

**Lighthouse Bible Church**

**September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012**

**John 2: 13 – 25**

**‘A house of Merchandise or Worship’ Pt #2** *Scripture reading Acts 2: 22-32*

**Stand – Read – Pray**

Last week we began to look at this passage and see that Jesus and His disciples had come to Jerusalem to pay their temple tax and to celebrate the Passover meal or the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Well, they arrive at the temple and enter the Court of the Gentiles, the place where Jew and Gentile alike could go and pray and worship God. When they get in there they see **those selling oxen and sheep and doves and the money changers doing business.**

This makes Jesus righteously angry at the sellers and money changers and we saw several reasons why last time. Partly because of **where** they were doing their business and partly because it showed their **irreverence** toward God, partly because in cleansing out the temple Jesus was showing them that there is no need for an animal sacrifice in order to please God or have sin atoned for, and the fact that their doing business there hindered those from coming in to worship God.

In His righteous indignation, Jesus makes **a whip of cords** and **drives out** everyone from the temple, including the animals, and turns over the tables of the money changers. It would have been pure chaos in there.

The reason Jesus did that was because, Verse 16 says, they were making His Father’s house a house of Merchandise and not a place of prayer and worship. Jesus never defended Himself but He defended the honor of His Father and His Father’s house.

And while all this is going on, can you imagine what the disciples are seeing and thinking, and that is where we pick it up this morning in Verse 17.

**Verse 17 then His disciples remembered that it was written ‘zeal for Your house has eaten Me up’.**

The disciples are watching the **zeal** and **righteous anger** and **boldness** and **authority** with which Jesus is cleaning out the temple and defending His Father’s house where all can come and pray and worship Him, and all of a sudden, John writes, **then they remembered that it was written.**

They are seeing Jesus do something that brings their thoughts to a passage of scripture that Jesus, by His actions, is fulfilling and it is back in **Psalm 69: 9**. This is a Psalm written by David as he was being persecuted for defending God and challenging God’s people to a standard of living that honors God.

And the disciples are saying ‘Jesus is doing the very same thing here, He has a zeal for God’s house that He will do whatever it takes for God not to be dishonored by the actions of the people.

In that they may also be thinking what David said in **Psalm 69: 4 those who hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head, they are mighty who would destroy me.**

But do you know what the interesting thing is? They knew what this scripture said and they looked at this situation through the lens of scripture. It tells you a little bit about **their** knowledge, understanding and application of the scriptures to their everyday life and circumstances.

That is God's desire for us today as well, isn't it? To know the scriptures well enough and to view our daily lives through the lens of scripture so that we can apply them to the situations of our lives.

We are told to hide God's word in our heart so we won't sin against Him

We are told that all scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for...

We are told that the scriptures are able to make one wise to salvation

We are told that there is no temptation taken us, as we saw Jesus resist the devil quoting scripture, so we too can

And on and on...

Because Jesus said to the people **do not make My Father's house** a house of merchandise and His cleansing of the temple of God, He was, in essence, saying that He was God's Son and, in that, that He was the promised Messiah.

So the Jews, the religious leaders and temple authorities, when they see and hear all of this say to Jesus in Verse 18, to challenge His authority to do this, if you are this promised Messiah then show us a sign to prove it

**Verse 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him 'what sign do You show to us, since You do these things'?**

They unbelieving religious authorities were always asking for a sign. The fact that He cleansed the temple should have been a sign from God for them to stop making the temple a place of merchandise or a den of thieves.

They asked Him in **Matthew 12: 39** teacher, we want to see a sign from you. It says in **Matthew 16:1** then the Pharisees and Sadducees came and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. His responses to them was a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah and He left **Matthew 16: 4** says.

Later in **John 6: 30** it says **what sign will You perform then, that we may see and believe You.** Listen, like we have said before, no amount of miracles or signs in going to convince anyone that Jesus is God in human form.

Their hearts were hearts of unbelief and rebellion against God and they took it out on the One who confronted them with their sin and unbelief and rebellion and that was Jesus, God in human form, whom they were instrumental in nailing to the cross.

And then, listen to this, while He is hanging on the cross, dying for their sins, they have the audacity to say to Him in **Matthew 27: 42** **..if He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him.**

That's why John says what He does in **John 12: 37** when he says **...although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him.** Why, because they could not believe in Him apart from God opening their eyes and their hearts to who He was. That is why that passage in John 12 goes on to say **He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn so that I should heal them.** So Jesus answers them in Verse 19

**Verse 19** Jesus answered and said to them 'destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up'.

Now, remember, this is taking place in the temple and Jesus says **destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up**'. He is not talking about the physical temple, as **Verse 21** says **but He was speaking of the temple of His body**.

But they, like everything else they did, twisted what Jesus had said into a means of discrediting Him and eventually destroying Him. Remember in **Matthew 26: 61** where Jesus was arrested and taken to Caiaphas and they brought false witnesses before Him and it says **2 false witnesses came forward and said 'this man said I am able to destroy this temple of God and to build it in 3 days**. They used that against Him.

In **Acts 6: 14** when Stephen was falsely accused and arrested and brought before the council it says **they secretly induced men to say 'we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God...they also set up false witnesses who said 'this man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, talking about the temple, and the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us**.

The Jews response was in **Verse 20** **it has taken 46 years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in 3 days?** They knew it couldn't be built in 3 days, but they were more concerned about Him saying that it would be destroyed, still thinking that He is talking about the temple building itself.

By the way, the temple of Herod would be destroyed not many years after its completion. Herod began the renovation project around 19 BC and it wasn't formally completed until around 63 AD but the majority of the temple had been completed by the time of Jesus.

In 70 AD Titus Vespation and the Roman army came and completely destroyed the temple and much of Jerusalem, something that Jesus predicted would happen when His disciples, in **Matthew 24: 1 – 2** commented on the beauty and massiveness of the temple building.

John says in **Verse 21** that **He was speaking of the temple of His body**. As a matter of fact, when Mark records this saying he says, in **Mark 14: 58** that Jesus said **I will destroy this temple made with hands and within 3 days I will build another made without hands**.

One writer said “what Jesus meant was that His coming had put an end to all this man-made, man arranged way of worshipping God and put in its place spiritual worship; that He put an end to all this business of animal sacrifice and priestly ritual and put in its place a direct approach to the Spirit of God which did not need an elaborate man-made temple and a ritual of incense and sacrifice offered by the hands of men”. *Barclay page 116 John*

That is why John will write later what Jesus said to the woman at the well in **John 4: 21** when He said **the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father...** He will want worshippers to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. But many churches today still hold to the liturgy and man-made traditions and impose a works righteousness system of religion.

Of course John then tells us what all this means in **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.**

Remember, John wrote the book of John some 50 years after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and is now looking back to what the disciples **remembered** Jesus saying and what that saying really meant.

Because at the time Jesus said that, the disciples and the Jews probably didn't understand what He meant by destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it. It wasn't until after it happened and they could look back that they understood what it meant.

Not only that, but it brought to mind some Old Testament scriptures that also reminded the disciples that His death and resurrection had been written about and that is what Jesus was referring to.

It says **they believed the scriptures**. Again they are looking at everything through the lens of scripture. What scripture did they believe? Well probably **Psalm 16: 8 – 11** which is quoted in **Acts 2: 22 – 32**, which was read earlier, and refers specifically to Jesus and His resurrection.

Now look at **Verse 23** **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.**

Jesus stayed in Jerusalem for the Passover and then for the Feast of Unleavened Bread which would have lasted another 7 days. During that time it says **they saw the signs which He did**. None of them are recorded just as we saw in **John 20: 30** and **John 21: 25** where Jesus did a lot of signs and miracles in the presence of His disciples that were not recorded.

We don't know what the signs were that He did but it says **many believed in His name** when they saw the signs. What you need to understand here is that the many who **believed**, believed in the signs pointing to Him as the Messiah. They didn't, necessarily believe in Him as the One who could take away their sin but meet their needs and entertain them and cause curiosity about Him.

I will tell you why! See the word many **believed**. That word believed is the word *pisteuo* in the Greek and it means to have faith in, to trust or to commit to. Now look at **verse 24 - 25** of John 2 where it says **But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because he knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.**

See the word Jesus did not **Commit** Himself to them. That word **commit** is the very same word, *pisteuo* that was used in Verse 23 for believed. You know what this is saying? They believed in Jesus but Jesus did not believe in them and you know they reason why? They believed in Jesus for what they could get out of it by way of needs being met, entertainment and self-fulfillment through the signs.

Because Jesus knows what is in the heart of a person, even though they make a public profession of faith, He knows whether that profession is for real. Do you realize that **James 2: 19** says **the demons believe**, the demons *pisteuo* and no demon is ever going to heaven. You see, it is never enough to just believe in Jesus, especially when you believe for your own personal, self-gratifying interests. You believe He can help you with your marriage or addiction or \$.

It is never a saving faith when you believe in Jesus but He never believes in you. I've used the illustration before of someone who knows everything about the quarterback of their favorite team. They can tell you when he was born, where he lived, how many pass receptions and interceptions and touchdowns and all of that. But when you ask that quarterback if he knows you, he will say no.

Just like what Jesus said to the religious unbelievers who were lost in their sin in **Matthew 7: 23** depart from Me you workers of iniquity **'I Never Knew You'**.

It is like the parable of the sower in **Matthew 13: 3 – 23** that hears the word and receives it with gladness but their heart is never changed and they fall away when difficulties come and the worldly possessions entice them. **Luke 16: 30 – 31** hell



Jesus, Verse 25 says, **knows what is in the heart of a person.** And because of that, He knows if their profession of faith is genuine saving faith or a dead works righteousness, I want to have my felt needs met kind of faith.

Jesus saw in John and Andrew and Peter and Philip and Nathanael a true desire to know God and the salvation His Son offers. Jesus saw in the many here a shallow superficial outward attraction because of what they had seen.

The big difference is this: the one with true belief and saving faith will end up in heaven and the other in a Christless eternity in hell. And yet many churches today want to focus on the felt needs of the people, want to entertain them with extravagance of a worship service and make them FEEL good about themselves, all the while leading them through the wide gate, down the broad path that leads to destruction.

Jesus knows when someone is swept away by the emotion of the moment, that many churches try to create. Jesus knows how someone can be taken in by the sensational of something, that many churches try to create. Jesus knows how someone can be taken in by the unusual or something different or the spectacular, that many churches offer today.

And He knows that people who make coerced, pleaded, professions of faith from their emotions or because of the sensation or because of something unusual or different or spectacular, profess only a superficial faith that does not save them.

Jesus also knows the hearts of those who, from a contrite heart that sees their own sin has offended a holy God and they need a Savior and that Christ alone is the only one who can save them from the penalty of their sin because He took the punishment on the cross and died, was buried and rose the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to appease the wrath of God against your sin, come to Him in true saving faith.

What about you, do you know Jesus and does He know you?

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Psalm 69: 1 – 9

Verse 18 What sign do you show us  
Matthew 12: 39, Matthew 16: 1, 4  
John 6: 30, Matthew 27: 42, John 12: 37 – 40

Verse 19 Destroy this temple and I will raise it in 3 days  
Matthew 26: 61, Acts 6: 14

Verse 20 It has taken 46 years to build this temple  
Matthew 24: 1 – 2

Verse 21 The temple of His body  
Mark 14: 58, John 4: 21

Verse 22 His disciples remembered again  
Psalm 16: 8 – 11, Acts 2: 22 – 32

Verse 23 Many believed in His name when they saw  
John 20: 30, 21: 25

Verses 24 – 25 He knew what was in man  
James 2: 19, Matthew 7: 23, Matthew 13: 3 – 23

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