

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE (2:12-17)

JESUS TRAVELS TO JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER (2:12-13)

Jesus Leaves Cana to Go to Capernaum (2:12)

After this, after Jesus performed His first miracle by turning the water into wine in the city of Cana. Jesus, **and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples** went down to Capernaum (*the village of Nahum*). Some believe this was named for the Old Testament prophet Nahum. Notice it says they **went down to Capernaum**, even though Capernaum is north of Cana it says they went down to Capernaum. This is because Cana was at a higher elevation than Capernaum so even though they were traveling up north, they were going down in elevation. Capernaum would later prove to be a central place for the ministry of Jesus. **They continued there not many days**. They were only in Capernaum for a few days.

After Spending a Few Days in Capernaum Jesus Goes to Jerusalem (2:13)

(13) **And the Jews' passover was at hand**. The Jewish **Passover** was a celebration marking the remembrance of God sparing the first born of the Hebrew people in the land of Egypt who had the blood of a lamb placed on the door posts (Ex. 12:1-13). Connected to the Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread which commemorated their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage (Ex. 12:17). Passover was one of the three feasts the Jewish males twenty years old and above were required to go to Jerusalem and bring an offering (Ex. 30:11-16). The three feasts were Passover, Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. As a Jewish male, Jesus was required to go **up to Jerusalem** to celebrate the **Passover**. Even though Jesus traveled down south to go to Jerusalem, it says He went up, this was because of the elevation of the city of Jerusalem.

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE (2:14-16)

The Defilement of the Temple (2:14)

Since Passover was one of the three major feasts, the city of Jerusalem would be packed with worshippers coming to celebrate. This would have been a very productive time for merchants since many of the pilgrims would be looking to purchase animals to offer as sacrifices. When Jesus arrived, he **found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting**. The temple refers to a courtyard outside of the temple which would be the Court of the Gentiles. In this verse we see three things going on. First, there were the merchants who **sold oxen and sheep and doves**. They would have had pens of oxen and sheep and cages of doves ready to sell to the pilgrims coming to worship the Lord. These businessmen jacked up the prices in order to make exorbitant financial gains. Second, there were the **changers of money**. Jewish males had to pay the Temple tax but they had to pay it with a specific type of currency. The money changers sat at tables ready to exchange the coinage the worshippers brought to pay their taxes into coins acceptable in the Temple. The money changers charged high exchange rates to those who needed to convert their coins. Both of these services were needed to help the pilgrims fulfill the requirements for worship. However, the exercise of these services was being abused by the merchants. To make matters worse, this was being done under the oversight of the religious officials. Third, Gentiles were not permitted beyond this

point, this would have been the place where they worshipped. No doubt their worship would be hindered by the buying and selling going on around them.

Cleansing the Temple (2:15-16)

As we read the Gospels we see there were two placements of the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus. The first one at the beginning of His ministry (Jn. 2:13-16) and the second one at the end of His ministry (Matt. 21:12-13; Mk. 11:15-17; Lk. 19:45-46). There are some who believe Jesus cleansed the Temple twice—once at the beginning of His ministry and the other at the end of it. Then there are those who believe He just did it once and John placed it at the beginning of His ministry while the other Gospel writers placed it at the end of His ministry.

Jesus made a **scourge of small cords**, this was a whip that He probably made from the rope which bound the animals. He then **drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen**. Jesus **drove them all out of the temple**—this refers to the men; **and the sheep and the oxen**—this refers to the animals. The Scripture does not comment on how forceful He used the whip on the men and the animals. Since Jesus was the sinless Lamb of God, He would have done this in a way that would not have been sinful. Then He **poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables**. What a scene this must have been, tables being turned over and coins rolling all over the floor. **And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise**. He told those who were selling doves, which were in crates, to take them out of the Temple Court. There has been much speculation why He did not use the whip on those that sold doves: 1) Because doves are gentle creatures; 2) Because doves represented the offering of the poor; 3) Because the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Suffices to say, we don't know specifically why He treated them this way. He had a stern word of rebuke for them also, **make not my Father's house an house of merchandise**. In the Gospel of Matthew we read, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13). This may indicate that Jesus was not necessarily angry about the buying and selling but the fact they corrupted the Lord's House and "made it a hangout for thieves" (MSG).

PASSION FOR THE LORD IS THE REASON FOR THE CLEANSING (2:17)

As the disciples watched Jesus wreak havoc in the Temple Court that day, they **remembered** the words of Psalm 69:9, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." David is the author of Psalm 69 and he had a zeal for the House of the Lord. Even though he did not build the Temple, but his son Solomon, God used him powerfully in the preparation for its building (1 Chron. 28:11-18; 29:2-5). The Hebrew word for zeal is *qinah* and it was used to represent a fervent emotion. David was a man after God's heart and had an intense passion for the House of the Lord. Because of his zeal for the House of the Lord, he made many enemies and there were those who sought to do him harm. Like David, Jesus had a **zeal** for His Father's house. He wanted to see to it become a place where the Glory of God could be seen and people could worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. It was because of this zeal that Jesus upset things in the Temple Court that day. As a result of this, He made many enemies, especially among the religious leaders. Like David He would realize, **the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me**, i. e., the ones

that scorned and mocked God turned their reproaches upon Christ. It was His zeal for the truth and the things of the Lord that ultimately led to His death.

In summary, the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus was not only an act of purification, it was also prophetic. Once He died on the cross, animal sacrifices would no longer be necessary. These blood sacrifices could only cover the sins of the people, but His death on the cross would take their sins away.