not speaking of the physical temple, but of His own death and resurrection. They would indeed destroy Him by crucifying Him, and three days later He would rise again. Unknown to them He had given them the greatest sign of His authority – resurrection from the dead.

After He rose, the disciples remembered what He had said on this occasion, and it caused them to believe even more. As God, Jesus had power over death – and He had authority over worship in the temple as well.

**Knowing the Heart of Worship (v 23-25):** These verses are a transition. They take us from Jesus' time in Jerusalem to the next story – Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus.

While Jesus was in Jerusalem He did many other signs that we are not told about. As the people saw the signs they "believed" in Him. They were enthralled with His miracles. Jesus, however, did not believe them for He knew what was in their hearts. Theirs was a superficial belief. They liked all the miracles He was doing, but they were not recognizing Him as Lord and Savior.

Jesus' supernatural knowledge of what is in peoples' hearts is a theme of the Gospel of John. He continuously confronts people with what is in their hearts. He knows the pride of Nicodemus, the adultery of the woman at

the well, the unbelief of the Official in chapter 4. He knows our hearts as well.

There are levels of belief (or unbelief). In James 2:19 we learn that even demons believe in God. Many have a similar belief that God exists, but that is not enough. As the story of Nicodemus illustrates we must be born again. Jesus knew the hearts of the people, and He knew those who were following Him only for the miracles.

True saving faith is one that recognizes our need for a savior. We have a sin problem that needs to be dealt with. If we are unable to let Him be Lord of our life then we do not really believe in Him. Romans 10:9 says "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Jesus knows our hearts. He knows who truly worships Him, whether our belief is superficial or real. There are many like the Jewish leaders who go through the motions and are religious, but who do not recognize Him as Lord.

In this passage Jesus shows His authority. He is zealous for God's honor. He knows what is in the hearts of men and women. He has authority over worship because He is God. Do we recognize His authority?



**It has been an honor to be a part of your lives this session. I feel I have gained a lot from getting to know so many of you in even a small way. I am thankful for all who were able to make it to the Tuesday evening Bible study. To those who were unable to attend I pray that these handouts have been an encouragement to you.**

**There is nothing in life more important than what we do with Jesus. It is my prayer that these studies have increased your knowledge of who Christ is, and have made you want to know Him even more.**

**I look forward to continuing to serve you in the months ahead.**

