

John 2:13 – 25

^{2:13} The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ 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; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves he said, ‘Take these things away; stop making my Father’s house a place of business.’ ¹⁷ his disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house will consume me.’ ¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, ‘What sign do you show us as your authority for doing these things?’ ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ ²⁰ The Jews then said, ‘It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?’ ²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²² 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. ²³ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in his name, observing his signs which he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus, on his part, was not entrusting himself to them, for he knew all men, ²⁵ and because he did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Theological Connections

- Tabernacle → Temple → Jesus is the New Temple → Jesus makes us part of his New Temple
 - ^{1:14} And the Word became flesh, and *tabernacled* among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - ^{14:16} I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper...¹⁷ that is the Spirit of truth... ²³ If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.’

Cultural Background

- Temple: God’s Plan B, where God made His presence known and seen in Israel. Only the Jewish high priest could see God face to face once a year (Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement). God’s Plan A was for all Israel to have met with Him face to face (Exodus 19). Because Israel rejected this invitation, God veiled Himself as He came into the Israelite community, first through the Tabernacle, and then through the Temple.
- ‘A place of business’: If Jews traveled long distances to reach Jerusalem, they might need to buy an animal to sacrifice, and exchange their Roman coinage for Temple currency. But the intrusion of the merchants and money changers was a rude, noisy, smelly disturbance. This also happened in the Court of the Gentiles, making the Gentile section of the Temple unwelcoming and polluted.
- Passover: Jewish Independence Day, like July 4th for the U.S. By the time of Jesus, Passover was observed for a week.

Questions

1. Review cultural background.
2. Read v.13 – 14 only. Imagine yourself in the scene. Imagine that you – as a Gentile (non-Jew) – wanted to pray in a sacred space on a sacred day, after being tired and wanting to connect with this God for a long time. But instead, you had animals, money changers, and merchants watching you all the time. What would you have felt?
3. Now read v.15 – 17. How does this action by Jesus appear to you?
 - a. Is he angry? Perhaps. Perhaps not. You can whip a horse or other animal without being angry. It's just a way of moving them.
 - b. Is he out of control? Absolutely not. Notice that in v.16, he does not make the doves fly off and leave their owners. He tells their owners to move.
 - c. Notice that there are strong similarities to 2:1 – 12, the wedding at Cana.
 - i. Stone instruments of Jewish purification (jars, Temple)
 - ii. Jesus fills something
 1. In the case of the jars, they were empty
 2. In the case of the Temple, he has to clean it up first because something else was filling it with noise and clutter
 3. In v.18 – 19, the Jews acknowledge that Jesus' action was appropriate (i.e. the Temple was polluted), given the proper authority or credentials. Jesus replies that he is the true Temple of God, therefore he has authority over the Jerusalem Temple, and his resurrection will prove it.
4. So what is the Temple courtyard like now that Jesus has cleared it?
 - a. Quiet, not smelly, a lot cleaner...
 - b. Jesus is there. You can approach him.
 - c. Illus: It was like me camping out for a full day in a meeting hall at Stanford over spring break, with no one around, with just my guitar, Bible, journal, and pencil. It was quiet, simple, and beautiful. I was able to pray and recharge from things that had drained me.
 - d. Jesus claims to fill to the full the thought in Psalm 69:9 about having zeal for God's house. There was the general expectation that the Davidic king/messiah would redeem Jerusalem, cleanse the Temple, and make everything right again. This is a small token of that, although Jesus would start to argue that the meaning of that expectation needed to be interpreted differently.
5. How do we see Jesus' care for people and for the Father in this action?
 - a. He makes a clean space, helping people meditate on the Father
 - b. He makes a quiet space, helping people hear from the Father
 - c. He stays in that space for the whole Passover week to teach and do signs
 - d. Jesus wanted to clear out the distractions from the Court of the Gentiles. Why did the Jews not care about Gentiles? It's like segregated space...
6. Jesus removes obstacles to connecting with God, especially for Gentile outsiders. He cleanses the Temple here, just as he is cleansing his own human flesh (John 1:14). But ultimately he came to replace the Temple, to be the New Temple in whom God dwelled (see 1:14). And by coming to live in us by his Spirit, he also makes us Temples in whom God dwells, where God makes Himself known to the world around us. What obstacles in us might Jesus want to clean out?
 - a. Jesus is cleansing his own 'flesh' (*sarx*, 1:14) that he took on. He is realigning it with the love of the Father, so that, after his death and resurrection, he could share the Spirit of his new humanity with us.
 - b. Notice that 'he knew what was in man' (2:25) concludes this section. What is 'in man'? Sinfulness, self-centeredness, clutter that needs to be cleaned out to remove obstacles to God's connection with us and through us to others.
 - c. Illus: leader give an illustration of Jesus cleansing your self-centeredness