

Remnant Life Church
August 13, 2017
John
The Second Sign: Clearing the Temple
John 2:13-22

- The 7 signs presented by John in his Gospel to encourage and build faith in the readers of who Jesus is
 - The One foretold by the OT prophets
 - The promised Messiah
 - The Son of God
 - One with God
- The first sign was the turning of water into wine at the wedding at Cana
 - He gives us the first look at His glory, His compassion, and His love
 - He presents an early look at His mission – to replace the old way of doing things (the water) with the new covenant through the shedding of His blood (the wine)
- The 2nd sign – the Cleaning of the Temple
- **READ – John 2:13-22**
- We begin by understanding what the temple is and how it came to be
 - God commissioned the temple to be built in Jerusalem to provide a permanent place to offer sacrifices and worship God
 - It replaced the portable tabernacle that had been built by Moses in the desert according to God’s specifications with a permanent location
 - God told David that there would be temple near his time but he would not be the one to build it because he was a man who had shed blood; instead it would be His son, Solomon (I Chron 7:12, 22:8-9; 2 Sam 7:13-14)
 - Solomon completed the temple in 957 BC
 - It was sacked twice over the next several hundred years first by the Pharaoh of Egypt and then King of Assyria
 - Finally, it was totally destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar II
 - It stayed destroyed for nearly 50 years until Cyrus the Great (having conquered the Babylonians just a year prior) authorized construction to rebuild the temple - urged on by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 6:14)
 - Reading through Ezra and Nehemiah we see that God used 3 kings – Cyrus the Great began the process
 - It took 23 years of construction to complete taking us to the reign of Darius I of Persia in 515
 - Dedicated by the Priest Zerubbabel

- Artaxerxes in 457 BC, as recorded in both Ezra and Nehemiah, saw the last of the people return and provided silver and gold for the temple artifacts ([Ezra 7:11-26](#))
 - The second temple is restored and is used by the people over the next 450 years
 - It begins, however to fall into a state of disrepair as, over the course of time it is defiled, desecrated, cleansed, and repaired and is in this state when Herod the Great gains control of Jerusalem in 37 BC
 - Herod (a Jew by birth) is put in place by the Romans to keep the Jewish people under control
 - He was noted for his massive building projects to benefit Jerusalem but he was the one who ordered the Murder of the Innocents ([Matt 2:16](#))
 - In the 18th year of his reign (20-19 BC) Herod begins a massive building expansion program on the temple that is not completed until between 62-64 AD
 - The Western Wall today is part of the project
 - It is this temple, still in a state of reconstruction, that Jesus comes, first as a boy with His family, and then as the Messiah with His disciples
 - The temple was destroyed again by the Romans less than 8 years after completion of the expansion in 70 AD under the leadership of General Titus and the Jews in Jerusalem at the time were either killed, captured, or scattered
 - When the Muslims conquered Jerusalem in the 7th century the Caliph ordered an Islamic shrine to be built on the site of the temple ruins
 - It was completed in 691
 - The golden dome of the rock is perhaps the most recognizable structure in Jerusalem
- Today, Christians, Jews, and Muslims all claim the site as one of the most holy places
 - But the Muslims control it and most likely will until God restores the Jewish people to their rightful place
 - This will come during the time of the last days
- The layout of the temple
 - It was rebuilt by Herod in white marble with gold overlay in many places – dazzling in the sun
 - It was divided into several sections called courts
 - The outer most court was the Court of the Gentiles – open to everyone
 - Probably the ceremonial cleansing took place here ([John 2:14](#))
 - A barrier, called a Soreg, was in place separating it from the inner courts with a warning that anyone other than an Israelite who entered would be put to death (Num 1:51)
 - The Court of Women was next – it was not just for women but this was as far as they could go into the temple as well as ceremonially unclean Jewish men
 - The Wood Chamber stored the wood used in the sacrifices
 - The Nazarite Chamber was for those ending their Nazarite vow (Samuel and Samson in the OT, John the Baptist in the NT) where

they would cook their peace offering and burned the hair they had just cut (did not cut hair during the time of the vow)

- The Chamber of Lepers were for those cured/healed of their disease who then needed to go through a time of purification
 - The Chamber of Oils, Wines was also a storage area for those items
 - Scattered throughout this area would have been 13 trumpet shaped containers for the temple offering to be placed by those who had come to offer to God their sacrifice (RLC offering)
 - At the far end was the great Nicanor Gate that led to the Inner Courts
- The Inner court is The Hall of Israel where the Israelites waited in reverent silence for their offering to be burned
 - The entire area was filled with animals brought to offer to God
 - The Abattoir (a-bah-twar – not a biblical word but from the French) was an area with rings that secured the animals heads so the blood could be drained and the animals prepared
 - The Brazen Altar was the place where not only the animals, but grain, and liquid offerings were presented to God
 - The Kebech was a ramp leading up to the altar
 - Leading up to the Holy places were 12 steps one each for the 12 tribes
 - The two most important areas were the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies
 - Within the Holy Place: 7 branched candlestick (Menorah); a golden altar to burn incense; a table where the Shewbread was placed
 - The Holy of Holies in Solomon's time was the location of the Ark of the Covenant
 - Inside the Ark were the 2 stone tablets Moses brought the law; jar of manna; Aaron's rod that budded in the desert (2Chron 5:10, Heb 9:4)
 - In Jesus' day this area was empty
 - Once a year in the month of October, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies to atone for the people's sin
- The temple was the most Holy place but it was on the decline, not physically, but morally
 - While it was the symbol of Jewish national and religious identity but...
 - The hearts of the people, turning more and more away from God, had infiltrated the place of worship
 - During the festival celebrations and the times of offering people would come from all over the then-known world
 - Rather than bring the animals needed for sacrifice with them through the long journey they would buy them from vendors along the way or in Jerusalem

- In earlier times the vendors would set up their stalls and tables across the Kidron Valley on the slopes of the Mount of Olives
 - Near enough for the people to have access
 - Not too close to the temple
- The other service provided was the exchanging of money
 - Every male Jew age 20 or older was required to pay a temple tax
 - The only acceptable coin was the Tyrian coin (Shekel) because of the high purity of its silver
 - Since people came from all over they needed to exchange their currency for the accepted coinage of the temple otherwise their payment would be refused
 - The money-changers would exchange the coins (with a service fee attached)
- Jesus does not enter the temple that day to the sounds of contemplative prayer and the sounds of worship
 - Jesus hears the sounds of animals, the bleating of the sheep, and the loud voices of commerce
 - He also hears the clink of money being moved about again, not doubt, accompanied by loud voices
- At first glance it would appear that Jesus just loses it in an impetuous outburst of uncontrolled anger
 - But as with all things, Jesus knew exactly what He was doing
 - The disciples recall the words of **Psalm 69:9**, ...zeal for you house consumes me.
 - What provokes Jesus' anger?
 - He is opposing the subversion of religious worship into commerce
 - All three synoptics quotes Jesus as asking if they intend to make the temple a den of robbers
 - This is a phrase found in **Jeremiah 7:9-11**
- Finally:
 - Jesus is showing that God's holiness and purity cannot tolerate consistent defilement of His house – in this case the temple – judgment is inevitable
- This word should be a clear concern for our country, our homes, and our churches today