

John 2021 #5 (5.23.21) #21043

John 2:13-25

Where to Meet God

**I. It would have been an amazing thing for the disciples to slowly come to the conclusion of just who Jesus is and what he is about. The first 5 chapters of John tell us things the other gospels do not. They were learning. So are we.**

A. They suspected he was Messiah, but had no idea what that really meant. (1:41)

1. Israel had its own idea of Messiah, very nationalistic.
2. People today also have their own ideas of God and Messiah.

B. They were raised in a religious world, but had no idea how disoriented it had become.

1. Disoriented = loss of a sense time, place, identity. Wrong orientation.
2. There was faith in a religious system (Judaism, Temple, etc.), but the system had been taken over by human religion.

**II. John takes us along on the journey...John 2:13-25. After the sign at Cana, Jesus takes his family to Capernaum, then to Jerusalem for Passover. There he found...**

A. Worship that had become a business. 13-22

1. He Swept the Premises.
  - a) He kicks them all out of the “heiron” = the temple precincts
2. He Clarified the Purpose. Ps 69:9
  - a) This is not an “emporium” (Gk emporion)
  - b) But a (v.19) “naos” = the temple as the dwelling place of God, the place to meet God.
3. *The point was not (in this case) the business itself, but the location of it—replacing grace and faith with religious machinery and commerce.*

B. Faith that had not become genuine. (faith based on signs alone) 23-25

1. This is not saving faith. It is actually a desire to get God to do things for us.

**III. Four questions that help us hear God’s Word:**

**A. Why did Jesus cleanse the temple? 14-17**

1. To demonstrate his own actual identity—the Messiah and the Son of God (Jn.20:30-31)
  - a) *Because the owner of the house is the only one who can rearrange it.*
  - b) “My Father’s house” = I am the heir and owner of this temple. I and the Father are One. Jn.10:30.
2. To clarify what the Father’s house was intended to be—A witness to the world, not a business for the religious.
  - a) *Because the business of religion was misrepresenting the purposes of God.*
  - b) The temple/tabernacle was intended to be a place where God’s people would meet with him, pray, be forgiven of their sins, and learn to represent him in the world.
  - c) The court of the Gentiles (outermost courtyard and the first contact of a visitor with the temple itself) was a place where non-Jewish people could worship.
3. Leon Morris writes that “for any Gentile who came up to the temple to worship it meant that prayer had to be offered in the middle of a cattle yard and money market.” (Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John* [Hendrickson, 2000] p.80. quoted in Mounce, EBC, *John*, [Zondervan, 2007] p.391)

**B. Why did the temple leaders ask for a sign? 18**

1. Because they knew Jesus was taking authority over them and their temple.
  - a) They understood that Jesus was taking authority over everything, the temple, the priesthood, etc. This was a direct threat to their structure, history, traditions, etc. This tension between Christ and the structure of Judaism (all religion actually) is what led to his crucifixion.

**C. Why did Jesus NOT give them what they asked for? 19-20.** He could have called fire from heaven (Matt.26:53), but it wasn't the Father's will at the moment. Instead, he answers with a cryptic reference to his own death and resurrection, 3 years away. Why?

1. Because his death and resurrection are the heart of the gospel and the fulfillment of the entire Mosaic covenant.
  - a) The ultimate sign and interpretive key to the entire Word of God. Lk.24:44-48
  - b) Even his own disciples didn't get it at the time and he apparently didn't explain it.
2. Because he is more interested in being trusted personally than understood completely.
  - a) Faith means taking another person's word for something real.
  - b) *We base our trust (faith) on understanding. He bases our understanding on trust (faith).*
3. Because he wanted his disciples to eventually understand it, trust the Scriptures, and believe his word. 22
  - a) We grow into knowledge, eventually gaining insight and wisdom, trusting the scriptures and his word.

**D. Why did Jesus NOT believe in the "believers?" 23-25**

1. Because saving faith is more than simple respect for Jesus (not less, but more). Jn.20:28-29
  - a) It is repentant, worshipful loyalty.
  - b) Coming to him as the risen Lord, Savior and Mentor.
  - c) And even using Jesus' name in religious circles is not evidence is saving faith if it lacks moral loyalty. Matt.7:21-23; Jas.2:14; Acts 8:9-24 (Simon Magus)
2. Because saving grace is not based on human potential.
  - a) *Jesus died for people that he couldn't trust. (Rom.5:10)*
    - (1) He's not "looking for a few good men"—he is creating them by faith.
  - b) *He does not have confidence in human potential apart from saving grace.*
    - (1) He knows both specifically and generally just how untrustworthy the fallen human heart is.
    - (2) We consistently over-expect from fallen humans. God does not.

**IV. So, what is the main thing the Lord is teaching in this passage? *the world meets God in Christ alone.***

**A. Jesus himself has replaced the Temple system. Christology.**

1. He is the Son, the king in God's kingdom. Heb.1:2
  - a) The authority to cleanse the Temple belongs to God.
  - b) God is Jesus' father. Jesus is the heir of all things.
2. He is the Sacrifice and the temple. Heb.9:11-28
  - a) The Lamb that was slain. (Jn.1:29, 36, 1Cor.5:7)
  - b) The Temple is where sacrifices for sin were made.
3. He is the High Priest. Heb.4:14-16
  - a) The one mediator between God and Man. 1 Tim 2:5

**B. Which means... (Worship)**

1. We do need a temple—and that is Jesus Christ.
  - a) The only Gathering Place for God's people on earth.
    - (1) Matt.18:20. Where two or three are gathered, I'm there.
    - (2) Matt.16:18. I will build my church. The Temple implied a community surrounding it. A "gathering" (ecclesia)
  - b) The only access to God the Father. Jn.14:6
    - (1) His temple, not our "special deals" with God.
  - c) The only one who brings us into the Ultimate Temple. Rev.21-22
    - (1) The New Heavens and New Earth are a temple, they are a New Creation with God the Father and the Son at the center. (Rev.21:22; 22:1, 3)
2. We do need to trust somebody besides ourselves—and it is Jesus Christ.
  - a) This is why he calls all humanity to himself. He died for people he cannot trust. If he doesn't trust us to save ourselves (because we cannot) then we must not trust ourselves for salvation. We must come to him in loyal faith.

**V. Come to Christ with an uncluttered and undistracted faith.**