

JESUS IS SUPREME OVER GOD'S HOUSE

JOHN 02: 12-22

Introduction

Jesus Christ has supremacy over God's house, that is, over the temple or church. He alone has the right to rule and reign over God's house.

- I. Jesus left Cana (vv. 12-13).
- II. His discovery of evil in the temple (v. 14).
- III. His right to cleanse the temple (vv. 15-17).
- IV. His power to erect a new temple (vv. 18-21).
- V. His objective achieved: the disciples remembered this event and believed the Scripture and the Word of the Lord (v. 22).

I. John 02:12-13 Jesus Christ Begins His Mission

Jesus left Cana. He went down to Capernaum and stayed there for just a brief time. He then left for Jerusalem to attend the Passover Feast.

Capernaum was His headquarters. Capernaum lay in the northernmost point of Palestine. It was deliberately chosen by Christ as "His own town" (Mt. 9:1; Isa. 9:1-7). God had prepared Galilee down through history for the coming of His Son's ministry. Several facts show this (see Gal. 4:4).

1. Throughout history Galilee had been invaded and repopulated again and again with different people and cultures from all over the world. Over the years such an influx of differing people had created an atmosphere susceptible to new personalities and ideas.
2. Galilee was strategically located. The world's leading roads passed right through its borders. Merchants from all over the world passed through, boarding in its cities.
3. Galilee was heavily populated. It was also surrounded by the Samaritans, Phoenicians, and Syrians making it an open door for world evangelization. It was one of the most fertile lands in that part of the world. This fact, plus the travelling trade, led people to settle within its borders. There were within the district over two hundred cities with a population of fifteen thousand or more. There were multitudes for Jesus to reach.
4. Galilee was open to new and fresh ideas. Its people, having come from all over the world, were liberal minded, always looking for new and fresh ideas to stimulate and challenge their thinking.

It was for these reasons that Christ chose Galilee to begin His ministry. The area was an open door for people to spread the news that the Messiah had come and the Kingdom of Heaven was being ushered in.

Thought 1. A person's place of ministry should be deliberately chosen. He should consider strategic locations for ministry.

Mat 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

II. **John 02:14** *Place of Worship Abused*

Jesus' discovery of evil in the temple. Note two facts.

1. He entered the temple (See *Temple*, Jn. 2:14).
2. He found the temple being desecrated. It was the Court of the Gentiles where so much commercialism took place. There was a regular commercial market within its walls. How did a commercial market ever get into the temple of God? Very simply, greed. Worshippers needed animals (oxen, sheep, doves), incense, meal, wine, oil, salt, and other items for their sacrifices and offerings. Pilgrims from foreign nations needed money exchanged. At some point in the history of the temple, the priests had decided to take advantage of the market themselves instead of letting retailers on the outside reap all the profits. Therefore, the priests began to set up booths within the Court of the Gentiles and to lease space to *outside retailers*. These often turned out to be family members. The owner of the booths or space was apparently the High Priest whose name was Annas. The outer courtyard of the temple, the very worship centre for the Gentiles, was filled with booth like spaces where worshippers could find any kind of service they needed. The atmosphere was one of commercial traffic and commotion, not of worship and prayer.

Remembering the teeming thousands who attended the great feasts, we can imagine the loudest commercial commotion, and our picture would still come short of the actual scene. Who can picture thousands of animals with their peculiar noises, wastes, and smells within the temple of God? And for what? What would cause men to so abuse the worship centre of God? As said above, money — the greed of men. It is no wonder Jesus did what He did. He could not do otherwise, for He was the Son of God, the Messiah sent into the world to bring about a true worship of God; and there was no hope of worship within the Court of the Gentiles. Prayer and worship were impossible.

Luke 19:46 “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

Eccl 5:1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

Psa 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

JOHN 02: 14 THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE

A person must understand the layout of the temple in order to see what was happening in this event. The temple sat on the top of mount Zion, and it is thought to have covered about thirty acres of land. The temple consisted of two parts, the temple building itself and the temple precincts or courtyards. The Greek language has two different words to distinguish which is meant.

1. *The temple building* (naos) was a small ornate structure which sat in the centre of the temple property. It was called the Holy Place or Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest could enter its walls, and he could enter only once during the year, on the Day of Atonement.
2. *The temple precincts* (hieron) were four courtyards that surrounded the temple building, each decreasing in their importance to the Jewish mind. It is important to know that great walls separated the courts from each other.
 - a. First, there was the *Court of the Priests*. Only the priests were allowed to enter this court. Within this courtyard stood the great furnishings of worship: the Altar of Burnt Offering, the Bronze Wash Basin, the Seven Branched Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, and the Table of Showbread.
 - b. Second, there was the *Court of the Israelites*. This was a huge courtyard where Jewish worshippers met together for joint services on the great feast days. It was also where worshippers handed over their sacrifices to the priests.
 - c. Third, there was the *Court of the Women*. Women were usually limited to this area except for joint worship with men. They could, however, enter the Court of the Israelites when they came to make a sacrifice or worship in a joint assembly on a great feast day.
 - d. Last, there was the *Court of the Gentiles*. It covered a vast space, surrounding all the other courtyards, and was the place of worship for all Gentile converts to Judaism.

Two facts need to be noted about the Court of the Gentiles.

1. It was the courtyard farthest removed from the centre of worship, the Most Holy Place, which represented God's very presence.
2. A high wall separated the Court of the Gentiles from the other courts, disallowing any Gentile a closer approach into God's presence. In fact, there were tablets hanging all around the wall threatening death to any Gentile who went beyond their own courtyard or centre of worship. □

III. *John 02:15–17 Cleansing the Temple*

Jesus' right to cleanse the temple. Three points show His right.

1. The whip of cords. This was a symbol of His righteous anger, of His right to be obeyed, of His right to enforce obedience within the temple. The whip was a symbol of the power and cleansing judgment of God – the kind of power and cleansing judgment that causes men to tremble before God (Phil. 2:9-11).

He ran through the temple doing three things: (a) He chased out *all* who were buying and selling; (b) He threw over the tables of the moneychangers; and (c) He threw over the chairs of the dove dealers.

Thought 1. The temple (church) can be abused by...

- forgetting what worship is all about
 - misusing the facilities and buildings of God's house
 - ignoring God's holiness and forgetting one's duty to reverence God
 - allowing questionable, non-worshipful activities
2. Jesus' unique relationship to God. He called God "My Father" and called the temple "My Father's house."
 - a. "My Father." Jesus was continually calling God "My Father", because He is the one and only Son of God. He is God Himself. But He is not the same person as God. He has the same *nature* of God, to be one with God in nature, in being, in substance, in power, in essence and in glory.
 - b. "My Father's house." Jesus was saying the temple was God's; therefore, it was to be a house of worship *for all people*. This included the Gentiles as well as the Jews. All people should be able to worship in quietness and peace within God's temple. No one should be barred, separated, or discouraged from worshipping God in His temple. All should be welcomed.

Note another fact. The temple (church) was called a house of worship, not a house of sacrifice, offerings, teaching, prophecy or preaching. Everything done within the House of God is to lead to the *worship* of the Father and *communion* with the Father.

Thought 1. The temple is not to be used as a commercial centre. It is not to be a place for buying and selling, marketing and retailing, stealing and cheating. It is not to be profaned. The temple is the House of God, God's House of worship. It is to be a place of sanctity, refined and purified by God Himself. It is to be a place of quietness and meditation, a place set aside for worship, not for buying and selling where man gets gain.

Luke 24:52-53 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (see Jn. 4:24)

Psa 26:8 I love the house where you live, O LORD, the place where your glory dwells. (see Psa. 23:6)

Psa 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.

Psa 65:4 Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

Psa 84:2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Psa 84:10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

Psa 122:1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Eccl 5:1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

Thought 2. A man either believes Jesus is the Son of God and over the Temple of God or else he believes neither (Jn. 20:31).

3. Jesus' consuming zeal. His zeal fulfilled Scripture and demonstrated that He was the Messiah. The Messiah was bound to be zealous for God's house and to react in anger at such corruption within the temple. Scripture had predicted the Lord's zeal (Psa. 69:9); therefore, Jesus had the right to show *zeal and anger* against such desecration of the temple. He was the Messiah, and His act stirred the memory of the disciples.

Lev 19:30 "Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God."

Hab 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."

Psa 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

IV. *John 02:18–21 New Meeting Place for God*

Jesus' power to erect a new temple. Note four things.

1. His authority was questioned by the religionists. What right did He have to do what He was doing? He claimed that the temple was His *Father's*. They knew that He was claiming to be the Messiah; therefore, they wanted proof that His claim was true. They wanted some spectacular sign.
2. His sign was to be given in the future. He was going to build a *new meeting place* for God. Note His exact words: “[You] destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days.”
3. His puzzling statement was misunderstood. They could not understand how He could possibly build a temple in three days. The present temple had taken forty six years to build.
4. His puzzling statement had a *symbolic meaning*. Jesus was speaking of His body, of His death and resurrection.
 - a. The proof that He was the Son of God with authority over God's house was to be given. The sign was to be His body, His death and resurrection. The resurrection was to be the supreme proof of His Messiahship. They were to destroy (kill) Him, but He would be raised from the dead after three days (Lk. 11:29-36).

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

Acts 10:39-41 “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen – by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.”

Rom 1:4 And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

- b. His death and resurrection was to provide a new temple, a new meeting place for God and man. It was to be *in Him* that men would thereafter meet God. The temple of His body was to become the temple of men, the temple whereby men would worship and be reconciled to God.

Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man. This is seen in the picture Jesus painted by the words, “You shall see *heaven open*, and the angels of God *ascending* and descending on the Son of Man” (Jn. 01:51). This is a picture of Jacob's ladder (Gen. 28:10-22). It is a picture of open access into the very presence of God: the door of heaven is open and the angels are *ascending from earth* to heaven. Jesus was saying...

- He is Jacob's ladder; the ladder is a symbol of Him. He is the One who opens heaven.
- He is the One who reaches *from earth* to heaven, the One by whom man has his communication carried up into heaven.

Thought 1. Three critical facts should be noted.

- 1) A man *can* approach God and enter heaven through Christ (Jn. 14:6). The gulf, the loneliness, and the alienation which man knows have been bridged.
- 2) A man has access to God *only* through Christ (Jn. 14:6).
- 3) A man can have *constant* communication with God. The picture is that of angels carrying messages from earth to heaven and back to earth again.

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

1 Tim 2:5 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

JOHN 02:09–20 CHARGES AGAINST JESUS

This is the statement used to charge Jesus with being an insurrectionist at His trial (Mt. 26:61; Mk. 14:58). It was also used to taunt Jesus as He hung upon the cross (Mt. 27:40). The Jews, showing their spiritual blindness and attachment to a materialistic world, understood Jesus to be saying that He would perform an architectural wonder. □

V. **John 02:22** *Belief in Prophecy*

Jesus' objective was achieved. The disciples believed the Scriptures which had predicted the coming and resurrection of the Messiah (Mt. 17:23).

Psa 16:10 *Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.* (see Acts 2:31; 13:35)

Isa 53:12 *Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* ■