

## **John, Part 9 – The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Consumed by Zeal**

John is giving a revelation of Jesus Christ. We have been given several names that help us know Jesus Christ. Then John begins showing us Christ's character and mission. As he progressively reveals Christ, we are shown His power and glory. When Jesus turned the water into wine, John said, "This beginning of signs Jesus did and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2:11) After His first miracle of turning water into wine in Cana of Galilee, Jesus went down to Capernaum, which ultimately becomes His headquarters.

**John 2:12 NKJV** After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

### **Take a quick look at the journeys of Jesus.**

1. Jesus came from Nazareth to the Jordan to be baptized by John.
2. After the baptism, He was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan.
3. Jesus was spotted by John, who declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God.
4. Then Jesus went to Cana of Galilee for the wedding feast. Luke indicates that while in Galilee, probably after the wedding, He went to Nazareth where He spoke in the Synagogue on the Sabbath.
5. After Jesus spoke in the Synagogue in Nazareth, all of them that heard him cast Him out of their city, (Luke 4:16-31). Probably after speaking at the Synagogue, He went down to Capernaum, (John 2:12).
6. John says, from Capernaum, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, (John 2:13).

When Jesus moved to Capernaum, it marked an interlude in His life. Capernaum is northeast of Cana on the great highway from Damascus to Acco and Tyre. Capernaum was on the Northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. "He went down from Cana to Capernaum." Cana has an elevation of 1,138 feet and Capernaum is 682 feet below sea level. The Dead Sea has an elevation of 1,162 feet below sea level. About A.D. 27 Capernaum became His home base. There are 19 references to Capernaum in the Gospels.

From this point on, it appears that Jesus was alienated from His family and His hometown of Nazareth. Jesus was in Capernaum a short time when He went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. It is important for us to know that from the time of the wedding feast, Jesus life and ministry comes into focus.

**John 2:13-14 NKJV** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.

Jerusalem has an elevation of 2,575 feet. Remember that John is giving us a revelation of Christ Jesus. Often we see Jesus as meek and mild. Here we are going to see His passion or zeal for the glory and holiness of God. Most often we see Jesus being patient and full of grace. When He arrives in Jerusalem and specifically at the Temple, Jesus finds things happening that should not be.

When Jesus entered the temple, He found it was being desecrated. God is very interested in what happens in church. In the Court of the Gentiles, people had set up a commercial market. Pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for the Passover were able to carry currencies easily, but it was difficult to bring animals for sacrifices. It was expedient for the priest to allow exchanges and purchases to be made within the Temple grounds. Worshipers needed oxen, sheep, doves, incense, meal, wine, oil, salt, and other items for

their sacrifices and offerings. At some point in the history of Temple worship the priests decided to take advantage of the situation. It was a matter of greed and convenience.

Why should retailers outside the Temple reap all of the profits? They made God's house a place of commerce. The priests had set up booths within the Court of the Gentiles and leased space to outside retailers. The High Priest was the owner of the booths or the space. The atmosphere was one of commercial traffic and not of worship and prayer. It is important for us to remember that God's house was to be a place for prayer and fellowship with the holy God. Jesus' holy zeal is being revealed.

**John 2:15-16 NKJV** When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

Jesus cleansed the temple two times. John recorded the first cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The three Synoptic Gospels record the second temple cleansing toward the end of His public ministry (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-16; Luke 19:45-46). This first cleansing caught the people by surprise. The second cleansing happened about three years later. As a result, the chief priests and scribes looked for ways to destroy Him.

It was the time of the Passover. After the Temple had been established in Jerusalem, the Jewish people would go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast.

Exodus 12 describes the feast of Passover. It was an annual festival to the Lord to remind Israel of God's deliverance. Every household prepared a lamb for the feast. All leaven was to be removed from their homes on the first day and for seven days they were to eat unleavened bread. This was a solemn assembly to the Lord.

The Passover was a reminder of what God had done when He brought them out of Egypt. Everything about the Passover pointed to God's intervention for His people and ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ. The feast was a reminder of God's grace and goodness.

God takes the business of His Church very seriously. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and remember God's goodness. In our celebrations, we should never forget God is a holy God. We should never forget how good God has been to us.

God established the Passover for His people to remember and celebrate His goodness. He had brought them out of bondage and redeemed them from their enemies. It is good to remember what God has done. We should not let anything keep us from giving God worthy praise.

The Temple and Passover were an appropriate time and place for Christ's ministry. The Temple Courtyard was very large. The wall around the Temple was 485.6 ft. by 145.6 ft. The Court of the Gentiles surrounded the temple enclosure. It was easy to rationalize buying and selling in the Temple courts. Worshipers needed animals for sacrifices and offerings. Abuses developed, and the pilgrim traffic became a major source of income. During Passover, the Temple became a market place and commerce.

What God had intended to be a place of worship became a market to make money. The sin of expediency made it easy to justify the booths of the money changers and convenience for the pilgrims. Temple dues had to be paid and someone would profit for their labors. The Priests received a percentage from the merchants changing coins. In their minds, the end justified their actions. It was a convenient and practical way to make money.

**John 2:15 NKJV** When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.

**Malachi predicted that He would come suddenly to the temple to purify them.**

**Malachi 3:1-3 NKJV** "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the Lord An offering in righteousness.

The zeal for the house of God consumed Jesus. He started a small stampede of the sheep and cattle and overturned the tables of the money changers.

**John 2:16 NKJV** And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

Why was the Lord upset? He did not protest the sacrificial system. The purpose behind the sacrifices was lost. This was supposed to be a place to meet with God. The second time Jesus cleansed the temple He called it "a den of thieves."

**Luke 19:46 NKJV Jesus said:** "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

**Hearing Jesus say this was an offense to them.**

**Jeremiah 7:11 NKJV** Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the Lord.

God told Jeremiah, "Go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel."

God watches over His house. He had made it a place where He would meet with His people. Jesus said His Father's house was to be a house of prayer. The purpose of the house was not for personal profit. The worshipers had lost the meaning for attendance. The priest had corrupted the purpose for the meeting. They had become more interested in the buildings and the appearance than God. The Lord Almighty is a holy and jealous God.

**Jesus was consumed by His zeal for the Father.**

**John 2:17 NKJV** Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

Jesus had a consuming love for the things of God. He had a consuming zeal for God. It was a love for righteousness and holiness. It was a love for fellowshiping God. It was a zeal for the presence and glory of God. David spoke of this zeal for God's house.

**Psalms 69:9 NKJV** Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

Jesus was willing to pay a price for His commitment to God's temple. Zeal for God would ultimately lead to His death.

When God called Moses to build the Tabernacle, it was originally called the Tent of Meeting. It was a place to meet with God. It was a place for a revelation of God's redemptive love. It was a place for God's glory to be revealed.

The Temple was to be no less of a testimony of God's presence and redemption.

Jesus was looking at a people who had lost the sense of the holy presence of God. The

glory of the Lord was not resting on the Temple. The Temple had become profaned by their actions. God no longer took pleasure in their sacrifices, (Hebrews 10:5-9; Jeremiah 7). When the presence of God is missing from where it should be, any number of things can happen. Their outward actions were a sign of what had happened in their hearts.

When Jesus looked at the Temple, He saw a place for God's presence. Even though they had corrupted and profaned the Temple of God, Jesus saw the Father's house. Jesus saw what should have been in that holy place.

This was a place where the glory of God should be revealed. Jesus knew something about the Temple that the High Priest did not know. The religious leaders lost the sense of the holy. The Jewish authorities claimed it as their holy mount. It was their religion. It was the house their fathers had spent 46 years building. When Jesus was looking at the temple, He was considering the fellowship with the Father.

Jesus knew something the Jewish leaders did not know.

**John 2:18-19 NKJV** So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" Jesus answered and said to them, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**"

The Jews demanded proof for His right to challenge the existing order. Instead of giving in to their demand, Jesus gave them a hidden message. His statement, "Destroy this temple," is in the form of a command, but the sense is ironic or conditional. Jesus said: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." They were not on the same page.

**John 2:20-21 NKJV** Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

Herod the Great replaced Solomon's Temple and by human standards it was glorious. It was not as glorious as Solomon's Temple. Solomon's Temple had a "glory" that Herod's Temple never had. When Solomon finished his dedicatory prayer, the glory of God filled the Temple. Everything had fallen from the former glory.

**Haggai 2:3 NKJV** 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?

For 500 years the glory of God had not been known. They continued doing what they were doing without God's presence or glory. God took no pleasure in the abundance of their sacrifices. They had an outward religion that did not deal with the issues in their heart.

Work on Herod's Temple began in 19 or 20 B.C. The 46 years they referred to brings them to the date A.D. 27 or 28. The work on the whole Temple complex continued until around A.D. 63. All of the work they had done had taken 46 years to complete. They were pleased with what they had done.

They had built a house for God, but His glory was not there. Now, the Lord of glory was in the house and they were only looking at the stones and property.

The Jews asked, "How could He rebuild it in three days?" That would be impossible! The Greek words "**and You**" are emphatic, suggesting their contempt for Him. Jesus was not talking about the temple Herod built but He was referring to His body. After His death, He would come out of the grave in three days.

Jesus was referring to a place where they would find the presence of God. Jesus is the Way to the Father. These people had come to Jerusalem to worship and fellowship with God, but they did not recognize Him.

**John 2:23-25 NKJV** Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast,

many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

Jesus did many signs and miracles before them. He wanted to do more and reveal His glory. He wanted to show them the glory of the Father. They were not able to take it in. He knew them and what was in them. He could not commit Himself to them.

Where are we in relation to that? Can the Lord unveil His glory to us? Can He fellowship with us on a deeper level?