

**John 2:13-22 (NIV)**

<sup>13</sup>When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. <sup>15</sup>So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!” <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” <sup>18</sup>Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” <sup>20</sup>The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” <sup>21</sup>But the temple he had spoken of was his body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

43-02-02-Cleansing God’s Temple  
 temple, holiness, cleansing, prayer, resurrection  
 John 2:13-22  
 Christ’s ongoing goal is to purify His people.

**INTRODUCTION:**

–God’s Word isn’t just to *enlighten our minds* but to *engage our wills*. [Eugene Peterson called his modern paraphrase of the Bible *The Message*, because Scripture isn’t just FYI (for your information). God is telling us how to live, giving us messages to read and to heed– 2 Tim 3:16-17. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God {*the believer*} may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.]  
 –In the 1<sup>st</sup> verse in Acts, Luke described what he’d done in his Gospel, “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began **to do and to teach**.” He then follows the same pattern in his story of the early church, telling us of *Jesus still doing things that teach us* His will for us.  
 –Our **text** today describes something Jesus did twice, both at the outset and at the conclusion of His earthly ministry: *He cleansed the temple*. It gave a clear message about Himself and about His will: HOM.idea.

**I. God Had a New Message for an Old Jerusalem– v.13**, *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.*

- A. Jesus was bringing the New Covenant predicted in Mal 3:1, “See, I will send **my messenger**, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; **the messenger of the covenant**, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.
1. John the Baptist was the “messenger” announcing “the messenger of the covenant,” Who would “suddenly come to His temple.” (At Christ’s baptism, John proclaimed Him the sin-bearing “*the Lamb of God!*”)
  2. These two times of cleansing the temple around *Passover* put an identifying parenthesis around Christ’s entire ministry:
    - a. The 1st cleansing identified *His prophetic authority*: He was “the Lord... suddenly come to His temple.”
    - b. The 2nd cleansing [recorded in the other 3 Gospels] identified *His priestly ministry*: He was “the Messenger of the covenant” Who had come to make a New Covenant with His own blood.
- B. *Old Jerusalem* had a meaningful name [*“habitation of peace”*]:
1. Faithful Jews came to Old Jerusalem at Passover seeking a peace that the OT sacrificial worship could never fully provide.

2. *The City of Peace* had become like other worldly cities under the *Pax Romana* [*Roman Peace*] where power and profit ruled over all. [Sacramento has a great name, too. Churches here in the mid-1800s united regularly to pray for this city to be a sacrament to the state and to the whole world. Few would call it that now, with *power & profit guiding its interests*.]
3. Worse yet, these visiting worshipers found this traffic of greed in “the temple,” the very heart of Jewish religious life— **v.14**, *In the temple courts* [Jesus] *found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting atIn the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money tables exchanging money.*

**TRANS:** [Hospitality offers a clean environment for guests. If we expect visitors, we tidy up; if not, we carry on as usual.] Those in Jerusalem were carrying on in *spiritually untidy habits*. Despite Malachi’s warning that “*suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple,*” they didn’t expect the Messiah to show up. Today, **we** are citizens of the heavenly *City of Peace*. If we, as *God’s temple*, have *spiritually bad habits*, we must realize that Jesus is already present in us, and His **ongoing goal is to purify His people**.

**II. God Had an a Object Lesson For Old Jerusalem— v.15.** *So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.*

- A. Was Jesus showing how to influence people and not win friends? No, He was doing His job. [Managers must *confront employees whose behavior is unacceptable*, and doing their job can make them unpopular.]
- B. Jesus was acting how we’d expect God’s Son to act. (*Cleansing the temple demonstrated His Father’s desire for holiness in His people and in their worship— v.16.* *To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”*)
- C. Behind this passionate cleansing of the temple was His intense love for His Father— **v.17**, *“Zeal for your house will consume me.”*
  1. Jesus later showed that same passion on the Cross, fulfilling His Father’s plan to provide repentant sinners with forgiveness of sin.
  2. This consuming zeal to cleanse His Father’s house persists in His *cleansing of us*, who are “the household of faith”— **Mal 3:1b-2**, “*suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,*” says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.

**TRANS:** **Christ’s ongoing goal is to purify His people**. In union with Him, we are *temples of the Holy Spirit*. But inner defilements shouldn’t cause frustration or depression. Christ’s holy zeal can empowers our own *passionate anger against sin*. With His heart motivating ours, we can rid our lives from whatever is blocking our spiritual growth. *There is good news in Christ’s passion to cleanse us, because...*

### III. God Has a New Jerusalem for the Old Jerusalem

- A. His indictment against *merchandising in God’s house* was so *obviously true* that the Jewish leaders didn’t try stopping Jesus.
  1. Neither had they tried to stop John the Baptist’s preaching. (*But here was a Prophet whose deeds threatened their profits!*)
  2. So they tried what Satan did in the desert: they attempted to affirm the validity of their own authority by *setting behavioral parameters* for Jesus— **v.18**. *Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”*
- B. Christ’s reply was a death sentence on false worship, **v.19-21**, *Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body.*
  1. There would be no renewal of “the temple” Rome would destroy.
  2. But soon, Christ’s resurrection would forever set the divine standard of true worship— John 4:23-24. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

### **CONCLUSION:**

—Today, the disciples’ hindsight is also ours— **v.22**, *After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. As they knew, we also know: Jesus offers a peace no human “city of peace” can give.* We know we are each “a temple of the Holy Spirit” needing personal spiritual cleansing as much as Old Jerusalem’s temple needed a social and religious cleansing. —*In our union with Him, Christ’s ongoing goal is to purify His Bride*, just as **Eph 5:27** says, “to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” This is what all of us are really seeking, even if we don’t realize it. It’s what Jesus really has for us, if *He lives within us* and we are saying to Him, “*Thy will be done.*”