# *Commentary on John 2:13-22*
## *International Bible Lessons*
## Sunday, April 15, 2012
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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, April 15, 2012**, is from **John 2:13-22**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the Bible Lesson Forum, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive International Bible Lessons Commentary Index. The weekly International Bible Lesson is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at http://InternationalBibleLessons.org and in *The Oklahoman* newspaper.

## *International Bible Lesson Commentary*

## John 2:13-22

**(John 2:13) The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**

After Jesus' first sign in Cana of Galilee, He went to Capernaum and then to Jerusalem with His disciples. This was the first Passover that Jesus attended with

His disciples. At the Passover, he could teach many who came to Jerusalem for the feast; people He might not meet going from town to town and teaching in synagogues, on hillsides, or in homes. He was arrested two or three years later at the last Passover that He celebrated with His disciples, after He cleansed the temple once again.

**(John 2:14) In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.**

The area in the Temple where the selling for sacrifices was taking place was reserved for worshiping God. God could not be worshiped rightly and reverently while buying and selling was take place. The religious leaders sold offerings and exchanged foreign coins as a method to make money for themselves. They determined what animals and coins were acceptable for gifts according to their laws and traditions. People who traveled from far away to worship would wait to buy their sacrifices and exchange their coins at the Temple, and then give their gifts. Though these pilgrims might be cheated in the currency exchange and the cost of the animals; it was probably more convenient for them to buy their animals in Jerusalem rather than travel a long distance with them. These offerings were important to the economy of Jerusalem.

**(John 2:15) Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.**

A whip would probably be needed because the sellers of animals and the moneychangers would not have left easily in response to a simple request from Jesus (or they did not leave after He requested them to leave – we are not told all of the details.) Of course, Jesus could have simply moved them all out by the power of his voice, even as He commanded a storm to be still or cast demons out of a person, but He chose a means more adapted to His purpose. You might imagine the moneychangers crawling around on the floor for their spilled coins; therefore, Jesus had to drive them out with a whip to get them to leave.

**(John 2:16) He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"**

The doves were sold to the poorest people for them to sacrifice. Doves are often a sign of peace. The Holy Spirit descended as a dove on Jesus when He was baptized. Jesus' concern for justice for all people is apparent, plus His concern that His Father's house was being desecrated. The Temple was His Father's house, built for people to learn of God and worship God. Jesus' body was also the Temple of God, and His

heavenly Father intended for people to learn about God and Jesus, the Son of God, from Jesus' teaching and example. Since our bodies are the Temple of God, God expects us to use our bodies rightly as an example and for teaching about Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God will discipline us when we refuse to do so: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

**(John 2:17) His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."**

It may very well be the case that Jesus cleansed the Temple at the beginning of His ministry. Then, finding things back the way they were two or three years later when He went to His last Passover with His disciples – seeing that the religious leaders were desecrating His Father's house once again – He drove them out again with a whip. The Holy Spirit reminded the disciples of this prophecy: "It is zeal for your house that has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me" (Psalm 69:9). Jesus did make judgments that required the use force sometimes to enforce the proper worship of God. As our Savior from sin and condemnation, Jesus chose to use no force against those who arrested, tried, and crucified Him.

**(John 2:18) The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?"**

When John wrote about "the Jews," he usually meant the religious leaders, since Jesus and His disciples were also Jews. Rather than seeing and doing what was right because it was right or according to the true meaning of the revealed Law of God in their scriptures, these religious leaders wanted some sign from Jesus that Jesus had the authority force them to do what was good for others and right according to God. They wanted to maintain their authority to take advantage of others, and Jesus' actions threatened their power and wealth. Some people will only do what is right when forced to by a higher authority or higher power or a person stronger than they are. For some, might makes right.

**(John 2:19) Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."**

Because these leaders had no interest in doing what was right because it was right and honoring to God, Jesus refused to say anything that would lead them into more wrong doing – attack Him, for example, for it was not His time to die. In addition, He needed to teach His disciples and other followers, and He did not want them scared away by these religious leaders before He completed His teaching. He knew that the

Holy Spirit would remind His disciples of these words and interpret for them their true meaning.

**(John 2:20) The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?"**

The Jewish leaders misinterpreted Jesus in a way that He intended for them to do at that time. At the same time, He wanted to plant a seed of truth in the minds of His disciples, a truth that the Holy Spirit would help them recall later after His death and resurrection. The Jews thought of Herod's Temple (the temple Herod rebuilt). Jesus spoke of His human body as the Temple of God. The bodies of all those who love and follow Jesus are the Temple of God.

**(John 2:21) But he was speaking of the temple of his body.**

Note: in John 2: 19, Jesus said, "I will raise it up." By killing Jesus' body on the cross, Jesus, the Son of God, was not killed as spirit or as God. Within three days time, He himself raised up His human body from the dead. His body would be glorified, a glorified human body, able to appear inside locked rooms or cook fish around a campfire. Only God, the Son of God, could raise himself up from the dead. When believers die, they will need God to raise them from the dead; they will not be able to do that for themselves as Jesus could do that for himself. Jesus will raise from the

dead all those who love and trust Him as Lord and Savior.

**(John 2:22) After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.**

Those who refuse to do the right things and reverence God will not understand the Scriptures rightly, just as the religious leaders did not understand Jesus' meaning in this situation. But after Jesus was raised from the dead, the Holy Spirit helped His disciples to remember (see John 14:26). The disciples believed the Scripture they had at that time (the Old Testament) and the words Jesus spoke. He proved He spoke the truth when He raised himself from the dead. Today, the Holy Spirit still helps believers understand and properly apply the Bible's teachings.

## Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. When Jesus began His ministry in Jerusalem, He found people selling animals for sacrifices in the temple, which He had seen every time He visited Jerusalem from the time He was a child growing up into manhood. How might He have felt during all those years prior to cleansing the temple?

2. Why do you think Jesus began His ministry in Jerusalem by first cleansing the temple?

3. How might the selling of animals for sacrifices have begun with good intentions and then eventually become corrupted?

4. Today, in what ways might a church become a marketplace and have an adverse effect upon the worship and service of God?

5. Why do you think Jesus purposely gave the temple authorities an obscure answer about the temple and His body?

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