

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

The Authority
of Jesus

INTRODUCTION

John 2:13-25

In today's society there is a constant questioning of authority. Recently, we have seen how many people have struggled to trust the authorities in our nation. Different institutions have a hard time finding credible authority, maybe because of so much uncertainty or because leaders have a hard time keeping up with their promises. In this passage from the scriptures, we'll see that there were people hungry for a leader with authority, and they were waiting for their Messiah to deliver them from their oppressors.

John 2:13-14 tells us about a Passover tradition where thousands of Jews would annually go to Jerusalem to celebrate this national holiday. During that time Jesus went to the temple and found a place with lots of economic activity -- cattle, sheep, and doves that were being sold to be later sacrificed according to the teachings of the Law (Leviticus 1, 3). Sadly, it was becoming more of a marketplace that apparently had less of a spiritual atmosphere but felt more of a traditional man-made business.

Back in the day, I remember hearing stories of people in Latin America that would use a whip to make a point when people were doing something wrong or even sleeping during the worship service. One of the Bible verses that they may have used as a justification for this act could have been John 2:15-16, arguing that Jesus used the whip when necessary to bring back respect to the temple. But what they aren't understanding is that the main point here is not the whip, but that we need to realize that Jesus' words are what brings attention to communicate his authority and the representation of the future event that would happen with his own body that we see in verses 18-19:

¹⁸ *The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"*

¹⁹ *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."*

This presents that Jesus is making a clear statement of his authority to present the God of the temple, who he recognizes as his Father.

OPEN IT

1. Describe a time when you had a problem with authority, maybe a teacher or parent who told you something that you didn't expect?

READ IT

John 2:13-25

EXPLORE IT

2. What festival were the Jews about to celebrate?
3. What did Jesus find in the temple?
4. What did Jesus do to the money changers and their animals?
5. What did Jesus say to the people?
6. What did the disciples remember when they heard Jesus say those words?

APPLY IT

7. How do we recognize Jesus' authority over our own lives?

This is exactly what we find in John 14:6, Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

And He found...

John 2:14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.

Phillips explains that the Temple grounds were "divided into four courts. Coming in from the east and moving toward the sanctuary itself, a visitor would successively pass through the court of the gentiles, the court of the women, the court of Israel, and the court of the priests. With their usual contempt for all things gentile, the Jews had designated their court as a suitable place to transact business....The place of prayer for all nations smelled of the barnyard, sounded like a cattle market, was filled with noise and din, was the scene of many a swindle."

MacArthur - What had begun as a service to the worshipers had, under the corrupt rule of the chief priests, degenerated into exploitation and usury. Religion had become external, crass, and materialistic; the temple of God had become a "robbers' den" (Matt. 21:13).¹

- 8. Why did Jesus get so upset when he came to the temple? What does this teach us about what our respect and honor should be for worship?**

Rod Mattoon - With all the racket, commotion, and trading, the Gentile seeking the Lord would be shut out. This was not an atmosphere for praying or worshiping. The priorities of the Jews was out of wack. They missed the purpose of the Temple's existence. Businessmen who attend a church for business contacts make the same mistake. The church is for worship. Animal sacrifices were irrelevant because they were not worshiping with the heart. They were going through the motions and rituals without heart. Sacrifices of animals can't make a man right with God. (See Isa 1:11-17, Jer 7:22-23, Hos 5:6, Hos 8:13, Ps 51:16-17). Do you find yourself making the same mistake of going through the motions of worship without worshiping with your heart? Beloved, God wants our hearts. (Read Mt 15:8, Pr 23:26).²

- 9. In what ways can people go to church for the wrong reasons today? Have you ever found yourself going to church for any of these reasons?**

¹ <https://www.preceptaustin.org/john-2-commentary>

² Ibid.

10. Why should we go to church?

Jesus' passion for right worship

15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"

And He made a scourge of cords - The cords used by Jesus to make the scourge could have been from rope. This is a clear example of righteous anger manifest by the Righteous One (Isa 53:11+) Himself.

Jesus' anger reminds us of Paul's three commands to the Ephesian saints "**BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go** down on your anger." (Eph. 4:26). ³

11. Is it wrong to sell products or do financial business at the church building?

12. What can a church do to ensure that it remains focused on worshiping God, equipping the saints, and making disciples?

³ Ibid

13. With so many demands and busy lives, how can we make it a priority to seek first his face rather than the to-do list?

And remember what he said to the woman at the well in John 4:21–23, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” In other words, authentic worship will not be attached to Jerusalem (or any other place). It will be in spirit and in truth. It is attached to Jesus.

“I am the new temple. When I raise my body from the dead, everywhere in all the world, people may come to God through me.”⁴

14. What is the best possible place for worship?

15. What can we do to keep ourselves from going through the motions with our church service and other church involvement?

⁴ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/destroy-this-temple-and-in-three-days-i-will-raise-it-up>

16. How can we keep ourselves from seeing our church as a place for business rather than a place of worship?

17. How should we respond if we see something happening in the church that is not right?