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Water to Wine and 1st Temple Cleansing (Part 2)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the significance of Jesus turning water into wine and cleansing the temple in John chapter 2. He contrasts being filled with wine and being filled with the Spirit, stating that while wine may change our mood, being filled with the Spirit has a spiritual impact. Gregg explains how Jesus' actions in the temple reveal his zeal for God and are an illustration of the true vine, through whom the true fruit of the Spirit comes. The talk also touches on appropriate anger and the cryptic comment Jesus made about the destruction of the temple.

Transcript

In Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18, Paul said, Do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. It's interesting that he put those two over against each other in contrast. Being filled with wine, or being drunk with wine, and being filled with the Spirit.

There's also a reason why alcoholic drinks have historically been referred to as spirits. Wine does have a spiritual effect, and usually a negative one. If you drink too much, it definitely has a negative spiritual effect upon you.

It's a sin to be drunk with wine. The Bible makes that very clear. To be drunk with anything.

But the point is that it changes your mood, it changes your attitude, it has a spiritual impact. And instead of getting drunk with wine, we're told to do what is the counterpart, which is obviously preferable, and holy, as opposed to dissipation, and that is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Which doesn't necessarily mean that when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll have the exact same kind of change of mind that a drunk person has.

Not usually the case. Although, we do know on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they were speaking in tongues, people conjectured in trying to explain the phenomenon, they said, these men are full of new wine. Something about their behavior on the day of Pentecost looked to observers as if perhaps they'd had a little bit too much to drink.

It says that in Acts chapter 2, in verse 13. When I was in Canada, I had an opportunity to visit one of these vineyard churches that are experiencing this laughing revival they talk about. Actually, one of the pastors from the Toronto vineyard where this all started happened to be there in Kelowna.

I went a couple nights just to observe, because I'd heard so much about it. I must confess, I don't know quite what to make of it even now. I mean, people were falling over a lot, but I've seen that happen in Pentecostal circles for years.

That wasn't too unique, just seeing people fall over. But people were doing some pretty strange things with their bodies too. The kinds of things that if they happened in the New Testament times, probably would have gotten a demon cast out of them.

But all kinds of wiggling and contortions and vibratings and things like that, I honestly don't know what to make of it, nor do I feel compelled to make something of it. But explaining this at the meeting, they said, Well, you know, when the Holy Spirit filled people on the day of Pentecost, they were accused of being filled with wine. And maybe so.

I mean, maybe there's more to it. Maybe the Holy Spirit is just making them act that way. Although, to tell you the truth, it was only the way they spoke on the day of Pentecost that made people say that.

We don't have any evidence that they were doing really bizarre things. But anyway, I'm not trying to make commentary on what's going on up there. I'm just saying that the fact that when the Holy Spirit fills people, sometimes it is compared with or even mistaken for people having drunk wine.

That's one of the rationales they use for some of the really strange things happening in some of those meetings. But the point I would make is that wine and alcohol, on the one hand, and the Holy Spirit on the other, are sort of counterparts of each other. What the Holy Spirit gives you is joy and peace and love.

Some people, when they get drunk, feel all those things. Some people don't. They just get depressed.

But the fact is, people often drink to try to get those feelings, to try to get that change of mental state. And those are the fruit of the Spirit. And wine is not only a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit, but also a counterpart of the Holy Spirit, as it were.

And I think that Jesus turned water to wine. I think the wine actually symbolized the spiritual aspect of what he was introducing, as opposed to the outward washings of the law, which couldn't change the inside of a man. Over in Luke chapter 5, verses 37 through 39, Jesus said, Now, there can be little doubt that wine here represents religion.

Old wine is the old religion of the Jews. The new wine is the new thing Jesus is bringing to replace it. And he said, If you put new wine that's not yet fermented into a goatskin bag, which is what they fermented it in in those days, but the goatskin bag is one that's already been stretched by previous wine fermenting in it, then when this new wine begins to stretch, it'll break the bag.

It's already been stretched to capacity, and it won't accommodate the life of the new wine, because the bag's already accommodated earlier growth of an earlier batch of wine, and it can't stretch anymore. It's brittle, inflexible. And in this context, Jesus was being criticized because he was not following in the pattern and the structures of the rabbis' teaching about religion.

He's basically saying, It's contained in the rigid, inflexible structures of your religious thinking. And what he did have, he called new wine. But of course, what he was talking about is life in the Holy Spirit.

Now, I said, people who've drunk the old wine often are not eager to have the new wine. They think the old is better. That's just because people think their traditional religious ways are better.

They don't like change. It frightens them. It's insecure for them to think that the wine they're accustomed to, the wine that's been numbing their senses so long, this dead religion that they're in, has got to be exchanged for something altogether different.

And many of them don't want to turn in their old religious ideas and their old religion for something new and venturous and risky, like just following the leading of the Holy Spirit. That seems so risky, because you never know what he's going to lead you to do. Well, however, there are perimeters within which he will always remain.

He's not going to lead you to go out and murder someone or steal or commit adultery, obviously. But it's much easier when your religion is all written down on paper, black and white, and you know exactly what to do in every situation. Much easier than just following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

But the latter is more alive. One is just dead religion. The other is a life in the Spirit.

And the water in the purification bottles represented the dead religion of the Jews, that the most it could ever do is clean up their outward man. It could clean up their behavior. They could conform to its requirements outwardly.

But wine can change the heart. And so Jesus replaced the old religion with the new. The old wine, as it were, the water of purification in this case, with new wine.

And that, I think, is the reason he did it. There was no cry in need that these people had to have more wine. It wasn't going to ruin anybody's life if they didn't.

There was no one suffering. I think Jesus did this miracle largely for the symbolic value of it, to convey this whole idea. And I think John recorded this miracle because that's what John does.

He only records miracles that have something like this behind them, something of a spiritual message in what Jesus did. So that's my understanding of this particular miracle, the first of his miracles. It was a way of illustrating that he was the true vine, that he was the one from whom the true fruit of the Spirit would come, the true wine would come.

And he's going to do so by replacing the old ideas of ceremonial purification, old ideas of outward cleansing of the outside of the cup, by something that was going to change the inside. Now, verse 11 says, This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. Manifested his glory is apparently a reference to the miracle itself.

When they saw his power to do this, they got a glimpse of the kind of exalted person that he was, the glory of God they began to see in him. Remember back in John 1, in verse 14, he said, The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory. Well, how did we behold his glory? Well, John who wrote this, for one thing, saw him glorified on the Mount of Transfiguration, but not everyone did.

They saw his glory manifested in his behavior, in the works of God being done through him. And that's apparently what it means here in verse 11, where it says he manifested his glory, his disciples believed in him. After this, John 2, 12, He went down to Capernaum, he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, and they did not stay there many days.

Why? Well, because there was a Passover coming. Capernaum and Cana are in Galilee, but Passover means the Jews, at least adult males, are required to go down to Jerusalem. So, they spent some little time at Capernaum.

There is nothing of significance stated there that they did. Now, interestingly, the fishermen were later called at Capernaum, or near Capernaum, and Peter's house was in Capernaum, and appears to be the place that became later the hub of Jesus' ministry. Whether this brief stay in Capernaum mentioned here, in any way centered around Peter's house, we cannot say.

We know Peter had met Jesus in the previous chapter of John, though apparently had not committed himself in any outward way to be a follower. However, he may have made Jesus a guest in his home when Jesus was in town, though that's not at all clear. Where Jesus and his mother and disciples and brothers stayed in Capernaum were not told.

They were evidently not rich, and they may have stayed in the home of some friendly

local, and that could have been Peter, whose house later in Jesus' ministry, after he called him to be a disciple, became a ministry center for all of Galilee. Verse 13, Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves and the money changers doing business.

When he had made a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And he said to those who sold doves, Take these things away. Do not make my father's house a house of merchandise.

Then his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal for your house has eaten me up. So the Jews answered and said to him, What sign do you show us, since you do these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I'll raise it up. Then the Jews said, It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days? But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

Therefore, when he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed in the scripture and the word which Jesus had said. Now, as I said, this is only one of two times that Jesus cleansed the temple. It's the first time, however, so it was altogether unanticipated by those who were put out by it.

Perhaps when Jesus did it the second time at the end of his ministry some three years later, just prior to his death, they thought, Oh, he's at it again. However, this time, he wasn't even a noticeable guy, as far as we know. He had not done anything to make a name for himself in Jerusalem at this point.

Oh, sure, yeah, he cleansed the temple twice. How do I know that? Because it's mentioned here, and it's mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, a different cleansing of the temple at a different time. So, the other Gospels record Jesus doing something similar to this, but at the end of his ministry.

Now, John is still talking about things before he even began his Galilean ministry, back before, certainly early in his ministry. It's an early Passover. It says the Passover was at hand.

Well, there's three more Passovers in the life of Jesus after this. It was near the last of them, that the other Gospels place this cleansing of the temple. I'll go ahead and show you, for example, in Matthew chapter 21, after the triumphal entry, after he rode a donkey into Jerusalem, this is the last week of his life.

This is after Palm Sunday, or it was probably on Palm Sunday. It says in Matthew 21, 12, Then Jesus went into the temple of God, and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables and the money changers, and the seats of those

who sold doves. And he said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer.

Which is a quote from Isaiah 56, 7. But you have made it a den of thieves, which is an expression taken from Jeremiah 7 and verse 11. It says, Then the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. So, Jesus turned over the tables and so forth on this occasion too, but this was after his triumphal entry.

It does not appear to be the same event. By the way, also, in John chapter 2, he does not mention anything about them being a den of thieves. He just said not to make the temple a house of merchandise.

Merchandise and thievery are not exactly the same things. To be involved in selling merchandise in some settings is not inappropriate. Being a thief is always inappropriate.

Jesus had a somewhat different objection here than he did in the latter case. But that is basically what I am basing it on. Now, we have Jesus coming to the temple, and he is upset by those who were selling there in the temple.

Some commentators believe that what upset him was the fact that the court of the Gentiles was the location for all these animal stands that they were selling animals at for sacrifice. Of course, these animals were sold for sacrifice there at the temple. The temple had several different courts.

The most remote from the center was the Gentiles court. And it is said that is where these people had their business set up. And some commentators believe that the objection Jesus had to this was simply that that place where the Gentiles should have been allowed to come and worship was just a marketplace scene.

It was not a worshipful environment at all. We just read a moment ago in Matthew 21 that Jesus said, My house is to be a house of prayer for all people. And the Gentiles are supposed to be able to worship and pray too, but there is just a bunch of commotion here with animals and sellers and arguers over price and so forth.

It was just a noisy marketplace. It was not a house of prayer at all. So some people feel that that was the principal objection, that Jesus was saying, Hey, look at this court of the Gentiles.

The Gentiles can't even come and worship here. It's just a marketplace. Maybe so.

That might have been his principal objection. Others have felt that his objection was based on the fact that the money changers were charging an exorbitant rate of exchange and the people were sort of at their mercy. You see, if a person brought an animal from home to sacrifice at the temple, the animal would have to pass an inspection by the priest to see if it had any marks or anything on it that would disqualify

it.

Well, from what I've read, the priest got to a place where they could find some kind of disqualifying freckle or something on every animal. If they even had to look inside the lips on the gums or something of the animal, they'd find some mark and say, Oh, sorry, this one can't be offered. It's flawed.

And then, of course, the worshiper had to buy an acceptable animal there at the temple. And then there's this deal with the priests and the animal sellers there that they'd turn a lot of customers their way this way. Now, not only that, but sacred animals had to be bought with temple currency.

Pilgrims came at Passover time to the temple from all over the world and they would, of course, have most readily at hand currency from their own homeland. So they'd have to go, like we would have to if we had foreign currency, to get the money exchanged for local money. In this case, they'd have to get temple currency to buy these things.

Well, of course, these people had to pay whatever the going rate was. Those who were money changers were the ones who exchanged the foreign monies for the temple currency, but they could charge whatever kind of rate exchange they wanted. Because people had to do it.

If they were going to worship there, they had to do it. They had to do it the way that was acceptable to the priest. And therefore, they couldn't just say, well, we'll go worship somewhere else.

We'll go to another church this Sunday. I mean, there was no other church. There was just the temple.

And therefore, people were forced to pay whatever the money changers charged if they were going to do what God said they had to do in terms of worshipping the temple. Some people had felt that that was what was going on, and that's why Jesus was so upset, particularly when he referred to the temple as a den of thieves in the second instance. Whatever his objection was, he didn't think the Father's house was to be a house of merchandise.

Now, merchandise, as I say, is not something bad in every setting, but the Father's house was not a place for it. The temple wasn't a place for people to capitalize on people's religious emotions and get their money. Nothing wrong with selling fruit and animals in the marketplace to people for food or whatever, but when they're coming to worship God, to capitalize on their sentiments, on their religious sentiments, and to persuade them that way to spend more money than they ordinarily would, is to use God as a money-making gimmick.

Now, the modern parallel would not necessarily be confined to selling things in church

buildings, because, of course, the spiritual counterpart of the temple is not church buildings, but the church itself, the living stones that are built up into a spiritual house. All of us, all Christians, are living stones and are part of the church. Now, I don't think there's anything wrong with Christians selling things to other Christians.

I do have some misgivings, however, about exploiting the religious sentiments of Christians in order to sell them things for more money or things they wouldn't otherwise need, like a mug with a dove on it, selling for about five bucks, when the same mug you'd get for a buck at Walmart without the dove on it. The dove inflates the price. John Rogers once made a joke back when we... I carry a little Bible in this pouch here on my hip, and he got one, and some other people in the same year got one, and John said, hey, we can buy these for ten bucks at BuyMart.

We can put a dove on it and sell them for 25 bucks at the Christian store. He was joking, of course. He knew it wouldn't go well with me to suggest that, and he wouldn't seriously consider it, but he was just parodying what really does go on.

People selling relatively worthless stuff, well, maybe it's not even worthless. Maybe it's useful stuff, but they sell it for much more than it's worth because it has the name Jesus on it or because it has some religious slogan on it or something like that. Somehow that just strikes me as turning the Father's house, as it were, the church, into a money-making thing, and I've got some problems with it.

Now, at the same time, I've really wrestled with the whole idea of Christian bookstores in general. I'm glad they exist because I like to buy Bibles. I like to buy Christian books.

I'd rather get them free, but I'd rather be able to buy them than not be able to get them. If publishers aren't going to publish Bibles and Christian books out of the goodness of their heart for free distribution, I'm glad that they at least publish them so that I'll pay for them. I don't mind.

I mean, the labor is worthy of his hire. I do think that the sale of Bibles is really something I really wrestle with because it's the Word of God. I mean, selling the Word of God, it's just hard.

Of course, if they say, well, we're not selling the Word of God, we're selling the leather and the paper and the ink and the labor and stuff to put it together, I could understand that. And that's why I have no problem buying a Bible or necessarily with people selling Bibles. I do have a little more problem with people who translate the new translations and get a copyright on them and then charge a royalty if you want a quote from them or if you want to use them.

That's one of the things I like about the King James Version. There's no copyright on it. Anyone can use it, can copy it, can quote it, can do anything they want and don't have to

pay royalties to anyone.

It's the only translation that was made or of the modern translations available now, it's the one that was not made as a commercial venture. The NIV and the New American Standard and many other Bibles, some of which are good Bibles, they were created as commercial ventures. Some publisher owns the copyright, New King James included, owns the copyright and they get a royalty every time someone buys one or quotes extensively from it.

I have to admit that there's a thin line there and I'm not here to lay out where all the restrictions would be, but I think that Jesus would be equally upset with some of the marketing practices and merchandising practices where people take advantage of Christians for money. And I realize that Christian books have to be a little more expensive than non-Christian books because they can't print as many of them. It's cheaper to print a million books than to print 50,000 of them or 5,000 of them.

That is to say per copy and you have to sell the copies for more. Christian books don't sell as widely as others. So I don't mind that Christian books cost a little more per copy than other books.

But there is a whole merchandising thing happening in the body of Christ. I think Keith Green wrote an article about it once. Didn't he call it Jesus junk or something like that? I don't remember exactly what he said, but I think it was probably the same thing.

But that's what I think Jesus was upset about, is people exploiting people's desire to worship God and their desire and need to approach God in the way that God prescribed, but finding a good time to make easy marks of them for some sale and for making some money. And in many cases quite a greedy one at that. Now Jesus did this with a whip.

A lot of people have had trouble with Jesus wielding a whip. On the one hand, some people just feel like that's not like Jesus. Jesus was too gentle to do that kind of thing.

And on the other hand, there's people who like the image of Jesus with a whip and they object to the whole suggestion of pacifism. They say, yeah, you think Jesus was a pacifist? Go ask those money changers whether Jesus was a pacifist or not. You've got both reactions to this.

Some people think Jesus should never have had a whip because it's out of character for him. Others feel that that's the kind of Jesus we like, is a man's man who goes in there and gets things done. And therefore we should fight in war, they extrapolate.

Which is an enormous leap, it seems to me, from whipping animals on the buttocks with a small whip to killing human beings with a gun. Kind of different moral issues involved there, I think. The fact I would point out is, first of all, there's no record anywhere of Jesus whipping people.

He may have, but it's not recorded that he did, and there's no reason that he would have to. All he would have to do is whip the animals, get them stampeding, and their owners would certainly go following them, trying to recover control of them. And there's really no suggestion at all that Jesus ever hit a person with this whip.

In the other Gospels we're told specifically the whip he made in the latter case of the cleansing of the temple was made of small cords. It wasn't a bull whip. It was a small little flail to get the animals running, probably, as near as we can tell.

So, whether we picture Jesus as gentle Jesus, meek and mild, who wouldn't ever harm a flea, or whether we picture him as a Rambo-type revolutionary, the fact of the matter is that the truth of this story is somewhat more moderate. He was more like a cattle driver in this situation, driving the animals out of the temple. It does not in any way make him a warlike person, nor is it anything inconsistent with his love for people that he would do something like this.

Now, when Jesus did this, verse 17 says, then his disciples remembered that it was written, zeal for your house has eaten me up. The quote is from Psalm 69, and verse 9. And some translators feel it should be translated, zeal for your house will consume me, or will eat me up. Now, the way it reads here, it almost sounds like it's saying he's consumed with zeal for God's house.

That he's just a burning engine of zeal for the glory of God. And, as far as I'm concerned, that's a very good way of understanding the applicability of this scripture to what Jesus was doing here. Many scholars seem to feel that the meaning of the scripture was this, that zeal for your house will be the death of me, will consume me, or will be the death of me, meaning that Jesus would eventually be crucified because of his zeal for God.

Now, the expression can mean either thing. Jesus, by doing this thing publicly, could have been the first public irritation that led to the growing dislike for him among the religious establishment, who later had him killed. In other words, it could be that this scripture, remembered at this time by the disciples, was, oh yeah, the Messiah, he's going to be killed by people because of his zeal for God.

However, the disciples, it doesn't seem like they remember the scripture on that occasion because they didn't have, at this point in their life, the concept that the Messiah was going to be killed. The death of Jesus three years after this came as a shock, I think, to them, and something that they were not really hoping or anticipating. And, therefore, the fact that they, on this occasion, when he drove the money chains off, they remembered this scripture as if it were applicable to this situation.

It seems not likely to me that they were thinking of it in terms of his saying, my zeal for God is going to be the death of me, as it were, because they didn't know that the death of him was something that was going to be coming up, or that this would lead to that.

But, if it had the more natural meaning, I'm consumed with zeal. I'm burning with zeal for God.

They could have thought of that scripture in this connection, where he's in there momentarily, almost like a madman, driving these animals out and shouting at people, and so forth, if that's what he was doing. They could easily see the scripture applicable in that way, that he was driven by zeal for God's house. That's how I think it probably is to be understood.

But, the whole issue of getting angry, of course, is raised by this whole story. Isn't anger a sin? Isn't anger a work of the flesh? Isn't anger one of those things you're supposed to put off, and so forth? Yet, Jesus appears angry here. Furthermore, we're told in no uncertain terms that Jesus got angry on another occasion.

It had nothing to do with cleansing the temple. It was an entirely different thing. But, in Mark chapter 3, verse 5, it says, So when he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, he said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

It's in the synagogue where the man with the withered hand was. Jesus looked around on the Jews with anger, it says. Now, there's a difference between Jesus' anger and whatever anger is sinful.

Clearly, it is possible to be angry without sinning. Not all anger is necessarily sin. The reason I say that is because Paul seemed to say as much when he said, Be angry and do not sin.

In Ephesians 4, verse 26. Ephesians 4, verse 26, Be angry and do not sin, suggests that there is an appropriate anger that is not sin. But what is that anger? Certainly, almost anyone when they're angry thinks that their anger is that kind.

I've never known anyone yet who thought when they were angry that they were sinfully angry. And if no one was really sinfully angry except those who recognize their anger as sinful, I'd say we'd have to say there's no such thing as sinful anger because no one seems to recognize their anger as sinful. Remember when Jonah was in a huff because God didn't wipe out Nineveh, he was all angry? And God says, Do you do well to be angry? I mean, the guy was just being a baby, just acting so juvenile.

And God confronts him and says, Do you do well to be angry? And Jonah says, Yeah, I do well to be angry, even unto death, he said. I mean, the guy was just acting like a little baby. And no doubt, if he's the one who wrote the story later, he probably realized his anger had been a little bit silly and wrong and sinful.

But at the time, it seemed right to him. It seemed like he did well to be angry. It always seems that way.

That's sort of in the nature of anger. That when you are angry, you feel you've been provoked and in a way that justifies your reaction. Now, I would say the difference between Jesus' anger and that which I guess we'd have to regard as sinful anger, and the kind which really most of us are very prone to when we are angry, is that Jesus never got angry at those people who were injuring him.

We never read of Jesus being angry at anyone who was injuring him, including people who did really rotten things to him. Like Judas, who betrayed him with a kiss. What was Jesus' response? Did he get really indignant? He said, Friend.

He spoke to Judas that way. He said, Friend, do you betray this man with a kiss? He kept his cool. He didn't get angry.

He wasn't very pleased, of course, but we don't see him getting angry at Judas or expressing anger in his words. And when he was crucified and they were spitting at him and wagging their heads at him and so forth, as he was on the cross and saying, you know, you saved others, save yourself if you can. See if God will help you now.

I mean, they were really getting at him. I mean, really provoking him. But he didn't get angry then either.

His prayer for them was that they be forgiven because of their ignorance. Jesus is never found getting angry at anyone who injured him. But he did get angry in Mark 3.5 at people who are trying to halt God from doing what God wanted to do.

A man with a withered hand, these men didn't want the man to be healed, even though God wanted him healed. They didn't want God to heal them on the Sabbath day and break their traditions. They were misrepresenting God.

These were the religious leaders and by their actions and their teaching, indicated that God didn't care half as much about people with handicaps as he cared about keeping this festival of the Sabbath every week. And that made Jesus upset. He was grieved at the hardness of their hearts and he was angry that they would be so misrepresenting God as people who were religious leaders.

In this case, he appears to be angry. There's no reference in this story in John 2 of Jesus really being angry. It doesn't use the word anger.

But I think it's safe to say he probably was angry. But not sinfully so. Again, these people had not injured him.

They hadn't picked a fight with him. He was zealous for the glory of God. He was zealous for the purity of his Father's house.

He was zealous for the things of God. And being zealous for the things of God can make

you angry at things that God is himself angry at. But not rightfully angry at things done to you.

If you are irritated by what people do to you, you can't help being irritated, I suppose. Some stimuli are irritating stimuli. But reacting to anger is a fleshly reaction which we're told to put off and put on patience and kindness and so forth and gentleness.

Jesus always did that whenever he was irritated personally, whenever someone was doing something to him. But he was angry for God. He was angry for the glory of God.

I don't think there's anything wrong with us being angry for the glory of God if there's really a disinterested unselfishness about it and we're just angry exactly at the same kind of things Jesus is or would be. Now, they came to him in verse 18 and said, Give us a sign that you have the right to say these kinds of things. Prove yourself to have some kind of divine authority to speak this way.

You just spoke of the temple as your father's house. You imply you're the son of God? This is God's house. Are you sent here by God to speak for him? We're not going to believe you unless you give us some kind of a sign.

And Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up. Then the Jews said, It was taken 46 years to build this temple. And will you raise it up in three days? Herod had begun reconstruction of the temple in 19 B.C. The year 19 B.C. And at this time it had been about 46 years it had been under construction.

Of course, the temple had been standing from the time of Zerubbabel. After the Babylonian captivity, Zerubbabel and others had gone back and rebuilt the temple but it was very non-elaborate. And Herod, in order to get the favor of the Jews, had spent a lot of money over a protracted period of time trying to get the temple looking good.

And he'd done a good job of it too. It was really quite a wonder. But it had taken 46 years and they said, Jesus, you think you're going to do this all in three days? But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

He didn't explain it though. Jesus didn't mind being misunderstood by people who didn't have any right to know. People whose hearts were not receptive or teachable.

He didn't mind that he walked away with them misunderstanding his meaning. Unlike me, I would hate to do that. The temptation would be too great to set the record straight and not let them mistake me.

Not let them think I mean something I don't mean. But Jesus had a lot more restraint. What's interesting, there's something very cryptic about his actual comment.

I mean, it's fairly prophetic in a sense. Because the destruction of their actual temple is

what they did do when they killed him. When they killed Jesus, they brought upon them the guilt which resulted in God judging them by destroying their temple and their commonwealth.

By destroying his body, they were destroying their temple. Although when Jesus said, this temple, meaning his body, he had a slightly different meaning. The idea was, the temple is the place where God's presence resides.

When Solomon built the temple and dedicated it, the presence of God was manifest in a cloud of glory that filled the temple and the priest couldn't enter and couldn't stand to minister in the temple. Jesus, his body was the habitation of God. His body was where the presence of God was.

You know, it's interesting, the temple is a house of prayer, but we never read ever of Jesus praying at the temple. But we read of him frequently praying elsewhere. Wherever he was, was a house of prayer because his body was the habitation of God.

And of course, we're familiar enough with the New Testament to know that our bodies are spoken of in just that same way. That we also, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. And the church, collectively, is the habitation of God.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, for example, 1 Corinthians chapter 6 says, verse 19, Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you? 1 Corinthians 6.19. Actually, there's other passages too. We're racing the clock now to get done here, so I won't look at them. But the idea is that there's no temple made with hands that is the place that God is restricted to living in anymore.

He was in Jesus, in the body of Jesus, and we are the body of Christ, which makes us the temple also now. Verse 22, Therefore, when he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said. Now, real quickly, the last few verses of the chapter.

Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did. We're not given any enumeration of these signs. We don't know what he did.

Maybe this cleansing of the temple is what they're referring to, but it sounds like he did other signs too, because later in the next chapter, chapter 3, verse 2, Nicodemus refers to these signs that Jesus did as being proof that God was with him. So probably miraculous signs are what's in view here. Jesus did some miracles there that are not itemized for us, but Jesus did not commit himself to them, even though they believed in his name.

He didn't commit himself to them because he knew all men. He had no need that anyone should testify of man, for he knew what was in man. Jesus knew what was in mankind.

Sin and selfishness, he knew what people thought. He knew what motivated them, what made them tick, and he was not going to commit his ministry to their management. He was going to do it God's way, not man's way.

There were a lot of people at this point who came to believe in him and would have been glad to put money into the project, put labor into it, probably serve as administrators of the kingdom he was trying to start, but he didn't want to commit his cause to them. He knew what made them tick. He knew what motivated such people, and he just kept pure.

He didn't allow men to dictate his program for him, although there were many, no doubt, who were interested in doing so. Well, the next thing we have to cover, and we'll cover it next time, is in John chapter 3, the meeting with Nicodemus. And we'll just stop here now and get into that next time.