

God's True Temple
John 2:13-25

January 10, 2016

A. Superlatives of Salvation

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1. The pollution of the temple (13-14)

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1. Belief with the eyes (23) ^{F.}

2. Not entrusted by Christ (24-25)

^A Genesis 6:5; Isaiah 59:2; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:1-3

^B Ephesians 2:4-5; Exodus 29:45-46; Jeremiah 29:45-46, 31:33; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 21:3

^C 1 Corinthians 6:19; Revelations 21:22

^D 1 Corinthians 1:22; Matthew 16:1

^E Colossians 2:9

^F Malachi 3:1; John 20:29

A. Superlatives of Salvation

1. Ultimate Conflict

- a. the Bible documents this conflict between man and God from the dawn of man's history, as it began with the sin of Adam and Eve
 - (A) Genesis 6:5 tells how it had worsened over 1500, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
 - (B) nor did God's blessing Israel lessen that conflict
 - (1) "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear." (Isaiah 59:2)
 - (2) "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)
- b. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:1-3 that Gentiles and Jews were equally affected: "1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." ... then comes God's

2. Extreme Reconciliation

- a. Paul continues in Ephesians 2:4-5, "4 ¶ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"
- b. This reconciliation of mankind with God was His plan all along:
 - (A) Exodus 29:45-46: '45 "And I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God.'"
 - (B) and later in Jeremiah 31:33, "'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"
 - (C) and Ezekiel 37:27, "'My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.'"

- c. 2 Corinthians 6:16 applies this plan to both Gentiles and Jews, 'Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."'
- d. this reconciliation, the restoration of relations between God and man, is the ultimate step of our salvation; Revelation 21:3 describes it thus: 'And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them,"'
- e. God's reconciliation results in His dwelling with His people

3. Jesus Our Saviour

- a. the Old Testament symbols of God's dwelling with His people were the tabernacle and the temple, and particularly the Holy of Holies within them
 - (A) in that place God would appear with visible, Shekinah glory
 - (B) but for Israel's disobedience the tabernacle was removed from its place at Shiloh
 - (C) and again for their disobedience the temple in Jerusalem has twice been destroyed, and now in its place is an Islamic mosque
 - (D) does that mean that God's plan has changed? ... or He has failed?
- b. No, there is a better temple!
 - (A) 1 Corinthians 6:19 tells us that the body of a Christian is a temple, with the Holy Spirit abiding within
 - (B) but Revelation 21:22, tells us of the ultimate temple in heaven: "And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple." (Revelation 21:22)
 - (C) this truth, that Jesus, the Lamb of God, is God's true temple lies under this history that we read earlier in John 2:13-25

B. What Is the Character of Our Worship ? 2:13-17

1. The Pollution of the Temple (13-14)

- a. '13 And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.'
- (A) the physical temple that had been erected to the glory of God had been polluted by what man was doing there
 - (1) there was a need for sacrificial animals to be available for those who had travelled distances to present their offerings

- (a) the Old Testament made provision for this in the offering of first fruit
- (b) but they need not be housed in the temple itself – probably in the entranceway in the court of the Gentiles
- (c) in other times, such sacrifices could be obtained in the Mount of Olives, only a short distance away
- (2) every man over age twenty, coming to the great feasts would bring with them the annual poll tax of a half-shekel
 - (a) because of their purity, this had to be Tyrian silver coins
 - (b) so they needed to exchange their foreign or base coins
- (B) a physical temple is always liable to pollution
 - (1) it happened throughout Israel's history
 - (a) Eli's sons, as recorded in the first chapters of 1 Samuel
 - (b) the various wicked kings of Judah such as Manasseh
 - (c) the abominations of the people shown to Ezekiel
 - (2) it has happened to churches erected to God's glory
 - (a) whose use and practises have fallen from their purpose
 - (b) and in which the message has departed from the gospel
 - (3) and it can happen to the Christian, as he or she wanders away from God and uses their body in an unbecoming fashion
 - (a) that is the context of Paul's reminder in 2 Corinthians 6 that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit
- b. Only Jesus Christ, the true Temple can remain unpolluted
 - (A) He has known no sin
 - (B) but He has borne ours

2. The Zeal of Jesus the Christ (15-17)

- a. [`15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume Me."](#)
 - (A) Alfred Edersheim and Josephus tell us that the temple rulers – the priests and Levites – farmed out the privilege of selling animals and of exchanging currency for a share of the profits
 - (1) they document the exorbitant prices charged for sacrificial animals – to bring a sacrifice bought

elsewhere was to risk it being rejected by the priests

(2) the coins Jesus poured out were of a certain size and were the additional amount – about 12½% – over the base value charged as an exchange fee – that’s worse than our banks!

(3) so the pious people were obliged to pay them

b. Jesus identified both with the Almighty God, His Father

(A) and with the temple that represented them both

(B) so he drove the animal, the merchants and the bankers out

(C) this is the first of two times that Jesus cleansed the temple

(1) this was at the beginning of His ministry

(2) the other came at the end of His ministry in the Passion week

(3) William Hendriksen, among other Bible students, has shown the many details which differ between the two

(4) this was the problem with the old covenant and the physical temple – any cleansing of its pollution was only temporary just as any benefit of its ritual was only for a season

(D) what was intended to be a place of worship

(1) a place of drawing near to the Presence of God

(2) had been transformed by the religious rulers and these merchants into what Jesus calls, literally, an emporium – we might say today, a supermarket or a shopping mall

(3) but our God is a Jealous God – that is the underlying thought of the word Zeal – and Jesus who is God, would not permit that which represented Himself, His Father, His Holy Spirit, to be polluted in His Presence

(E) when Jesus says “My Father” it is very personal

(1) we are taught to pray “Our Father” – the Father God that we share with all believers by being His children

(2) but with Jesus it was an eternal relationship

(3) and His very use of the term was an affirmative declaration that He was the promised Messiah

(4) that He was the fulfilment of the Messianic Psalm 2 where God declares, “Thou art my Son,” to the Christ

C. What Is Our View of God’s House? 2:18-22

1. The Temple Destined for Destruction (18-19)

a. ‘18 The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these

things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

- b. they did not question His judgement against these practices
 - (A) some of their own number, such as the grandson of the great rabbi, Hillel, had intervened respecting some of them
 - (B) but they had never been able to cleanse this pollution
- c. what they questioned was His authority to do these things
 - (A) probably only three or four months have passed since Jesus began his ministry by His being baptised by John
 - (B) aside from those early days with John, His ministry has been in the northern part of Israel, in the region of Galilee
 - (C) now He is in Jerusalem, the Jewish religious centre
 - (D) though they may have heard reports about him, they now ask to see His badge of authority by means of some sign
 - (1) Moses, delivering Israel from Egypt, showed sign upon sign
 - (2) it was a nation that loved supernatural signs
 - (3) Paul says concerning them, "For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom;" (1 Corinthians 1:22)
 - (4) ordinary miracles they would consider insufficient
 - (5) for them it must be a sign from heaven (Matthew 16:1)
- d. Jesus gave a sign to them, but one hidden from their understanding
 - (A) until these verses, the word that has been used for temple has been hieros, the physical building of such grandeur and the site of all the ritual worship – the externals of Judaism
 - (1) just as for many today
 - (a) church is perceived as a mere building
 - (b) and Christianity as a system of dry dogma
 - (2) but Jesus now uses a different word – the religious rulers do not seem to perceive the difference – naos, the sanctuary and used to designate the place of God's Presence, Holy of Holies
 - (a) destroy the place of God's Presence in your very midst
 - (b) put to death the Christ who is Emmanuel, God with Us
 - (c) and He, the Son of God, along with the Father and Holy Spirit, will raise that Jesus Christ from the dead

2. The Eternal Sanctuary (20-22)

- a. '20 The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"
21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken.'
- b. for Jesus Christ is God's true Temple
 - (A) As expressed by the apostle Paul, 'For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form,' (Colossians 2:9)
 - (B) it is not some great building made by hands
 - (1) whether at the orders of Solomon, or of Cyrus, or of Herod
 - (2) a great cathedral in Rome, or Paris, or London
 - (3) for all these can be and have been polluted by man
 - (C) but in Jesus Christ, the pure and perfect One, God took up His residence
- c. by faith, then, when Jesus takes up residence in our lives, we have access to the eternal God Himself; and will have such access for ever

D. What Kind of Faith Do We Have? 2:23-25

1. Believing Their Own Eyes (23)

- a. we shall return, Lord willing, to these verses next Lord's day, when we consider Jesus' conversation with the Jewish ruler, Nicodemus
- b. but just a word from them for today
- c. 'Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing.'
 - (A) the cleansing of the temple was a sign fulfilling Malachi 3:1 '... the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; ...'
 - (B) but there were other signs, and brought faith to many
 - (C) but 'Luther speaks of this a "milk faith". This he explains as "a young faith of such as enthusiastically accede, give in and believe but just as quickly withdraw when they hear something unpleasant or unexpected."'
- d. later 'Jesus said to him (Thomas), "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'" (John 20:29)
 - (A) those who had this type of faith were ...

2. Not Entrusted by Christ (24-25)

a. '24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, 25 and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man.'

b. Oh that we might not have "milk-faith" but "meat-faith"

Oh for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not trembled on the brink
Of any earthly woe!

Lord, give me such a faith as this;
And then what e'er may come,
I'll know while here, the hallowed bliss
Of my eternal home. ^{-{2}}.

c. let us rejoice in all that we have been blessed in Jesus Christ

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 National Council of Churches of Christ; Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Bruce	--	<i>The Gospel & Epistles of John</i> , by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
BM	-	<i>Biblical Museum</i> , Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC	-	<i>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> , © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI: <i>John</i> , by Merrill C. Tenney
EGT	-	<i>The Expositor's Greek Testament</i> , Hodder & Stoughton; 1903 <i>John</i> , by Marcus Dods
Kerux	-	The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com .
LBBC	--	<i>Layman's Bible Book Commentary, Volume 18: John</i> , by James E. Carter; Broadman Press, Nashville, TE; 1984
NICNT	-	<i>The New International Commentary on the New Testament</i> <i>The Gospel according to John</i> , by Leon Morris
NTC	-	<i>New Testament Commentary</i> , by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
RWP	-	<i>Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament</i> , by Dr. A. T. Robertson
TEC	--	<i>The Gospel according to John</i> , by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965

There are a few leaps of logic (*non sequiturs*) in this message, that, while I have clarified them in my own mind, I have not elaborated upon in the written version, but which I believe will be made clear to the reader as he or she meditates upon the passage.

2. 'Oh for a Faith that Will Not Shrink,' by William H. Bathurst, 1796-1877.