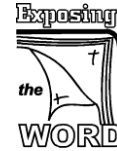




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5- Zeal for the Temple: John 2:12-17

Jesus began His public ministry as with an event that has some important components. There are some nuggets of gold that are lying in wait for us as we explore His zeal for the temple of God.

I- To Capernaum:

John 2:12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

After the first recorded miracle of the turning of the water into wine Jesus leave Cana and goes to Capernaum. Capernaum is called His own city. *Mat 9:1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.*

While this may seem insignificant in the choice of Jesus to make this His primary city to go from and to it was not accidental at all. Remember we are seeing the things that verify the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah spoke many centuries before and said in *Isa 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*

Matthew 4:12-15 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

One of the things that verify the Messiahship of Jesus is fulfilled prophecy.

There are literally hundreds of such fulfillments.

Some may say yes but the evidence you use to verify this is the Bible. One internal evidences of just how accurate the Bible is found in the words *“went down to Capernaum.”* The city was lower in altitude that Nazareth and Cana from where He had recently traveled from. The Bible is authenticated as a reliable source by scrutiny of the statements that it makes and its minute accuracy with those statements.

II- Passover at Jerusalem:

John 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

God had given the Law of Moses to be observed as a way to live and worship Him. In order for the Messiah to be authentic He would therefore have to observe the law given by God. Not necessarily all the 613 interpretation of the law that the rabbis had come up with as they interpreted the law.

The observance of Passover was to be a perpetual covenant with Israel. The Passover remembered the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

Another small but profound insight is that it says that He went up to Jerusalem. He is moving from the geography north to the south, and most of the times we say we are going up when traveling north and down to the south. The Bible says he went up to Jerusalem while moving south. It is because of the natural features of the area where you go up in topography to a higher elevation to Jerusalem.

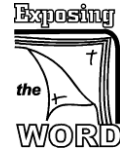
He tarried a little while in order to arrive at Jerusalem for the Passover. He is going to fulfill the law of Moses. As He observed



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Passover here He was not casting out the Jewish law but those that had perverted it.

There are a total of four Passovers that are recorded during the 3 ½ years of Jesus public ministry. This is the first one. The second is in *Luk 6:1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.*

The third in *Joh 6:4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.*

Joh 11:55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. The fourth, the one just prior to being crucified where He acted as the head of the company.

III- Corruption in the Temple:

John 2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

This is the first of two times that Jesus would cleanse the temple. He begins His public ministry with this temple cleansing recorded in John and ends it in the final week of His human life with another cleansing some 3 ½ years later. It is recorded for us in *Matthew 21:12-13 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

We turn to the prophet Malachi to find that this was another of the fulfillments of prophecy. I have included the first verse to see that this ties to the coming of John the Baptist and certainly speaks of the Lord Jesus cleanings the temple.

Malachi 3:1-3 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

This corruption in the temple would have been more like a modern day flea market with a carnival heckler selling the merchandise. These men were tuned into hearing the sound of money more than worshipping God and hearing His voice. W. Herschel Ford illustrated this beautifully with the following story.

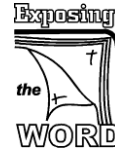
We hear what we have been trained to hear. Two men walked down Broadway in New York City. Thousands of people were milling up and down the streets. One of these men was a naturalist, a man who loved all living creatures. "Wait a minute," he said to his companion, "I hear a cricket." The other man said, "I don't hear it." The naturalist then walked over to a florist's door and there he found a cricket on a bush. "Now," he said, "let's see if the people hear *this* noise." And in the midst of the noisy crowd, he dropped a half dollar. At least fifty people turned around a looked back. We can train ourselves to hear the voice of the world, or the voice of God. (p 80)



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This place that was supposed to be a place to hear God had become anything but that.

IV- Cleansing the Temple:

Jesus had just arrived on the scene in Jerusalem. We know it was not His first trip because you will recall when He was twelve it is recorded that He was in the Temple and spoke to the religious hierarchy then and confounded them with His understanding. He arrives in Jerusalem, suddenly appearing on the scene, and goes to the temple. After He finds the scene in the temple so revolting because it had become a den of thievery and corruption He must, as God and Messiah, take action.

John 2:15 *And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*

The house of God had become instead of a place of worship a place where people were being cheated as they came to worship there.

We need to understand that this was not a practice, when done correctly, which was forbidden. In fact it was addressed in the law for occasions when it was not feasible to bring animals for sacrifice long distances. **Deuteronomy 14:24-26** *And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: 25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: 26 And thou shalt bestow*

that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.

It is the perversion of this practice that Jesus was addressing.

Matthew Henry said, "he showed his displeasure against those that make religion a matter of worldly gain."

There are some critical principles that we need to see about this event.

- 1- The cleansing of the temple here shows us that we must constantly be on guard that we do not allow ungodly practice to invade the places of worship.
- 2- Jesus zeal for the house of God was to begin redemption and not just to have satisfaction of straightening them out.
- 3- This does not forbid, in my estimation, the sale of ministry items. Remember He is addressing corruption and not things that edify the believer.

V- Zeal Fulfilled Prophecy:

The disciples recognized what Jesus was doing had been prophesied. **John 2:17** *And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* This is found in **Psalms 69:9** *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

Let me back up to **John 2:16** for another though about this zeal for the house. Jesus said that it was His Father's house. Jesus had come to the nation of Israel with God's claim upon their lives and upon their worship. He felt the spiritual indifference that had turned worship into a commercial enterprise. Those who worship must worship Him in spirit and in truth. We must strive to keep our hearts right to worship God.