

Destroy This Temple

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Scripture Text: [John 2:11-22](#)

Introduction

After attending a wedding at Cana and performing the miracle of turning water into wine, our Lord with His mother, His brothers and His disciples went to Capernaum and stayed there for a few days. Then Jesus with His disciples went up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover as He was accustomed to do. But when He went to the Temple, which is very important to the Jews, the place where the sacrifices is offered and where His Father is worshipped, He was grieved because He found people selling sheep, oxen and doves and the money-changers sitting there within its walls. When He saw His Father's house being desecrated and being turned into a market place, it caused Him to display His holy anger. When He saw what was taking place in the Temple and because of His passion for the His Father's glory, it caused Him to display His righteous indignation.

The Cleansing of the Temple

[John 2:15](#) And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; [16:](#) And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

The conduct of our Lord in the temple reminded the disciples of the words of the psalmist ...

[John 2:17](#) And his disciples remembered that it was written, **The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.**

His love and passion for the Father's house consumes Him and it was revealed when He saw it being destroyed by the religious leaders of His day.

The Jews' Demand for a Sign.

After our Lord had driven out those who are selling sheep, oxen and doves within the Temple's walls, we are told that the Jews objected against it.

[John 2:18](#) Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

What sign do you show us to prove you are authorized and commissioned to do these things? **Being Jews** and **if they cared** about the purity of the Temple and the honor of the Father, **they should have been glad** that someone is willing to stand up and seek to make things right in the Temple. **They should have stood with Christ, and assisted Him in cleansing the**

Temple. But instead they were upset and they questioned His authority and demanded proof of His authority.

Christ's answer to their demand.

The Jews required for a sign, for a miracle but our Lord did not gratify their unreasonable demand. He refused to work a new miracle to convince them, but instead He referred them to a future event, which, if it is accomplished, would satisfy their demand.

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

Nobody in the crowd understood the meaning of our Lord's statement. There were two groups of people that did not understand the significance of Jesus' word.

1. His enemies

They had no clue what our Lord was talking about. They thought He was referring to the physical Temple.

John 2:20 Then said the Jews, **Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?**

They were surprised and confused with Christ's statement. They thought that building the Temple in three days is impossible and an arrogant claim. But if they had realized that He was talking about His death and that how He would resurrect Himself after three days they would even be more amazed and upset.

They took these words from our Lord and distorted it and used it against Christ in at least two occasions -

At the trial of Jesus, in the high priest's palace, one of the charges brought against Him was that He said He would destroy the temple.

Mark 14:57 And there arose certain, and bare **false witness** against him, saying, **58: We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.**

Not only did **they misunderstood** what Christ said, but also **they misquoted Him**. The false witness said, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." But that's not what He said. What He said was, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

At the cross, when He was bleeding and dying, the passers by reminded Jesus of what seems to be **an impossible promise.**

Mark 15:29 And they that **passed by** railed on (insulted) him, wagging (shaking) their heads, and saying, **Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,** **30: Save thyself, and come down from the cross.**

To them Jesus was an impostor, a blasphemer, someone who arrogantly claimed to have great power. "*You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross. Where is now the power you claim to have?*"

This is one of the things I love about the Lord Jesus Christ. I love the way Christ He treated and responded to His enemies. The One who has all power and authority could have easily come down and destroyed all of them but He did not. He did not respond in anger and vengeance.

Jesus Announcing His Death and Resurrection

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:

As we all know now that Jesus spoke here of the temple of His body. Christ is announcing His death and His resurrection. Christ knows what is coming. He was aware of what is going to happen.

Please understand that when Jesus said, "Destroy this temple," **He was not commanding them**, but He was simply prophesying. Our Lord was prophesying His death and He knew that the religious leaders themselves would be the means by which the prophecy will be fulfilled. Jesus knew that these religious leaders would attempt to destroy His body, but He also knew that they would not succeed.

Jesus Willingness to Go to the Cross

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:

What an affirmation of His willingness to go to the cross and die but then to overcome it with His resurrection.

Jesus Giving the Jews the Ultimate and Final Sign

Destroy this temple, and **in three days I will raise it up**:

Jesus confidently claimed the power to raise Himself from the dead, and He repeated the claim in ...

[John 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.](#)

In raising Himself from the dead He would give them the final and ultimate sign that He was the the Messiah, that He was God manifest in flesh. It would prove that He is God and if God, then the He has the absolute right and authority to cleanse the defiled temple which bore His name.

We are told that Christ ...

[Romans 1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4: And **declared to be the Son of God with power**, according to the spirit of holiness, **by the resurrection from the dead**:](#)

There is another group that did not understand ...

2. His disciples

Even His disciples at the time He spoke these words, did not understand the meaning of the sentence. It is true that John informs us that Christ's was referring to His death and resurrection.

[John 2:21](#) But he spake of the temple of his body.

But at the time that it was spoken, none of the disciples including John understood what He meant. It was only after the death and resurrection of Jesus that His disciples understood and believed both the Scriptures and this specific promise of Jesus.

[John 2:22](#) When therefore he was risen from the dead, **his disciples remembered** that he had said this unto them; and **they believed** the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

A comfortable and an encouraging truth

Isn't this encouraging, for three years they had no idea what these words, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up: meant.

But after Christ has risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they understood and believed the Scripture.

[John 2:22](#) When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

"For three years it was a dark and useless saying to them. For three years it lay sleeping in their minds, like a seed in a tomb, and bore no fruit. But at the end of that time the darkness passed away. They saw the application of their Master's words, and as they saw it were confirmed in their faith. "They remembered that He had said this," and as they remembered "they believed."

It is a comfortable and cheering thought, that the same kind of thing that happened to the disciples is often going on at the present day. The sermons that are preached to apparently heedless ears in churches, are not all lost and thrown away. The instruction that is given in schools and pastoral visits, is not all wasted and forgotten. The texts that are taught by parents to children are not all taught in vain. There is often a resurrection of sermons, and texts, and instruction, after an interval of many years. The good seed sometimes springs up after he that sowed it has been long dead and gone. Let preachers go on preaching, and teachers go on teaching, and parents go on training up children in the way they should go. Let them sow the good seed of Bible truth in faith and patience. Their labor is not in vain in the Lord. Their words are remembered far more than they think, and will yet spring up "after many days." (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ecclesiastes 11:1.)" - J. C. Ryle

This is what keeps me going. This is what keeps me preaching Sunday after Sunday, because **I know God's Words will not return unto Him void.**

[Isaiah 55:10](#) For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return

unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Practical Applications

What practical instructions can we learn from this incident?

1. We are to be committed to the House of God

We are to be committed to the House of God **because Christ is!** Christ is committed to the glory of His Father and the purity of His house and worship. Christ is passionate and devoted to the house of God that **He will not tolerate all irreverent behavior in the house of God.** He showed righteous indignation. He displayed holy wrath He saw that His Father's house is being desecrated.

This may be applied to the New Testament church of God which is the house of God, where He dwells; where the word of God is read and preached. Jesus Christ is zealously committed to the house of God. He loved it, and was always jealous for its honor and purity. Such was Christ's zeal that He could not bear to see it dishonored and profaned.

If God is our Father in heaven, and it is therefore our desire that His Name may be sanctified and honored. There should be something in us that want to rise up and do something, when His Church, God's House is being polluted or neglected.

No Strange Fire!

We need to **jealously guard** the house of God from becoming a market place, a club house, a social gathering, an entertainment center.

Make sure that we do not introduce any strange fire into our assembly like what Aaron's sons did.

Leviticus 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2: And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

(cf. Numbers 3:4, 26:6)

The incident should cause us to be careful what we do when we come to the house of God. We should jealously guard it and get rid of anything and everything that is offensive to Christ.

2. We are not of all men most miserable!

Destroy this temple, - there is a challenge!

And in three days I will raise it up - there's the promise and He kept it!

In light of this truth, we must remember that we are not of all men most miserable, but rather we are of all men most blessed.

1 Corinthians 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18: Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19: If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20: But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

We serve a risen and a powerful Saviour! "The Lord is risen indeed!" that is our message.

Because He lives we too shall live

He who had power to raise Himself from the dead, had promised in His word ...

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: **he that believeth in me**, though he were dead, yet **shall he live**: 26: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. **Believest thou this?**

Because He is risen we can live victoriously

We do not have to live defeated lives. We have a powerful Savior. May we all experience the power of His resurrection as His disciples did.

Because He is risen we can overcome sin and temptation

Are you struggling with temptation and sin?

Romans 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Because He is risen we can overcome the Devil

Are you being harassed by Satan, day and night accusing you?

Jesus rose to be your advocate and intercessor.

Romans 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Because He is risen we can face tomorrow

Are you afraid of tomorrow? You don't need to if Christ is your Saviour. Commit your life to the One who holds tomorrow!

*God sent His son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal, and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.*

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, All fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.*

What a blessed Saviour we have! What a blessed gospel we preach - the gospel of a living powerful Christ who raised Himself from the dead and now He is calling sinners to believe Him and to trust Him. He is ready, He is willing and He is ready to save. All you have to do is come. Come humbling yourself before Him. Come believing who He claims Himself to be. Friends, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the true Messiah. His enemies sought to destroy Him by nailing Him to the cross. But they did not succeed, for after three days He raised Himself back to life, just as He said He would.

Come! Come to the Saviour and experience the power of His resurrection! Amen!