

STUDY #6

The Loyal Son

John 2:13-22 (ESV)—

¹³The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

¹⁸So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."²⁰The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²²When 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.

Key Words:

"Passover" (v. 14)—this annual celebration commemorated Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt—when the Lord killed, by His angel of death, the first-born of the Egyptians, but **passed over** the houses of the Israelites who had lambs blood over their doorposts (Ex. 12:23-27). In Jesus' time, it is estimated that a million Jews would travel to Jerusalem, offer a lamb as a sacrifice between 3-6pm, and eat a special Passover meal. This is the first of three Passovers in Jesus' ministry and the kick off to his public ministry.

"temple" (v. 14) —(Greek word: *hieron*) The whole temple in Jerusalem, the heart of Jewish religion.

"those selling..." (v. 14)—vendors would sell animals (for sacrifice) to those who traveled to Jerusalem from distant lands, but at very high prices.

"money-changers" (v. 14)—every Jewish male >20 had to pay an annual temple tax using Jewish or Tyrian coins. These money changers charged an exorbitant fee for their services.

"My Father's house" (v. 16)—the temple was the place of worship, which signified God's presence. As the Son of God, He was acting as a loyal Son—purging His Father's house of impure worship.

"zeal.." (v. 17)—Psalm 69:9. His righteous indignation stemmed from an absolute commitment to God's holiness.

"what sign"(v. 18)—challenge to His authority.

"temple" (v. 19)—(Greek word: *naos*) this word is reserved for the sacred structure itself, which contained the holy place and the holy of holies.

This is used symbolically for Jesus' body and of believers (1 Cor. 6:19) in whom the Holy Spirit lives.

Related Passages:

Luke 2:41—"...now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover."

Psalms 69:9—"For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me."

Psalms 51:16-17—"For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Romans 12:1—"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

1 Corinthians 6:19—"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"

Matthew 12:38-40—"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." ³⁹But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Discussion Questions

→ Read v. 14-17

1. Why did Jesus go to Jerusalem? (O) Was this His first time? (See Luke 2:41) (O)

*2. Describe how the temple in Jerusalem had become a “house of trade.” (O) Why was this wrong? (I)

*3. What was different about this trip to the temple than all previous ones? (O) Think about this sentence: “He drove them all out of the temple” (v. 15) One man single-handedly drove out tens of thousands of people (plus animals) from the temple. Can you imagine that scene?

How was this miracle an act of judgment on a system of religion? (I)

What is the significance of His calling the temple in Jerusalem, “My Father’s house”? (I)

How does that help us understand His motive for His actions? (I)

How did his actions fulfill the prophecy in Psalm 69:9? (I)

*4. The Jews sadly fell into a ritualistic, empty, burdensome system of works-based religion and corrupted the house of God. Read Psalm 51:16-17 and Romans 12:1. What kind of sacrifices is God please with? (O) How do these contrast with what was going on in the temple? (I) What does offering a “broken & contrite heart” and “presenting our bodies as living sacrifices” look like practically in your life? (A)

*5. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, believers are symbolically called “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” How can you and I avoid the Jews mistake of corrupting God’s temple? (A)

→ Read vs. 18-22

6. Jesus is not arrested for his actions, but His authority is challenged. What do the Jews (perhaps they are the temple guard) ask of Jesus? (O) Isn't it kind of odd that they ask for another sign? Wasn't it enough that He alone, single-handedly drove out the masses from the temple?? What does this say about them? (I)

*7. Knowing that Jesus is referring to His body when He says "temple," what sign is He predicting in His response to the Jews? (I) Did they understand? (O) Why/Why not? (I) When did the disciples understand what Jesus was talking about? (O) What was the effect? (O)

8. Note, that He said, "**I will** raise it up." Who is doing the raising? (I) Why is that significant? (I) Later on in John 10:17-18, He says, "I lay down my life...I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." What do these two passages communicate? (I)

9. Keeping in mind John's purpose: "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31), how do the verses that you just studied impact your understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what He did? (A)

PRE-STUDY #7
Interview with Nicodemus (Part A)

John 2:23-3:10 (ESV)—

²³Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

3 ¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Key Words:

“did not entrust” (v. 24) –“entrust” is the same Greek word for “believe” in v. 23. Basically, John is saying though the people believed in Jesus, Jesus did not continue to believe in them. The people were amazed at His spectacular signs, but their faith proved to be shallow, superficial, and disingenuous. Mere amazement or intellectual belief is not true saving faith. Even the demons believe (James 2:19), but do not have salvation. Saving faith requires one to be conscious of the need for forgiveness of sins and the conviction that Jesus alone is the Mediator of that forgiveness between God and man.

“he knew all people...he himself knew what was in man” (vs. 24-25)—Jesus’ omniscience is clearly stated. It is universal (all people) and individual (what was in man).

Pharisees (3:1)—the elite religious party that, because of their zeal for the Mosaic Law and their own oral traditions replaced true religion with mere behavior modification and ritual. “Salvation” was all about works. Sadly, the wide gap between their teaching and their practice led to hypocrisy (something that Jesus points out repeatedly). They had great influence with the common people.

“ruler of the Jews” (3:1)—He was one of 70 members of the Sanhedrin, which was the governing council of Israel.

“born again” (3:3)— the new birth, or regeneration, is the act of God by which He gives eternal life to those who are “dead in...their sins” (Eph 2:1)

“kingdom of God” (3:3,5)—synonymous with salvation.

“Born of water and the Spirit” (3:5)—water and Spirit often are symbolically used in the Old Testament for spiritual renewal and cleansing. (Ezekiel 36:24-27) “Born of water” may bring John the Baptist’s message of repentance and water baptism to mind. “Born of the Spirit” means regeneration. Therefore, one “cannot enter the kingdom of God” without: Repentance and Regeneration.

“born of the Spirit” (3:6)—only the Holy Spirit can produce spiritual birth. It is His work, unaided by human effort.

“wind” (3:8)—the wind cannot be controlled or fully predicted, but it can be observed. Same with the Spirit—His work of regeneration in the heart cannot be controlled nor predicted, yet its effects can be seen in the lives of those who have been transformed.

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:4-5

Study Questions:

1. What divine attribute do we see Jesus possess in 2:23-25?

2. Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus? (I)

3. From verses 5-8, is being “born again” a work of man or of God? (O) In what ways? (I)

*Key word explanations are from MacArthur or Phillip’s commentaries