

#1764  
Cf. #323 #478

John 2:13-22<sup>1</sup>  
At one of the Passovers Jesus attended,  
he drove out the businesses that had  
encroached on the Temple area  
& proclaimed he would raise  
the Temple of his body in three days.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent

*Oculi*<sup>2</sup>  
Supplementary Lectionary Series "B,"  
Gospels

Pastor A. J. Kunde  
Grace WELS Durand MI  
March 3, 2013  
Open Forum  
Potluck  
Elders' Meeting

<sup>13</sup> When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the Temple Courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. <sup>15</sup> So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the Temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup> To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's House into a market!" (cf. Isaiah 56:7b; Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

<sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your House will consume me!" (cf. Psalm 69:9).

<sup>18</sup> Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

<sup>20</sup> The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But the Temple about which he had spoken was his body. <sup>22</sup> After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said, and they believed the Scripture and the Words that Jesus had spoken.

JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS AUTHORITY  
I. BY CLEANSING GOD'S HOUSE  
II. BY RISING FROM THE DEAD  
III. BY THE PASSOVER

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> This Third Sunday in Lent is known as *Oculi*, Latin for "my eyes." Confidently, we pray with King David, "My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare." (Psalm 25:15.) Our LORD Jesus released us and freed us from our bondage to sin and death, and has given us eternal life.

In the Name of Jesus, who raised up the Temple of his Body after three days in the grave, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

Jewish adult males were expected to appear for worship in Jerusalem for three festivals: The Passover, which was accompanied by the Feast of Unleavened Bread; Pentecost, the Spring harvest including the bringing of the Firstfruits; and, Tabernacles, which included the Day of Atonement, the blowing of trumpets and the Fall harvest. We are not told which of these festivals Jesus attended – all of them or some of them. Jesus' appearances at three Passover celebrations, however, are recorded for us in the Scriptures. Our text deals with the second of these appearances.

On the last two occasions of Jesus' appearances at the Passover celebration, Jesus cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem by driving out the sellers of livestock and moneychangers (our text, John 2:13-22; cf. Matthew 21:12,13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45,46; 20:1,2). On these occasions, Jesus was challenged as to what authority he had to do this. Our text tells us how Jesus demonstrated his authority. JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS AUTHORITY ... I. BY CLEANSING GOD'S HOUSE; II. BY RISING FROM THE DEAD; and, III. BY THE PASSOVER.

## JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS AUTHORITY I. BY CLEANSING GOD'S HOUSE

“When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the Temple Courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money” (2:13&14). Part of the celebration of the Passover included the bringing and offering of sacrifices. Those coming from long distances – from foreign countries – could not very easily bring bulls, heifers, sheep, goats and doves with them. So this service was provided by the people who lived around Jerusalem. Cattle, sheep and doves were for sale to those who came from long distances. In addition, the Temple administration would only accept approved money. Moneychangers were therefore available to convert foreign money to the currency accepted in the Temple. Three problems arose with these practices.

The first problem was that the cattle, sheep and dove sellers charged exorbitant prices. It was a lucrative business. The second problem was that the moneychangers charged outlandish fees for converting foreign currency to the currency accepted in the Temple. The third problem was that these sellers and moneychangers had brought their businesses into the Court of the Gentiles, which was reserved for Gentiles to worship, praise the LORD, and pray. No doubt, there were devout Jews who were offended by these encroachments but could do nothing about them. Jesus could and did.

**<sup>15</sup> ... [Jesus] made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the Temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup> To those who sold**

**doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s House into a market!”** (2:15,16; cf. Isaiah 56:7b; Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

Jesus took action regarding these encroachments into his Father’s House. Jesus’ action was a stern proclamation of the Law. Jesus’ action called for repentance. But there was no repentance on the part of the Jews, only confrontation.

“The Jews demanded of [Jesus], ‘What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?’” (2:18). The fact of what Jesus told them when he drove out these marketeers was not enough: “How dare you turn my Father’s House into a market!” (2:16b). They wanted some miraculous, stupendous, stunning, sudden, thunderous sign from heaven that indicated that Jesus had a right to drive out these businesses from the Temple. Jesus stated the sign he would give them.

**<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”**

**<sup>20</sup> The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” <sup>21</sup> But the Temple about which he had spoken was his body** (2:19-21).

Jesus’ answer to the Jews is a veiled answer. It was the kind of answer that was a riddle. Yet Jesus’ disciples came to understand the answer, for “after [Jesus] was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said, and they believed the Scripture and the Words that Jesus had spoken” (2:22).

Jesus cleansed God’s House in Jerusalem; Jesus cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem by removing those who had invaded a worship area. But the Temple of Jesus’ Body was already clean, for Jesus “committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:14; cf. Isaiah 53:9); and, although Jesus was “tempted in every way, just as we are—yet [Jesus] was without sin” (cf. Hebrews 4:15b). Jesus is the perfect, holy, righteous and sinless God-man.

#### APPLICATION

The Temple of Jesus’ Body was holy, righteous and sinless. What about your body? And, yours? And, yours? And, mine?

St. Paul writes to the Corinthians Christians and to us:

**<sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;**  
**<sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body** (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

The price at which you and I were bought, Peter describes in his First Epistle, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed

... but with the precious blood of Christ, a Lamb without blemish or defect (cf. 1 Peter 1:18,19).

Believers in Jesus are believers because the Holy Spirit dwells in them. Through the Gospel or Good News of Jesus, the Holy Spirit creates faith in a person and dwells in that person – in that believer. St. Paul again speaks to the Corinthians, “Do you not know that you yourselves are God’s Temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). So, fellow-Christians, our bodies are God’s Temples. Do our bodies need cleansing?

Do the Temples of our bodies need cleansing? Again speaking to the Corinthians, St. Paul says, “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18). St. Paul similarly writes to the Ephesians,

***<sup>3</sup> But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be partners with them*** (Ephesians 5:3-7).

Again, St. Paul writes to the Galatians,

***<sup>19</sup> The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God*** (Galatians 5:19-21).

So what about it, dear friends? Do our bodies, which by faith in Jesus are Temples of the Holy Spirit – do our bodies need cleansing? Do any of these sins about which St. Paul spoke to the Corinthians, to the Ephesians and to the Galatians – do any of these sins apply to you and me? Yes! They do! How then can we be cleansed?

Jesus drove out with a whip those who had occupied the worship area of the Temple in Jerusalem. It is through God’s Word that brings repentance that sin is driven out of the Temples of our bodies. It is through the Gospel of Jesus that the Holy Spirit dwells in our bodies through the forgiveness of sins. John writes in his first Epistle, “the blood of Jesus, [God’s] Son, purifies [or cleanses] us from all sin (1 John 1:7b).

But how do we know that this is true? How do we know that, through Jesus, we have been cleansed of sin and that our bodies are Temples of the Living God? Once again, Jesus demonstrates this for us.

## JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS AUTHORITY II. BY RISING FROM THE DEAD

**<sup>18</sup> ... the Jews demanded of [Jesus], “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”**

**<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this Temple, and I will raise it again in three days” (2:18,19).**

The Jews do not understand what Jesus said. “The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the Temple about which he had spoken was his body” (2:20:21). Jesus’ statement to the Jews was intentionally veiled, hidden and mysterious. This was in line with the Parables Jesus taught.

Regarding his parables, Jesus said, “I speak in parables, so that, ‘though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand’” (Luke 8:10b; cf. Isaiah 6:9). The meaning was clear enough to believers in Jesus, but the Gospel “is veiled to those who are perishing [to unbelievers]. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, who is the Image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:3b,4). By saying that he would raise his Temple in three days, Jesus was referring to his resurrection from the dead.

By his resurrection from the dead, Jesus would demonstrate that he himself was God’s Temple and that, in Jesus, “all the fullness of the Deity [or, Godhead] lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9b). Christ Jesus is One with the Father and the Holy Spirit. “The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; yet they are not three gods, but One God.”<sup>3</sup> In Jesus, we have the God in man made manifest. Moreover, Jesus’ resurrection proves that Jesus is the Redeemer and Savior – true God and true man.

Concerning Jesus, St. Paul writes to the Romans, “regarding [God’s] Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 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” (Romans 1:3,4). By Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, Jesus, true man, is “declared ... to be the Son of God” and the Savior of all. Thus, Jesus demonstrates his absolute authority by rising from the dead.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Athanasian Creed, Christian Worship – A Lutheran Hymnal*, Authorized by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), p. 132.

## APPROPRIATION

There is no authority higher than Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen LORD and Savior. At his death on the cross, Jesus proclaimed his victory: "It is finished!" (John 19:30b). That proclamation signaled that the sins of the world had been taken away. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the public proclamation of justification, the forgiveness of sins, for all people (cf. Romans 4:25). By his cross and resurrection, Jesus demonstrated his absolute authority and victory over sin, death, hell and the devil. Through this message – this message of the Gospel or Good News – the Holy Spirit works faith in the heart for eternal life.

The Holy Spirit has worked faith in Jesus in your heart and in mine through this Gospel. By the Gospel – Good News of Jesus – the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in our bodies. Recall what St. Paul said, "Do you not know that your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19a). It is by faith in Jesus that our bodies and souls and entire beings have been cleansed from sin. Through that faith, you and I too will be raised from the dead just as Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep in faith in him. All who believe in Jesus will be raised from the dead on the Last Day and live forever in heaven with Jesus (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

Jesus demonstrated his authority by rising from the dead. In order to do that, Jesus first had to die. Thus,

## JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS AUTHORITY III. BY THE PASSOVER

"When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (2:13). As noted before, the Scriptures record for us Jesus attending three Passover celebrations. The first Passover that the Scriptures record as Jesus having attended was when he was twelve years old and went up to Jerusalem for the celebration with his parents – his mother Mary and his stepfather Joseph (cf. Luke 2:41-25). The second recorded Passover Jesus attended is the one with which our text is concerned. The third and last Passover Jesus attended was the one before his suffering and death on the cross.

On both the last two Passovers, Jesus drove out from the Temple, the cattle, sheep and dove sellers and the moneychangers. Remember that they were there in order to sell sacrificial animals to those who came from long distances and could not bring their sacrifices along. Yet, regarding those sacrifices, the writer to the Hebrews states, "It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). There was only one sacrifice, one Passover Lamb, that could take away the sins of the world, and that was Jesus (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7b). John the Baptizer said regarding Jesus: "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29b).

Jesus himself would take away the sins of the world and nothing would deter him from that objective. When Jesus drove the animal sellers and moneychangers out of the Temple,

his disciples remembered the Old Testament statement concerning the Messiah, the Christ, “Zeal for your House will consume me” (2:17b; cf. Psalm 69:9). That zeal was reflected in Jesus’ cleansing of the Temple on two occasions. More significantly, that zeal was revealed as Jesus permitted nothing to interfere with his going the way of suffering, cross and death, in order to bring the forgiveness of sins and salvation to mankind (cf. Luke 9:51). Jesus demonstrated his authority by the Passover – by being the Passover Lamb sacrificed once for all people.

#### APPROPRIATION

Cattle, sheep, goats and doves did not take away sin. Only Jesus, the Lamb of God, has taken away the sins of the world. Jesus has taken away your sins and mine by offering his body and blood on the tree of the cross. No more sacrifice for sins is necessary or acceptable. No sacrifice for sins can be brought. How do you and I take advantage of this forgiveness of sins?

First of all, the writer to the Hebrews does warn us,

***<sup>26</sup> If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the Truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, <sup>27</sup> but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who rejected the Law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the Blood of the Covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay” (Deuteronomy 32:35b) and again, “The LORD will judge his people” (Deuteronomy 32:36a; cf. Psalm 135:14). <sup>31</sup> It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:26-31).***

God will not be mocked! (cf. Galatians 6:7). God will not tolerate the person who says, “Jesus is my LORD and Savior,” and then goes on deliberately sinning – God will not tolerate that. Jesus warned, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘LORD, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). The will of the heavenly Father is that people believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4) and bring forth fruits of faith and repentance in their daily lives (cf. Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Luke 24:47). And the same time, faith in Jesus has given to us the forgiveness of sins.

The second point is that by faith in Jesus we have the benefit of the forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life in heaven with Jesus. Jesus has taken away the sins of the world by being the Passover Lamb sacrificed for us and for the world. It is by faith alone in Jesus that you and I grasp the forgiveness of sins that Jesus won for us and for all. Let us live in that faith and bring forth the fruits of that faith in godly living.

## CONCLUSION

Jesus cleansed the physical Temple of Jerusalem of those who had encroached on the worship area with their marketeering and moneychanging. Jesus himself, however, is the Temple of God, for Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is holy, righteous, clean, and sinless. By offering himself up as the Passover Lamb, Jesus took away the sins of the world. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the public announcement to the world of the full and free forgiveness and eternal life that Jesus won for all. Through his Word and Spirit, Jesus calls you and me to repentance and faith in him alone as our Savior. Amen.