



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 2:13-22

¹³ Now the Jewish feast of Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He found in the temple courts those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting at tables. ¹⁵ So he made a whip of cords and drove them all out of the temple courts, with the sheep and the oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold the doves he said, 'Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!' ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "*Zeal for your house will devour me.*"

¹⁸ So then the Jewish leaders responded, "What sign can you show us, since you are doing these things?" ¹⁹ Jesus replied, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again." ²⁰ Then the Jewish leaders said to him, "This temple has been under construction for 46 years, and are you going to raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² So after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the saying that Jesus had spoken." (John 2:13-22 NET)

SUMMARY:

John's 'Gospel of Signs' begins with two defining episodes: the Cana wedding signifies blessing and abundance; Jesus is the (secret) hero. In contrast, Jesus' Temple action arouses opposition and hostility. Psalm 69 portends his rejection, shame, and death. The Jewish leaders oppose Jesus; they misunderstand and reject his enigmatic 'sign'— 'Destroy this temple and I'll raise it up in 3 days.' Jesus lost this public honor/shame contest; he's shamed before everyone—going from hero to 'zero.' Will his disciples follow him, sharing both his blessing and his shame? Resurrection vindicates Jesus and enables the disciples' understanding. But, until then, they follow Jesus by faith, lacking full

understanding. Even today we don't have all the answers—why did this happen (or not happen)? One day there'll be answers; until then let's walk by faith in the risen Jesus.

1. Two Episodes—Wedding Wine & Temple Cleansing (2:1-22)

a. Two Episodes presented as a Pair

- “Although the 2 [episodes] occur in 2 different geographical settings, the wine miracle in Galilee & the Temple cleansing in Jerusalem, nevertheless, they seem to be linked literarily...At first glance, the [temple] cleansing...seems wholly unrelated to the [wine] miracle...In actuality there's a close relationship.”—Stephen S. Kim
- “The account of Jesus' actions in the Jerusalem Temple is the *companion piece* to the miracle at Cana.”—Craig Koester
- “Both the Miracle of Cana & the Cleansing of the Temple are signs which signify the same fundamental truth: that *Christ has come to inaugurate a new order.*”—C. H. Dodd
- John “chap 2...describes *two events* [that]...*form a prelude or diptych*, which represents Jesus' ministry symbolically: the miracle of wine is...the ‘first of signs’ & the...temple [cleansing] symbolizes the end—the death & resurrection of Jesus.”— Rudolf Bultmann
- “John...begin[s] his account of Jesus' mission with the...temple [cleansing] episode, because, together with the wedding at Cana, it *fore-shadowed & epitomized the effect of Jesus' mission...on Judaism.*”— James D. G. Dunn
- “*Whoever understands the miracle of the wine & the cleansing of the temple has the key to the ministry, death, & resurrection of Jesus & their outcome.*”—George Beasley-Murray

b. Contrast: Cana Wedding & Temple Cleansing

- John describes “Jesus' chaos-inspiring outburst. Jesus' brashness at the temple contrasts with his rather demure attitude at the wedding in Cana, where he needed to be prodded into action, thereby underscoring not only Jesus' passion but also his origins & unity with the Father.” [Alicia D Myers, *Characterizing Jesus*, 143]
- “Cleansing the temple in Jerusalem...was *Jesus' 1st public presentation to...Israel*. Whereas the *wine miracle in Cana was a ‘semi-private’ demonstration* of Jesus' messianic identity to His disciples, the *cleansing of the Jerusalem temple was a public declaration* to...Israel & its religious leaders...as the Messiah.” [Stephen S Kim, *Miracles of Jesus...[in] John*, p 122]

2. The Historicity of Jesus' Temple Action & Declaration

a. An Historical Event & Authentic Saying

- “In spite of innumerable variations regarding exact reconstructions, *there is far-reaching agreement* in recent scholarship *that Jesus' temple act is historical & his temple saying authentic.*...Most [of these] scholars regard them as coherent with regard to their content or message as intended by Jesus.” [Jostein Adan, “*Jesus & the Temple*,” in Tom Holmén (ed.) *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 2653-4]
- “The material found in Jn. 2:13-22, depicting Jesus' action in the temple & the saying about its being destroyed & rebuilt in three days, is a key point of intersection between...John, the Synoptics, & the Gospel of Thomas...Because of this multiple attestation...*very few scholars...dispute that Jesus engaged in some sort of action in the temple*, however *small & symbolic*, & *that he spoke in some way about the temple being destroyed...*” [James F. McGrath, “*Destroy this Temple*,” in P. N. Anderson (ed.) *John, Jesus, & History*, V. 2: *Historicity*, 35]
- Jesus' “*saying* [2:19] *is given a high degree of authenticity...It must have been a well-known statement of Jesus*; his accusers [Mt. 26:61] did not wring it out of him at the trial, nor did they invent it...in either case it would hardly have been a ready taunt for the crowd [at the cross (Mt. 27:40)]. It was not the basis of his condemnation by the Sanhedrin, yet the Church preserved it, even though it...must have provoked unwelcome controversies...” [Harold W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House*, 112]
- The Synoptics record “Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the [Jerusalem] temple [e.g. Mk. 13:2... The Synoptics'] Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple & expected God to send a new one... This prediction is mainly cast [as his opponents'] accusation that Jesus threatened the [temple's] destruction...(Mk. 14:58; 15:29; Acts 6:14...). In John, in the...‘temple cleansing’ scene (2:13-22), Jesus...attributes the destruction of the temple to the Jews as he says ‘[You] *destroy* (aor. imprv.) *this*

temple, & in 3 days I'll raise it up' (2:19). Then the narrator applies this saying to Jesus' own resurrection: *'He was speaking of the temple of his body'* (2:22)... The '3 days' [2:19] already suggests Jesus' resurrection... In putting this 'prediction' on Jesus' lips, [John] has also placed it in the context of *the temple event*, which—as is now widely agreed—is, & was, *historically, really an assault on the temple signifying its end*. Moreover, it's addressed to 'the Jews,' who... have an important role in condemning Jesus to death. The narrator... makes explicit the interpretation of the temple as Jesus' body. This fits John's Christology, in which *Jesus displaces the temple as the place of God's definitive revelation* (cf. 1:14)... John 'christologizes' the word of Jesus [2:19] & fits it into his... perspective on the relationship of 'the Jews' to Jesus." [D. Moody Smith, "John," in Paul N. Anderson (ed.) *John, Jesus, & History, Vol. 1: Critical Appraisals*, p. 175]

b. Only John's Gospel puts Jesus' action & his saying together

- "Jesus' action in the temple is thought by many scholars to be symbolic of its immanent destruction (e.g. Sanders). It is surely ... significant... that John's placement of the saying confirms a conclusion reached by historians almost entirely on the basis of the Synoptics. That Jesus spoke of the temple's destruction is rarely disputed, & it... seem[s] intrinsically plausible that Jesus' action in the temple is... connected to this emphasis... *John's connection of the action, the question about authority, and the saying about destroying & rebuilding in this context is historically plausible.*" [James F. McGrath, "Destroy this Temple," in Paul N. Anderson (ed.) *John, Jesus, & History, V. 2: Historicity*, p. 39]

c. John makes the Temple Incident programmatic

- "If Jesus began his ministry with a prophetic demonstration in Jerusalem, *a more programmatic concern is suggested*. He came not only to challenge the legal use of Jewish Scripture... [but] also to challenge the cultic role of the Temple by becoming a revelatory bridge between God & humanity—a gift of the Father's love for the world... Further, rather than seeing Jesus as running into trouble with the religious authorities only at the end of his ministry [as the Synoptics suggest] what if he *intentionally challenged institutional authorities from the start* [as in John]?" [P. N. Anderson, *Riddles of... 4th Gospel*, p 210]

3. Wielding the Whip, Flipping Tables—Jesus' Prophetic Temple Action (2:13-17)

- ¹³ Now the Jewish feast of Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He found in the temple courts those who were selling oxen & sheep & doves, & the money changers sitting at tables. ¹⁵ So he made a whip of cords & drove them all out of the temple courts, with the sheep & the oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers & overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold the doves he said, 'Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!' ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "*Zeal for your house will devour me.*" (2:13-17)

a. Placement: John's placement of the Temple Cleansing (vs. the Synoptics)

- John's "placing of... the [temple] cleansing... at the beginning of the ministry, in striking contrast to the Synoptic accounts, is almost certainly... [an editorial decision], through which the particular *significance of the temple event is underscored*. By this conjunction of the sign of Cana & the [temple] cleansing... has created a [two-panel] diptych to form a prelude to... the ministry of Jesus." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, 31]

b. One Temple-cleansing or Two?

- "It is not possible to resolve with certainty whether *one* [temple] *cleansing*... took place, *or two*; but... the most natural reading of the text favors two." [D. A. Carson, *John*,]
- "This is one of the few scenes John shares with the Synoptic Gospels. In interpreting this passage, it's important not to merge the details from the various gospel accounts or to blur the differences..." [George M. Smiga, *John*, p. 99]

c. Jesus' Prophetic Sign—Wielding the Whip, Flipping Tables

- "In a rather violent Johannine twist, [Jesus] uses a whip of cords & overturns tables & coins in the process... Jesus is asked for some sort of *sign to authenticate his prophetic behavior*, [like]... OT prophet[s] such as Jeremiah." [Scott M. Lewis, *John*, p. 18]
- Jesus' "actions were not merely a prophetic denunciation of commercialism... Jesus did not only speak out; *he acted [out] judgment as God himself would act, driving out* the money-changers & those who sold animals & birds for sacrifice. It was an attempt to restore the true function of the temple" [*Concise New International Dictionary of NT Theology &...*, pp 401-2]

- “In this scene Jesus renames Israel’s ‘house of God’ as the ‘*house of my Father*,’ (2:16). The renaming of the temple is the first of a number of changes made across the Joh[n’s] narrative, through which the *meaning of the temple, as the place of God’s dwelling, is transferred to the person of Jesus*...The first movement in this transfer of meaning is in John 2...*Jesus is enacting a prophetic critique of the temple & announcing that Israel’s sacrificial system & cultic way of coming to God is over*...Jn. 2 begins with the physical temple building, but by the end...the temple has been reinterpreted as a person: ‘he spoke of the temple of his body’ (2:21). In Jn. 2 the meaning of ‘my Father’s house’ is transferred from a building (the temple) to a person (Jesus).” [Mary L. Coloës, “*John’s Portrait of Jesus*,” D. Burkett (ed.) *Blackwell Companion to Jesus*, pp. 71-72]

d. **“Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!” (2:16b; Zech. 14:21)**

- 2:16 “*Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!*” “*A marketplace*” or “House of merchants” (an allusion to Zech. 14:21). 14:21, in context, is clearly *a picture of the messianic kingdom*...Read in this light, Zech. 14:21 states that there’ll be no merchant in the [Lord’s] house...in that day (...at the establishment of the messianic kingdom)...What would Jesus’ words (& actions)...suggest...to the observers? *That Jesus was fulfilling messianic expectations* would’ve been obvious—especially to the disciples, who had just seen the miracle at Cana with all its messianic implications.” [NET translation note on 2:16]
- “Jesus complains [that] the sacred site risked being trivialized & given the feel of a bazaar or [shopping] mall instead of a place to concentrate on meeting God...[His] complaint was about more than money & commerce: Jesus was protesting that the temple was being trivialized & exploited in...ways that impacted its sacredness.” [Darrell L Bock, *Who is Jesus?*, p. 134]

4. **Psalm 69:9 as an Interpretive Key—“Zeal for your house will devour me.” (Ps. 69:9; Jn. 2:17)**

a. **Accessing our Scriptural Memory Storage**

- “The NT foregrounds...[a] process of Scriptural clarification...There’s, first of all, a partial comprehension, where the *Scriptures which people have already stocked in their memory* shed light on the words & [actions] of Jesus (2:17). This is followed by fuller comprehension both of the Scriptures & Jesus’ words (2:22). The disciples *already knew...the Scriptures*... [yet something] profound... happened [that] could only be brought to light with the resurrection & the faith to which it gave birth.” [Oliver-Thomas Venard, “*Christology for OT to NT*,” in FA. Murphy (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Christology*, p. 32]

b. **Remembering the Scriptures (2:17, 22)**

- Jesus’ “*disciples remembered* that it is written: ‘*Zeal for your house will consume me.*’ (2:17)
- Jesus’ “*disciples remembered*...he had said this, & they believed the Scripture & the statement Jesus had made.” (2:22)

c. **“Zeal for your house will devour me.” (Ps. 69:9 quoted in Jn. 2:17)**

- “The only clear OT reference in John’s version of the temple cleansing is Ps. 69:9, a...psalm [of complaint]; the Synoptic writers do not mention this [psalm]. John stresses that Jesus’ actions are rooted in his ‘zeal’ (Gk. *zelos*), where...the Synoptic writers [have]...the ‘house of prayer’ angle. Jesus’ righteous indignation accompanied...his forced removal of the moneychangers...Jesus was upset... [his] action is akin to...the prophets of judgment.” [Brian N. Peterson, *John’s Use of Ezekiel*,]
- “A post-resurrection reading of Ps. 69...discloses...*Jesus himself is the speaker of Ps. 69:9*, the praying voice who declares, ‘Zeal for your house will devour me’...That insight...opens...the entire psalm...[pre-figuring]...Jesus...We know...the early church...read Ps. 69...[as] portraying Jesus as the righteous sufferer.” [RB. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, p. 312]

d. **Psalm 69:6-9 ‘disgrace, shame, humiliation, dishonor’**

- “Virtually every line of quotation from the Psalms in John emphasizes the malice of the speaker’s *enemies, who betray, hate, seek to destroy, & falsely accuse Jesus*.”—Marianne M. Thompson
- “The allusions of the Ps.[69] citation in 2:17 are about *suffering, estrangement & death, Jesus’ death*...”—Ruth Sheridan
- ⁶ Let none who rely on you be disgraced [‘shamed’] because of me, O Sovereign Lord of Heaven’s Armies. Let none who seek you be ashamed [‘humiliated, dishonored’] because of me, O God of Israel. ⁷ For I suffer humiliation for your sake & am thoroughly disgraced. [‘Shame (dishonor) has covered my face’] ⁸ My own brothers treat me like a stranger; they act as if I were a foreigner. ⁹

Certainly *zeal for your house consumes* [devours] *me*; I endure the insults of those who insult you.” (Psalm 69:6-9)

- “Psalm 69...(Jn. 2:17) is adopted in the temple-cleansing event recorded in Jn. 2:13-22. These words, applied to Jesus at the temple cleansing event [are] to be seen in the light of the whole of John’s gospel, that *Jesus [temple] action ‘will lead to his future death’* [(‘devour/consume’) Zenger who] argues that the allusion of Ps. 69:10 in John 2:17 requires an understanding of the whole context of Ps. 69...” [Peter C. W. Ho, *Design of the Psalter*,]
- “The quot[e] of Ps. 69:9 in Jn. 2:17...[where] John begins to describe *hostility toward Jesus*, forms an *inclusio* [bookends] with an allusion to the same Psalm in Jn. 19:29, the *climax of hostility* that ended Jesus’ life...John...remembered this episode in Jesus’ life as a major event that led to his death....” [Karen H. Jobes, *John Through OT Eyes*, p. 71]
- The context “of Ps. 69 makes it obvious...when reading the quote...in 2:17, *we should think of Jesus’ death.*”—MJJ. Menken
- “Jesus embodies the zeal of the psalmist in the temple incident & the suffering of the psalmist in his death. It is not that ???????? [‘will devour’] does *not* concern Jesus’ experience during the temple incident. The suffering & rejection that climax in Jesus’ passion appear in seed form in the temple incident...John invites us to read *Jesus’ suffering & death* along the contours of the [psalmist’s] suffering [in Psalm 69]...The specific echoes suggest that Jesus embodies not only the psalmist’s suffering but also God’s judgment...First, [Jesus’] prophetic judgment (Jn. 2:13–16) enacts the judgment of the psalm (Ps. 68:23, 25). The psalmist asks YHWH to *turn the enemies’ table* into a trap, & *Jesus flips the tables* in the temple. Likewise, the psalmist asks YHWH to *pour out his wrath*, & *Jesus pours out* the money-changers’ coins. Second, Jesus’ resurrection (Jn. 2:18–22) enacts the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the psalm (Ps. 68:36–37).” [Matthew J. Klein, “*Flipping Tables & Building Temples...Jn. 2:17*,” *Horizons of Biblical Theology*, 16 April, 2021]
- “The Hebrew word lying behind ‘consume/devour’ commonly means ‘to eat,’ but it can be used for the fire that consumes the sacrifice offered to God. Given that *katstho* [‘to eat up, to consume’] is used to describe Jesus’ death...it’s possible... there’s *an allusion* [here] *to Jesus’ death* being a sacrifice...‘The zeal of Jesus must be *consummated in his own death*’ (Hoskyns)...‘zeal for the house of God ‘will cost him his life’ (Schnackenburg).” [Alan Kerr, *Temple of Jesus’ Body*, p. 85]
- “By the end of [John’s Gospel]...*the zeal* shown here by Jesus *has consumed him*, and this Passover [2:13] has led to another one in which Jesus...has been killed...But after [this came] his resurrection...” [David F. Ford, *John*, 71]

5. Showdown in the Temple—Jesus Vs the Jews (2:18-20)

a. Claim, Challenge, Response...

- “Jesus’ actions in 2:14-16 constitute a ‘*claim*,’ implying that he has a role & status authorizing him to deal with the temple as he does. A *challenge* immediately follows from [‘the Jews’] who stand to lose prestige & wealth as a result of Jesus’ action: ‘what sign will you show us...?’ (2:18). Jesus *responds* to their challenge & gives them a sign (2:19)...” [Johnson Thomaskutty, *Dialogue in the Book of Signs*, p. 99]

b. Jesus’ First Confrontation, with Jewish Leadership

- “The temple incident (2:13–22)...is the 1st of several confrontations with the [Jewish] authorities during a feast (chs. 5, 7– 10), which culminate in [Jesus’] death (chs. 18–19).” —Matthew J. Klein

a. Jewish Leaders demand an authenticating Sign (2:18)

- ‘The Jews’ “first encounter with Jesus...takes shape as a *tense confrontation*. [They] demand a ‘sign’ from Jesus that will authenticate his dramatic actions.” [Ruth Sheridan, *Retelling Scripture: ‘The Jews’...in John*, 122]
- In the Synoptics’ (later) Temple-cleansing Jesus counters the Jewish leaders’ demand for an authenticating sign (Mk. 11:29)

b. Jesus Responds with an enigmatic ‘sign’—“*Destroy this temple & in 3 days I’ll raise it up again*” (2:19)

- “In the [‘temple cleansing’] the word for ‘temple’...is *hieron* (2:14). The term *naos* [‘temple’ in 2:19] is a...riddle, and its ambiguity is...reinforced [by]...the verb *egeiro* [‘raise up’]...The Christian reader will associate this term with resurrection, but it’s...[an] *ordinary word*...[for] *the erection of a building*.” [John Ashton, *Understanding the 4th Gospel*, p. 339]
- “The Jews respond to Jesus’ Temple cleansing with a request for a sign (2:18). *Jesus’ response is enigmatic... so enigmatic that the Jews and even his own disciples do not grasp the significance at the time.*” The Jews

think Jesus is referring to the Jerusalem Temple, which leads them to *dismiss his proposed sign as absurd* (2:20). After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples remember Jesus' saying (2:19), understand it correctly, & accept it as true (2:22). Thus, they understand that when Jesus says, 'Destroy this temple, & I'll raise it up in 3 days' (2:19), *he is actually referring to his body as the Temple & not to the Jerusalem Temple at all* (2:21)." [Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in...John*, pp. 111-2]

c. Ambiguity—common in John

- "The first *occurrence of ambiguity* [in John] *turns on the meaning of 'temple'* in 2:19-21. After Jesus' [temple action]...the Jewish authorities ask for a sign. Jesus responds: 'Destroy this temple & in 3 days I'll raise it up' (2:19)...The listeners are perplexed...the temple has taken more than 46 years to complete, & so the narrator explains 'He was speaking of the temple of his body' (2:21)...The *hearers think in terms of the concrete* ('a sign') & *the material* (literal 'temple'), thus *missing the true sign, which is Jesus' resurrection* (2:22). Yet *not even the disciples could grasp the deeper significance of Jesus' words until after the resurrection.*" [James L. Resseguie, *Strange Gospel of John*, pp. 45-6]

d. The Jews Reject, Rebuff, & Ridicule Jesus proposed sign (2:20)

- "The reaction of 'the Jews'...is *more than ridicule*...Jesus has replied to them *in direct speech*...the reported words of Jesus [2:19]. Their reaction is a *rejection of these words*. They throw his 'words' back at him, refusing to leap outside their own categories of the stone of their Temple building. Not only do they misunderstand Jesus...they [also] *reject the words he offers as his authority.*" [Francis J. Moloney, *Johannine Studies*, p. 369]

c. Jesus Vs 'the Jews'—An Honor/Shame Contest (2:18-20)

- The Jewish authorities "engag[e] in a public [honor-shame] contest. They enter the challenge-riposte [response] with the presumption of honor on their side; they are heavy favorites to prevail against [Jesus] a rural rabbi from Galilee. The opening questions set the tone of the debate: 'By what authority...?'" [William R. Herzog, *Jesus, Justice, & the Reign of God*, 235]
- Issues of honor & shame were "likely at play in Jesus' [Temple] cleansing...Jesus claimed honor by his [Temple] actions... ['My Father's house' (2:16)]. It was a claim to a very high honor (...prophetic honor, if not divine honor)...The Jews responded to [Jesus'] challenge by asking for a sign (2:18). What happens next is significant: Jesus' statement ['Destroy this temple...in 3 days I'll raise it up' (2:19)] is deemed unsatisfactory and *the challenge by the Jews is deemed to have been victorious*. The leaders treat Jesus' answer with disdain & contempt—['this temple's...construction took 46 years...you'll raise it up in 3 days! (2:20)]. *They shame [Jesus]*, so much so, that the Gospel does not even deem it necessary to echo the sentiment from the... crowd. Even the [narrator's] comment...[is] evidence that *Jesus' challenge [to the leadership] was deemed a failure*. [Jesus'] sign was deemed inadequate by the Jews— & even by the disciples *until after resurrection*...In every other...challenge in John, the [crowd's] response...is provided by the narrator (...always in Jesus' favor). In this scene, the crowd does not [respond] because there's no need...[It's] *evident to everyone; Jesus lost! He received public shame inflicted as a result of the templecleansing challenge.*" [Edward W. Klink, *John*, pp. 177-8]

d. The Jewish Leaders have the 'last word'; they're victorious (cf. Mt. 21:14-17)

- "The...dialogue between Jesus & the Jews ends with an official counter-response to Jesus'...sign [2:20]. The statement by the Jews & the *absence of a response by Jesus* are fully intended to signify that *Jesus lost the challenge*. In a culture [of]...honor & shame, *Jesus was shamed*. Jesus didn't respond because no response was warranted; *in the eyes of the temple authorities, in the eyes of any bystanders, & even in the eyes of the disciples...Jesus was shamed*. [It's] the only honor contest...in the Gospels, where the verdict is not declared...where *Jesus was not (publicly) victorious.*" [Edward W. Klink, *John*, pp. 182-3]
- The Jews' "dismissive comment [2:20] *ends the battle of words*..."—Jo-Ann Brant, *John*, 73]
- In the Synoptics' (later) Temple-cleansing [1.] Jesus has the 'last word' (Mt. 21:16) & [2.] the crowd's support (Mk. 11:18)

e. Jesus lost this public Honor/Shame Contest—Jesus is shamed

- "*Jesus was publicly shamed* by his failure to defend [to Jewish leaders] why he had the authority to 'judge' the temple." [E. Randolph Richards, "Shaming of Jesus in John," in C. Flanders (ed.) *Honor, Shame, & the Gospel*, p.]
- "In the honor/shame conflict between the Jews & Jesus the narrator does not want us to miss that *Jesus actually lost the conflict with the Jews. Everyone knew it*: the Jews, the crowd, even the disciples. *Jesus lost!*... "Jesus lost" is the story of the gospel—"Jesus lost" is the good news... "Jesus lost"; it could be no other way. Jesus was shamed. In his temple, at his Passover, in his city, by Jewish leaders [of his people]...*Jesus received shame*. But this is the good news. *This is God in the person of Jesus declaring through Psalm 69* that 'shame covers my face' (69:7) & the insults of the people have fallen on him (69:9b) [& his 'zeal for God's house will devour/consume him' (69:9a; Jn. 2:17)]." [Edward W. Klink, *John*, pp. 186-7]

f. **“The Celebration of Shame: From Wine to Whip” (Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 4:14)**

- “The contrast between the 2 [episodes] in John 2...is stark. *Jesus has gone from the ‘master of the celebratory [wedding] banquet’ to the ‘shameful [‘fraud’]*. The scene...moved from the ‘Lord of the wine’ to the ‘servant of the whip’...This is the gospel: ‘*For the joy set out for him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame*’ (Heb. 12:2)...To live this gospel is to celebrate shame, to hold fast to what he lost, which is our gain. We too now understand; ‘*If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed*,’ for like Jesus in the Temple, ‘*the Spirit of glory & of God rests on us.*’ (1 Pet. 4:14).”—Edward Klink

6. **Jesus Enigmatic Sign—“Destroy this temple & in 3 days I’ll raise it up again” (2:19)**

- “...The Jewish leaders responded, “What sign can you show us, since you are doing these things?” ¹⁹ Jesus replied, “*Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again...*” ²¹ But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² So after he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered,,& they believed the scripture & [what Jesus’]had spoken.” (Jn. 2:13-22)
- “A good case can be made for *an authentic saying of Jesus that was purposely ambiguous, sufficiently cryptic to be used against him at his trial* ([by false-] witnesses, Mk. 14:59) & *to be understood by his disciples’ after his resurrection, as a reference to his own body & the atoning death he would suffer, fulfilling by this means the deepest purposes of the temple, & thus replacing it.*” [DA. Carson, “*Understanding Misunderstandings in the 4th Gospel,*” Tyndale Bulletin, V. 33 (1982) p. 80]

a. **Two Temples—Jerusalem’s Temple (2:14-15) & Jesus’ own Body (2:19, 21)**

- “John is the *only canonical Gospel to identify Jesus explicitly as a temple*. This identification occurs in Jn. 2:13-22...John is also the *only Gospel to juxtapose the cleansing of the temple with a word about destruction*. However...it’s important to note that *Jesus’ action in the temple & the word about its destruction refer to two different temples*. Jesus’ [temple] action...has as its goal the purification of *his Father’s house*, but the saying about the destruction of the temple applies to *Jesus himself*. That is to say, *there’s one temple that must be purged* from the trappings of buying & selling so that it can indeed be the temple, the house of God; *there’s another temple that’ll be destroyed & raised up again*. This other temple is Jesus himself.” [Marianne M Thompson, “*Jesus & Victory of God Meets...John,*” N. Perrin (ed.) *Jesus, Paul & People of God*, p. 33]
- “In...John, Jesus is standing in the courts of the Jerusalem temple, & the natural way to take his words is to assume he means, ‘If you destroy this building, I’ll raise it up in 3 days.’ *It is precisely this understanding that the editorial comment corrects: Jesus is not speaking of a miraculous act he’ll perform if the Jerusalem temple is leveled*, but of what he would do in the event of his own death...In John, *the entire saying about destruction has to do with Jesus’ crucifixion & resurrection...* Jesus is not understood to say, ‘If the Jerusalem temple is destroyed, I’ll replace it.’ Rather the narrator informs us that Jesus was speaking about another temple altogether, namely one that was destroyed in about the year 30, not the year 70.” [Marianne Thompson, “*Jesus & Victory of God Meets...John,*” N. Perrin (ed.) *Jesus, Paul & People of God*, pp. 33-4]
- 2:19 is “a clarification of...[this] sign & a pointer to its mode of fulfillment: the ‘*destruction*’ of the temple is...*the destruction of the [physical] body of Jesus*, & the building of the new temple takes place through the resurrection of Jesus. The Jews will accomplish the former [the ‘destruction’ of Jesus’ body]; Jesus will accomplish the latter [‘raise (his body) up in 3 days’]. This is the interpretation...in the light of Easter. The risen Lord is the ‘place’...[God’s] glory...is revealed, where his forgiveness & renewal are experienced, & where fellowship with God is...forever maintained. Note that *the temple of the new age is Christ, not the Church* (...‘*It is not possible that soma [‘body’] should refer to the community in [Paul’s] sense* [the ‘Body of Christ’ (1 Cor. 12:12, etc.)], since the object of ‘destroy’ & ‘raise up’ must be one & the same’).” [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 41]
- “The verses 2:21-22 point back to the prophecy of 2:19 [‘destroy this temple...’] in a formal manner... [‘Destroy’] & [‘raise up’] in each passage...refer to the same object & the expression [‘*this temple..it*’] in 2:19 are now seen as *a reference to the ‘body- temple’ & not primarily to the geographical temple...* It is certainly the ‘body temple’ that...has become the object of the saying in 2:19.” [Kåre Sigvald Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective*, p. 162] **Note:** Jesus’ challenge/prophecy ‘Destroy this temple & I’ll raise it up’ (2:19) refers to the ‘temple’ of his physical body, *not* the Temple building in Jerusalem.

b. **Is there a Double-Meaning in 2:19? NO**

- Some scholars suggest: “There might...be a double entendre in 2:19, saying that ‘*If you tear down this geographical [physical] temple, I’ll raise up a new one, that’s a body temple [Jesus’ resurrected body] & this temple takes the place of the former.*’ [Interpretive paraphrase of 2:19]. This suggestion faces 3 difficulties:
 - a. It is partly based upon...Mk. 14:58 about ‘the temple not made by hands’, an idea not found in John...The idea of a nonphysical temple & worship is wanting [here] & the resurrected body of Jesus is clearly presented as physical [in] 20:27.
 - b. The objects of the 2 sentences [‘destroy this temple’ & ‘raise it up’] have one & the same reference—the geographical temple or later interpreted to be the body of Jesus, & 2:21 does not say that Jesus was referring to both temples at the same time. As in all other passages containing misunderstandings in...John, the misunderstanding [here] is...corrected by the author.
 - c. The ‘Jews’ are described as misunderstanding when they take Jesus to refer to the geographical temple...[Jesus’ response to] the sign the ‘Jews’ demand is nothing but the resurrection as seen [by] the final author [John].” [Kåre Sigvald Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective*, pp. 164-5]
 - “From the viewpoint of the author...there are evidently only two temple references in the passage, *the geographical temple, & the ‘body temple’ of Jesus*. 2:14-17 presents the geographical temple & the relationship of Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. 2:22 demonstrates that the temple Jesus was to rebuild was his *soma* [Gk. ‘body’]...The resurrection has brought new... insights, the body of Jesus is not only identified as a temple, but *Jesus was in fact alluding to his death & resurrection in 2:19*...Nowhere else is Jesus’ body described as a temple.” [K. S. Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective*, pp. 167-8]
 - “Schmackenburg is right in *rejecting*...Paul[’s] thought (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12, [etc.]) of the church members as the body of Christ [here], since this image of *the [corporate] body of Christ cannot be read conclusively from the Gospel of John*...It cannot be read out of the Gospel of John.” [Kåre Sigvald Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective*, p. 170]
- c. **Jesus answered, ‘Destroy this temple, & I’ll raise it up in 3 days.’ (2:19)**
- “All through this exchange...the Jews...& Jesus have been talking past each other...Now in 2:21 the narrator brings it out into the open: ‘But he (Jesus) was speaking of the Temple of his body.’ The Jews think [Jesus] has been speaking of the Temple made of stone, but, in fact, he’s been speaking about another Temple—his own body...*It is the resurrection body [of Jesus] that is the new Temple.*” [Alan Kerr, *Temple of Jesus’ Body*, 93]
 - “2:19 pointed away from the Jerusalem temple to the temple of His [Jesus’] body (2:21). 2:19-21 ‘suggests that *Jesus’ body is the replacement for the Jerusalem temple*, whose days are numbered as the special locus for the presence of God.’ In addition 1:14 points to Christ as the new dwelling place of God. In the Incarnation, ‘the concepts of temple & [Christ’s] body are united...The NT draws a close parallel between Jesus & the tabernacle/temple.’ [MA. Erickson, *Freely Gathered Communities*, p.]
- d. **Destruction of Jerusalem’s Temple is not in view in John’s Gospel**
- “While *the material sanctuary [temple]* stands quietly in the background of large portions of [his] narrative, it is *not John’s main focus*. The temple in John is primarily a re-envisioned temple...[It’s] Jesus’ body as sanctuary space. While 1:14...might play a part...the most important text is 2:21. This... is the narrator’s explanation of [Jesus’] enigmatic statement in 2:19, ... ‘*Destroy this temple & in 3 days I’ll raise it up.*’...The narrator clarifies for the reader...what precisely Jesus was referring to: ‘*But he was speaking about the temple (naos) of his body*’ [2:21]...There’s no doubt that John intends to link Jesus’ human body to sanctuary space [i.e., ‘temple’].” [W. V. Cirafesi, *John within Judaism*, 248]
 - “Whatever the saying’s value as...historical tradition, [in...John’s narrative presentation, Jesus’ words on 2:19 are clearly not meant as judgment on the Jerusalem temple; John actually goes out of his way in 2:21-22 to ensure...the reader understands this. *Jesus’...opponents have misunderstood* the saying...which was, in fact, meant as a metaphorical fore-shadowing of Jesus’ bodily death & resurrection, *not the temple’s destruction*. Similar to Matthew & Mark, which depict false witnesses stating that Jesus had spoken against the temple (Mt. 26:61; Mk. 14:58), *John is...defending Jesus from such an accusation*. What’s more, unlike the Synoptics, *in John there’s no statement of the temple’s future cataclysmic doom...The destruction of the material temple is...not in view in 2:18-22; rather, it is the fate of Jesus’ body.*” [W. V. Cirafesi, *John within Judaism*, 248-9]
- e. **“...in 3 days I’ll raise it up...He was speaking about the temple of his body.” (2:19, 21)**
- a. Jesus’ body is the temple (2:21)
 - a. “*The new temple is...the crucified & risen Son of God*...Paul[’s]...images of the Church as temple...& the Body of Christ is assumed by [John]...but he refrains from the use of such expressions...*The ultimate significance of the temple cleansing is therefore Christological, not ecclesiological*. [It’s about Christ, not the Church!]” [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 42]

b. “John...instructs his readers... *The link between the temple & Jesus’ body is made explicit* [2:21], providing an [interpretive] key for John’s symbolism throughout the narrative. *Jesus now takes over the temple’s function as a place of mediation between God & human beings...* (Jn. 1:51) *Jesus has become the nexus between heaven & earth*—the role previously ascribed to the temple as the site of God’s presence...That is also why Jesus can later tell the Samaritan woman ...[that] *True worship is focused not on any geographical location or cultic site; rather it is focused on the person of Jesus himself...who is the place where God’s presence dwells.*” [Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, pp. 312-3]

b. Not the Church as the corporate ‘Temple’ or ‘Body of Christ’

- Contrary View—Witness Lee: The New Temple [Jn. 2:17, 19] is the corporate Body of Christ
- “Paul tells us in Eph. 2:6 that...we were resurrected together with Him. Peter further says that through... resurrection we’ve all been regenerated (1 Pet. 1:3)...This implies that *the temple the Lord Jesus built up in 3 days* [Jn. 2:19]...*in His resurrection, is not a single person but a corporate entity.* In the Epistles we’re told that *the church as the Body of Christ is God’s temple.*” [W. Lee, *Conclusion of the NT (8): Experiencing...*, p.] Note: This is based on Paul & Peter, not on John!
- “The fact that temple and body are both NT metaphors for the church has led some commentators to find corporate implications here: The body-temple that Jesus will raise up is the Christian church (cf. Mt. 16:18). But though it is true that the church is built on Jesus’ resurrection (cf. Eph. 1:20-23), *there’s no evidence that the Gospel writer [John] has more in mind here than the raising of one man from the dead in 3 days. It is the resurrection of Jesus, & of him alone*, that gives him authority over the temple & his disciples a sure foundation for their faith.” [J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, p.]

7. Misunderstanding & Not Understanding Jesus’ Temple Saying (2:19)

- “*After [Jesus] was raised from the dead*, his disciples *remembered* that he had said this, & they *believed* the Scripture & the saying that Jesus had spoken.” (John 2:22)
- “Understanding, misunderstanding & not understanding are important themes in the Fourth Gospel.” –D. A. Carson
- “*‘Misunderstanding’ is a major motif in the Gospel of John...*The words of...Jesus generate confusion on the part of friends, enemies & casual onlookers, especially...about his identity & mission...[Herbert] Leroy identified *eleven pure instances of misunderstanding in the Gospel of John*: [1.] 2:19-22 (the Jews misunderstand Jesus’ comment about the destruction of the temple)...” [Tom Thatcher, *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism*, p. 9 #10]
- “We find in 2:19-22 the first appearance of a [literary] technique [where] the author...[uses] a progression from ambiguity to misunderstanding to comprehension. The ambiguity of 2:19 leads to the misunderstanding of 2:20 & to the final clarification of 2:21. This technique...occur[s] frequently in the Gospel.” [D. Bergant (ed.) *Collegetown Bible Commentary* 985]

a. ‘The Jews’ misunderstand; the Disciples fail to Understand

- In John “2:19-22...concerning Jesus’ body as the temple, there are 2 separate groups who fail to understand—[1.] the Jews misunderstand &...[2.] the disciples fail to understand until after the resurrection. Thus, of these two groups which fail to grasp the significance of Jesus’ temple saying, one [group, ‘the Jews’] explicitly misunderstands, & the other [group, the disciples] *implicitly fails to understand until a specified time* [when Jesus’ resurrected].” [DA. Carson, “*Understanding Misunderstandings in the 4th Gospel*,” Tyndale Bulletin, vol. 33 (1982) p. 68]

b. Jesus’ Resurrection—the Key to New Understanding

- “In John 2:13-22...*Jesus’ death & resurrection is posited as the key that unlocks the interpretation of Scripture.* Retrospective reading of the OT after the resurrection *enables Jesus’ disciples to ‘believe’ in a new way* both Scripture & Jesus’ teaching & to see how each illuminates the other.” [Richard B. Hays, *Reading with the Grain of Scripture*, p.]
- **Our Privileged Position:** “In...John’s Gospel, the reader is invited to reflect on their privileged position living *after* the crucifixion & the giving of the Spirit, which allows them to know & understand so much more than Jesus’ disciples did during the time they walked with Jesus. In fact, much of what Jesus says in John’s Gospel *could not be understood* until after his departure & the coming of the Spirit (2:22; 13:7; 14:26b).” [Karen H. Jobes, *John Through OT Eyes*, 23]
- “The [interpretive] key...is given explicitly in an authorial voice-over directed to the reader in John 2:21-22: *‘But he was speaking of the temple of his body. When, therefore, he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; & they believed the Scripture & the word that Jesus had spoken’*...It means something like: *‘Jesus spoke figuratively about the resurrection of his own body; therefore the meaning of his prophecy could be understood only after the resurrection, only after he had embodied [fulfilled] its figural sense.’*...John is teaching his readers...Look beyond the literal sense, he

whispers, & read for figuration. Read Scripture retrospectively, in the light of the resurrection. If you do, you'll see the temple as *prefiguring* the truth definitively embodied in Jesus." [Richard B. Hays, *Art of Reading Scripture*, p. 221]

c. Between the Temple Event & Jesus' Resurrection the Disciples did *Not* Understand (2:22)

a. The Disciples Lacked Understanding

- "According to 2:22, *the disciples did not, at the time of the event, understand* the meaning of Jesus' action in the temple. After the resurrection, they remembered these events, interpreted them appropriately." [N. Farely, *Disciples...4th Gospel*, 37]
- "The perplexity plaguing [Jesus'] followers...come[s] to a decisive end after his death & resurrection, but *until then*, the Spiritless disciples will continue to struggle to comprehend the full implications of their master's words." [J. David Woodington, *Dubious Disciples*, p. 139]
- "The important [point]...is that the evangelist insists it was *only after Jesus was raised from the dead* that the disciples remembered the saying & 'believed the Scripture & the words Jesus had spoken' [2:22]. The unavoidable conclusion is that *the disciples*, whatever they thought of the saying before the resurrection, *did not understand it before the resurrection* as they, understood it after the resurrection. Before that event, they, like the Jews, may have misunderstood; or they may have left the saying out of their integrated thoughts, [as] merely not understood. Either way, *the disciples did not understand until after the resurrection*...The point is that...the understanding of the disciples is unmistakably linked to developments in salvation history. This is a fine instance, *not of ['prediction after the event'], but of ['interpretation after the event']*." [D. A. Carson, "Understanding Misunderstandings in the 4th Gospel," Tyndale Bulletin, vol. 33 (1982) pp. 80-81]

b. Developing Faith:

- "In 2:22 [*'after he was raised from the dead...his disciples...believed'*], the reference to the disciples' faith becomes a sequel to 2:11: *'they believed in him'* at Cana, but *they believed & understood more deeply* 'after he was raised from the dead.' The faith of 2:11 is preparatory to the post-resurrection faith of 2:22, the faith of the Gospel-writer and his readers. Christian belief is incomplete until it fixes itself on the death & resurrection of Jesus." [J. Ramsey Michaels, *John*, pp.]

c. Proper Post-Resurrection Perspective—"But he was speaking of the temple of his body" (2:21)

- Lit. "But *that (one)* was speaking about the Temple of his body" (2:21 Gk. Interlinear)
- "The genitive 'of his body' is a genitive of apposition clarifying which temple Jesus was referring to...Jesus was speaking about the temple *of his body*. For the author, *the temple is...Jesus' resurrected body*." [NET translation note on Jn. 2:21]
- "The reader is expected to understand 2:21 as the correct interpretation of Jesus' saying [2:19], & *not as an additional, deeper meaning that John later discovered* in it." [Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in...John*, 113 #26]

d. Proper Perspective due to Two Factors

- "According to [2:22] the disciples 'remember' Jesus' saying at the temple & believe the 'Scripture' & his words upon his resurrection...['Remember'] does not simply mean to recollect an event, but an attaining of a deeper level of insight into the event's significance & especially its spiritual [relevance]...[This development] hinged upon:
- [1.] a 'temporal factor,' [an event] namely...it only came about after Jesus' death & resurrection [2:22a]...[Plus]
- [2.] The disciples' pre-Easter incapacity of discerning...certain events in Jesus' life...is partly due to the fact that the Spirit had not been bestowed upon them. In [John] the Spirit of truth (14:17, [etc.])—the *Paraclete*—will not come to the disciples to enlighten their knowledge of the truth until Jesus 'is glorified' [resurrected] (7:39)...When the Spirit-*Paraclete* comes, he will 'teach'...& 'remind' [the disciples]." [Mavis M. Leung, *Kingship-Cross Interplay in... John*,]
- "Precisely because of this teaching & reminding activity of the Spirit-*Paraclete*, the disciples *remembered* Jesus' action in the temple & all his words; & they *believed* the Scripture & what Jesus had said...They recognize...the fulfillment of that sign demanded earlier by the Jews (2:18) & given by Jesus in response to them (2:19). It is the Spirit...in his teaching-reminding activity, [who] instructs them that all is now fulfilled in Jesus' death & resurrection; so they 'believed the Scripture & the word which Jesus had spoken' (2:22b)." [Jojko Bernadeta, *Worshipping the Father in Spirit & Truth*, 203]

d. Examples of Misunderstanding in John

- 3:3-4 "Born again" Nicodemus thinks Jesus is talking about a literal 2nd birth, but he's talking about being 'born from above'
- 4:10-15 'Living water' Samaritan woman asks for literal 'running water;' Jesus talks about water that imparts life

- 4:31-38 Jesus “I have food you don’t know about” –doing the Father’s will; disciples think of physical food. [Christopher W. Skinner, “*Characterization*,” in D. Estes (ed.) *How John Works*, 129-30]
- “There are not fewer than **16** episodes in *John* where the *misunderstanding* displayed by this party or that *would only be removed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*.” [DA. Carson, “*Faith in Christ*,” I. H. Marshal (ed.) *Spirit & Christ in NT*, p. 113]