

Let's take a look at where **Jesus** has been thus far in our study of the Gospel of John...

Map...

- JTB...
- Jesus comes down from Nazareth...
- Baptized...
- Tempted in Wilderness...
- Behold the Lamb!
- Calls first Disciples..
- Goes back home to Galilee... Cana...water to wine....

John 2:12

"After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there **for a few days.**"

Whereas the events in the other three gospel accounts are not necessarily listed in chronological order.....John's **timeline** since Jesus' baptism has been very tight... (telling us day by day what is happening) – even though he tells us at the end that he is not recording most of what happened...

All this is taking place in the **early spring** of the year **28 A.D.**....

We know that because (in the Jewish calendar) the Passover was held during the full moon that occurred during (what is on our calendar) late March or early April of each year....

God had prescribed this Passover feast as a **remembrance** and celebration of the work He had done in delivering them from Egypt... and in making them His covenant people....now dwelling in the Promised Land...

Every year during this time... **all** Israelites were required to travel up to the Temple at Jerusalem to bring an offering according to their means.... It was a solemn and yet a joyous occasion...

Jewish historian *Josephus* tells us that in 65 AD, **3.5 million** Jews came up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover....

So if you want a **CURRENT** picture of that that looks like..... (visually anyway)... right now... as I speak...2.5 million Muslims have made their way to **Mecca** (Saudi Arabia) to perform a series of rituals... including walking around..a cube shaped building in the center of the mosque... which serves as the **PLACE** toward which all Muslims everywhere point to when they bow down to pray each day...

Foxnews calls it the largest human gathering on earth...

Well, in Jesus' day... the Passover was such a gathering.... because... at that point in salvation history.... the Temple in Jerusalem.... was **the** Holy PLACE.... where God met with His people...

It was **the** precinct where God had caused His Name and **Presence** to dwell... on Mt. Zion...

It was the **intersection** of heaven and earth.... because it was there at that **PLACE**... that God had appointed priests to offer sacrifices.... and to **mediate** between sinful man... and a Holy God... through the blood of innocent animals....

- Jesus was coming to FULFILL **all** of what that pointed to..... Jesus (as we have already learned in this study)... is not only our sacrificial **LAMB**...

Who by the sacrifice of Himself... takes away our SIN.... offers all who believe FORGIVENESS and eternal life...

- Jesus is not only our **HIGH PRIEST** who (through the sacrifice of Himself) has gone into the Holy of Holieswhere He ever lives to make intercession for us.... Where He has become the ONE mediator between God and man.....

But (as I pray we will see today).....

- **Jesus is the True Temple**

Jesus has become the PERSON and the PLACE where all true worship of God takes place.....

ALL true worship....

Steve Jobs was wrong. He said that religion is one room with many doors....

Jesus Christ said No! I AM the Way the Truth and the Life... no man comes to the Father EXCEPT through me...

So.....Instead of having to come to **a Holy Place**..... we now come (in the Holy Spirit) to the ONE who provides our instant access to God.

We can meet Him in a cafeteria..... or in a home.....or under a tree.....

Because He said... wherever two or three are gathered together in MY NAME... there I am in the midst of them....

The Temple of God has come to us!

JESUS is the True Temple...

Watch (in our text) how He chooses to UNVEIL this monumental shift that is going to take place after His resurrection.....during what was (at that time) the largest human gathering on earth...

John 2:13-22

" The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, **"Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."** His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

So the Jews said to him, "What **sign** do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, **"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."** The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken."

Since Jewish people made the trip to Jerusalem from all over the known world for this feast... many of them would not have been able to bring animals from their flocks on the trip. In order to facilitate them being able to purchase ceremonially clean animals for the sacrifice..... **Vendors** had long offered such livestock for sale....

The pilgrims to Jerusalem also had a need to exchange their currency for the Tyrian silver shekels like **these**....

Because of its consistent quality of silver....it was the only type of coin the Leaders would accept as payment for the annual tax required of all Jewish men...

So... **moneychangers** were also required.

The rub was that **formerly**... historians record both the animal vendors and the moneychangers being **outside** the city gates... across the Kidron valley.... on the slope of the Mount of Olives....

show **map**-

But as Jesus arrives at the Temple to worship for this Passover..... He finds them carrying on business right in the temple precincts themselves....

In fact, the only place they could have been set up was in the Court of the Gentiles...

God had declared that His house was to be a **house of prayer** for **all nations**....

But under Jewish Ceremonial Law.... the Gentiles were only allowed in this outermost portion of the temple mount.... (court of women, court of Israel, Holy Place, the Holy of Holies)...

It would be like if you drove all the way to Dallas to see the Redskins play the Cowboys..... but when you got to Jerry's stadium (because you were a Redskins fan) they made you stay in the parking lot....where you could see the Jumbotron.....

But it was there in this outer court..... that the Gentiles were able to come as close as they could to the worship of the one true God.

But instead of them having a reverent place to pray and worship.... this outer court was so clogged with commerce....

That the scene was more like a **noisy bazaar** or an **indoor flea market** than the Temple of God Most High....

So Jesus takes action...to **CLEANSE** the temple of the things which were obstructing worship...

John 2:14-16

"In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a **whip of cords**, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, **"Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."**"

I want you to imagine what this must have **felt** like for Jesus....

Because these buildings... and the activity that took place in them..... was all meant to reflect His Father's glory.....and worth....

It would be like.....

If you let some friends stay in your house....while you were away.... and you came home to find the framed family pictures which you had put up on the walls for guests to see... had been used as TV trays.....with food and drink spilled all over them....

- Jesus was **NOT** happy.

This is called righteous indignation.

Yet, his anger was not of the kind of violence of some insurgent..... He was simply enforcing a moral code that the people already knew they were guilty of violating...

He came with the authority of God...and He claimed that this was **HIS** Father's house.....

But they had turned it into a **shopping mall**....

It was not **HOLY**..... It was not focused on the Presence of God or the sacrifices that were being made...

The environment was not one of PRAYER and PRAISE....

Nor was anyone able to give **sound instruction** (as Jesus himself had received there as a boy)....and would later give Himself to all who would listen....

Teaching could not happen because of the constant lowing of the oxen and the bleating of sheep....

It was filled with **DISTRACTIONS**.... it was filled with ACTIVITIES (that were not in and of themselves evil)..... but because of a disregard for God's holiness..... had become **OBSTRUCTIONS** to the worship of God.

- Is that not an accurate picture of our lives as God's people here in NOVA in 2011?

As Jesus inhabits the temple of these bodies through His Holy Spirit..... and we come to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him.... both daily and here together on Sunday.....

Don't **DISTRACTIONS** of every sort threaten to rob God of His Holy Place in our worship?

Jesus is the True Temple

1. Remove All Distractions from Worship

The next time we see Jesus in bodily form... (I believe) He will be returning to **consummate** the Kingdom....

We will not longer have a need to see Him through eyes of faith... because we will behold Him face to face....

But **until** then.... by His **Spirit**.... the risen Lord Jesus has come into this assembly...and He not only sees **VISIBLE** distractions to our worship....

But He sees and knows every thought and intention of our hearts....

And if we are honest..... even on Sunday morning.....He often finds our LIVES and MINDS so filled with the **commerce** of the day....

that true worship of God is at best obscured.....and sometimes eliminated all together.

So think about ...as you TRY to worship the Lord.... what are the things in the outer courts of your life that get in the way?

- the noise of our personal devices
- the constant LURE of social media
- the worries of things we can not change...
- the approval of other people..

The Lord is saying to us this morning.... **"Take these things away!"**

Think about what He meant... in that original context.....

He was **NOT** saying.... stop selling animals to sacrifice.....

He was NOT saying..... stop exchanging foreign currency.....

Those were helpful activities..... they were a service to the people.....

But those HELPFUL economically good activities.... had been brought up out of the **COMMON** area.....

Into a PLACE reserved for God to interact with His people.....

A **HOLY PLACE**.....

God has created within you who believe..... a HOLY PLACE..... it is called your **heart**.

It is not wrong to participate in COMMON tasks..... (like using technology)....

or watching and enjoying SPORTS.....

It is when those ACTIVITIES begin to **INVADE** the Holy Affections of your HEART.... that Jesus gets angry....

Because they are taking you away from what is MOST important... what is MOST satisfying...what is eternal.

Jesus says: ANYTHING that hinders you from running to Me in prayer.... in praise....and **cherishing** My Presence.....

Needs to be TAKEN AWAY...

Or... He will come and forcibly DRIVE IT OUT.

1 Corinthians 10:22

"Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?"

We talk a lot around here about the **Grace** of God..... and we should.... but the Lord who has drawn us into fellowship with Himself by His grace.... is the **same Lord** whose ANGER was **kindled** against His people over and over in the OT.... because they had other PRIORITIES in place of Him...

Other activities OBSCURED their heart's ability to regard Him as Holy.... and to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

So take this visual picture of Jesus using a WHIP to RID the temple precincts of COMMON things.....as a WARNING

Because The Lord who bled and died to reconcile you to God... is no less **JEALOUS** for your attention and because of His love for you....

He is consumed with zeal to secure your undistracted devotion in Himself...

No LESS so ... than He was this day in Jerusalem...

In fact, His disciples saw Him declaring in these actions.....that He is the Messiah...

John 2:17

"His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me.""

I wonder....as God looks in your heart this morning.....

What is it that you are Zealous about?

Is it your Job?

Is it some relationship (or lack thereof)?

Is it some sport's team?

Some activity you enjoy?

When you are **consumed** by Zeal for something.... or someone.....

You make **sacrifices** in order to make it happen.....

You have trouble thinking about anything else.... it consumes you.....

David was consumed with Zeal for the house of the Lord.....

He said that he would not even sleep in his own house... until he found a way to build a house for the Lord..... He made great sacrifices to get provisions.... He passed on His **God given plans** to Solomon....

All that THRILLED David's soul was the realization of GOD dwelling permanently in the midst of His people!

So was the **Son** of Davidthe descendent who is now sitting on the Throne and who will reign forever..... the Lord Jesus....

But the Scripture that the disciples were **remembering**..... (as they watched him drive out distractions from worship) was pointing **forward** to the Zeal that would consume Jesus so that he could bring you into HIS temple forever.....

It was a Zeal that carried Him through the darkness of **Gethsemane**.... to take up His cross and bear the wrath of God (we deserve) in His own body on the tree...

Psalm 69:7-9

"For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons. For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me."

Jesus is passionate..... about your worship..... passionate enough to bear the REPROACH of **your** sin....

He was so consumed with ZEAL for God being able to dwell in your life.... that he didn't care what his own family thought about him....

He bore the wrath....you get the **GAIN**...

so that you could gladly enter in.....to **worship** the Living God.

- What was it, again, that said **you** were consumed with?

Jesus is the True Temple

1. Remove All Distractions from Worship
2. Glory in His Resurrection!

I was thinking this week about how much we love to glory in displays of power.

Even if we know it is animated.... or simulated in some other way.....

We LOVE it.... We glory in it....

Maybe it is because we feel so **helpless** much of the time. Don't you feel helpless sitting in bumper to bumper traffic?..... we feel helpless when get that bill in the mail.....or see the sign where the price of gas has gone up **again**....

God designed us to LOVE displays of POWER!

Unless of course, they threaten to undermine our Sovereignty..... unless someone else is using power to encroach on our **TURF!**

Jesus had just committed an act of power that sent **chills** up the spine of the Jewish leaders...

They were stunned... so they said.... um.... can you show us some credentials....

Who do you think you are?

John 2:18

"So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?""

They knew that **ONLY** one claiming to be the Messiah would dare pull off something like this..... so they demanded to see some miracle to authenticate His identity.....

Some **PROOF**....

Jesus said.... here is the **ONLY** sign you need:

John 2:19

"Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.""

He did not say that HE would destroy the temple...(as His accusers would later state).... He was not even predicting **HERE** the coming destruction of the Jerusalem in 70 AD (although he later would prophesy about that)....

He was declaring openly something that **His Body** would soon replace this model through the **POWER** of His resurrection!

That as they heard more about His claim to be their KING... they hand Him over the the Romans to be whipped... tortured..... pierced with spikes... and a spear... and left to suffocate on a tree...

They would destroy the **ONLY** perfectly righteous human body that has ever existed.

And He would show them His credentials by **RAISING** that body from the **DEAD!!**

Jesus will go on to say.....

John 10:17-18

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may **take it up again**. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and **I have authority to take it up again**. This charge I have received from my Father.'" "

Jesus' Words went right over the Jewish Leader's heads..... They were so fixated on THEIR Temple.... over which THEY had jurisdiction.....they didn't get it....

John 2:20

"The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?""

Look buddy... it is one thing to pick up a whip and drive out some vendors.... but you are out of your league now....

Herod himself had built that temple (and from the time plans were drawn until the state it was currently in) it had taken almost a half-century...

You are a **JOKE** pal!

John 2:21

"But he was speaking about the temple of his body."

See (please get this).... Jesus as the Word who became flesh... and pitched His tent among us.... WAS the Temple of the Lord all by Himself...

Anyone who SAW Him..... saw MORE of the Father... than any prophet of the OT.... or any High Priest who went into the Holy of Holies.....

Colossians 2:9

"For in him **the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily**,

But the end goal of God causing His fullness to dwell bodily in the PERSON of Jesus Christ... was so that He could demonstrate **His LOVE** for you by yielding this beautiful TEMPLE of God up to be destroyed....

So that YOU and I could be **incorporated into** the Body of JESUS....

So that we could be made MEMBERS of **His PERSON**....

So that (as His Body was destroyed)... the **CURTAIN** of that old temple was TORN into two! (from top to bottom)...

So that you low down Gentile sinner..... washed in His Blood... forgiven of your sin and clothed in His very righteousness...

Could march right straight into the Holy of Holies.....and GLORY in His Resurrection!!

- Do you **BELIEVE** that?

If so... it is because you have partaken of resurrection power! The Risen Christ Himself has brought you into the **True Temple**.

We could end there.... except for one problem....

Because **this very day**.....(maybe before some of you get to your car)...

the vendors and the moneychangers.... or whatever it is that wants to camp in the outer courts of your temple.....

Are going to be sneaking in the back doors..... They won't rush in..... they'll move in **gradually**.....

So before you realize what is happening..... their **NOISE** will drown out... the **Word** of the Living God...

So God gives you the prescription for how to fight that.... right here:

John 2:22

"When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples **remembered** that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken."

That is precisely what is going to have to take place in your life....

The very **WORD** you have to call to **REMEMBRANCE**.... so that you can BELIEVE what God has said to you here today....

The two edged Sword of Jesus' Words..... is the Whip that will drive those distractions away.... and NOTHING ELSE!

Jesus is the True Temple of God..... good news... He has chosen to bring you in...

Please bow your heads....

- Will you ask God (even now) to CONSUME you with ZEAL for being apart of His HOUSE?

- Will you DEFEND your heart against the encroachment of the WORLD that wants to clutter up your mind and heart with things that DULL you to the enjoyment of His glory?
- There might even be something right now clamoring for your attention...distracting you from the voice of your KING... ask Christ to drive it out.
- Ask forgiveness... plead the blood....

Then... let us do what we have been redeemed to do!

Hebrews 13:15

"Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, **the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.**"