

Let there be No Confusion in God's House

John 2:18-25

Facilitator: Rev. Tesfaye Tamrie

I. BIBLICAL CONTEXT & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Those of us who have been in Sunday School long enough know that everything in the Old Testament **signifies** and **points** to Jesus Christ, the Messiah. We also know that Jesus Christ came to **fulfill** the Law, the Prophecies and the Psalms (**Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44-53**). So, let us consider for a moment **why** God established the Passover, the sacrificial lambs and the Tabernacle in the Old Testament. **What** did they **signify**?

1. The Passover and the Passover Lamb

- a) **Exodus 12:1-50** "... The animals you choose must be **year-old males without defect**, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides of and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ... **Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover**. ... On that same night, I will pass through Egypt and strike every first-born – both men and animals – and I will bring judgement on all the gods of Egypt. I AM THE LORD. **The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you**. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt" (vv. 1-13).
- b) **Leviticus 6:4-7**: "The LORD said to Moses, 'If anyone **sins and is unfaithful** to the LORD by deceiving his neighbor about something entrusted to him or left in his care is stolen, or if he cheats him, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sins that people may do – when he thus sins and becomes guilty, ... **he must make restitution in full**, And as a penalty, he must bring to the priest, that is, the LORD his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, *one without defect and of the proper value*. In this way, **the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty.**"

2. The Tabernacle (Sanctuary) for the Presence and Name of the LORD

- a) **Exodus 25:1-9**. "... **make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them**. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you" (vv. 8-9).
- b) **1 Chronicles 28:1-20; 2 Chronicles chapters 3 through 7** – **The Temple for the Name of the LORD**. The Temple is *consecrated* as Holy because the Holy Name and Presence of God is invoked there. The Temple is a **Spiritual Entity** where the Divine interacts with people for the Eternal Salvation of their souls.

3. **John 1:29-35 – The Lamb of God.**

“Behold, **the Lamb of God, who takes away the Sin of the world**” (v. 29).

II. THE LESSON: Let there be No Confusion in God’s House

The Israelites, God’s people, got into trouble every time they decided to **disobey** God. Similarly, Christians get into trouble every time they decide to do the opposite of what God requires of them. Even though God gives absolutely clear instructions and precise commands as to how they must behave in His House, people tend to do the opposite because of **disobedience**. *God speaks with absolute clarity and authority in the Bible.* God meant for His Word to be understood by people who trust Him. Even though God speaks the Truth and His Promises are true, people fail to receive them due to **unbelief**. Faith and Obedience are the two fundamental requirements which a person needs to fulfil in order to have a close relationship with God.

In John chapter 2, beginning at verse 13, the Bible tells us that Jesus went to Jerusalem during the time the Jews celebrate the Passover. ***Immediately, Jesus encounters several situations which offended Him that needed to be corrected.*** As Minister Earnest Greene thoroughly explained to us last week, the situation was so bad that Jesus took drastic actions! *The Jews were in total violation of the spiritual significance of the Passover Celebration.* The Jews were in total violation of *the fulfilment of the Law* regarding the way the sacrificial lambs were brought and offered at the Temple. As revealed in verses 14 through 16, Jesus found the Jews

- a) “**selling** cattle, sheep and doves;”
- b) “others sitting at tables **exchanging money**” in the courts of the Jerusalem Temple.

What offended Jesus was **the desecration of the Jerusalem Temple** by the **commercial frenzy** of “the selling and buying of animals” which destroyed **eternal significance of the Passover!** The *noisy barter* associated with the “money exchangers” completely destroyed **the spiritual dimension of the Passover.** That is why Jesus was offended and reacted so strongly! The Jews **desecrated** both **the Passover** and **the Temple** by *introducing commercial enterprises* inside the “temple courts” which were reserved for highly spiritual experiences. We know this to be true from what Jesus himself said in verse 16, “Get these out of here! **How dare you turn my Father’s House into a market.**” So, what was the reaction of the Jews? Let us now examine the following verses closely for our lesson today.

1. **v. 18: The Jews Question the Authority of Jesus.**

This question of the Jews reveals several things:

- a) **This is the Way We Have Been Doing It Syndrome.** The Jews never considered that the commercial enterprise taking place at the Jerusalem Temple was wrong/sinful. In other words, they have been doing it for so long that it had become ***an accepted norm*** (in spite of the commandments of God as clearly given to the Jews in the Law – READ Leviticus). ***Many churches are now suffering from this Syndrome! The Temple is a Spiritual Entity! Let there be No Confusion in God’s House!***

- b) **Nobody Can Tell Me the Truth Syndrome.** People can be so *entrenched* in their sinfulness that they refuse to see the Truth. Even though the high Priests, Pharisees and Sadducees claimed to be the authority in the Law of Moses, *they didn't practice it!* They did the opposite of what the Law says while claiming to obey it! They were so much in darkness that they couldn't see **The Light** standing before them! Some Christians claim to love Jesus while they hate others! Other Christians claim to love Jesus, while they abuse their own children and spouses! Still others claim to know the Truth while they are lying and cheating all the time! Since they are so entrenched in their sinfulness, they are incapable of receiving the Truth about their conditions! ***Such people suffer from "Nobody Can Tell Me the Truth Syndrome." Some Christians suffer from "Nobody Can Tell Me the Truth Syndrome." Those who believe in God must conform to His Truth! Christians must live out God's Truth! Their speech and deeds must match the Word of Truth they claim to believe in! Let there be No Confusion in God's House!***
- c) **The Power Hungry Syndrome.** This is a situation where someone **Claims Authority** which doesn't belong to him or her. People are known to **usurp power** which doesn't belong to them; once they have it, they refuse to relinquish it. When this happens, society suffers. Individuals are also known for **claiming positions of authority** for which they are not qualified. When this happens, both the organization and the service it render suffer. In both situations, once in power, power hungry people will not give it up voluntarily. They get *obsessed with power* so much so that they become *totally insensitive* to both their own **detriment** and the **damage** they cause to others. ***Such people suffer from The Power Hungry Syndrome. This syndrome has snuck into the Church! There are some Christians who suffer from "The Power Hungry Syndrome." The Only Authority and Power in the Church is the Head of the Church! Christ is the Head of the Church! The pastor, the deacons, the ministers and the ministry leaders are just servants of our Lord Jesus Christ! We all servants of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Let there be No Confusion in God's House!***

The Jewish authorities questioned the authority of Jesus because they feared losing their power over the people. **They were suffering from "The Power Hungry Syndrome."** *Rather than fear the God who has Absolute Power over their lives, they questioned His authority.* So, they demanded that Jesus perform "miraculous sign" to prove His authority. **Imagine how absurd it is for us to demand that God prove to us His authority in His own Temple?!** That is because they had heard Him say "How dare you turn **my Father's House** into a market!" earlier.

2. vv. 19-21. **The Carnal Cannot Understand the Eternal.**

As you read and study the Gospels, you will find that Jesus often appeared to ignore the questions the Pharisees asked in the way He responded to them. Sometimes Jesus responded in **parables** to help the masses understand **deep eternal matters** while at the same time He *refuted* the misinterpretations of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Other times, He just performed miracles which demonstrated His supernatural powers. **Therefore, Jesus Goes Deeper to Expose their Ignorance.**

When the Jewish authorities demanded that Jesus prove His authority by performing a miracle,

- a) **v. 19:** His reply was “**Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.**” Jesus was making reference to **Spiritual Matters of Eternal Significance!** His response was connected to what **The Passover** was meant to signify! **Eternal Salvation through the Sacrificial Lamb for the Atonement of Sins!**
- b) **v. 20:** The Jews reacted by saying, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” They were so carnal in their thinking that they didn’t understand what Jesus was saying! **The Carnal Cannot Understand the Eternal!**
- c) **vv. 21-22:** In these verses, the Scripture itself gives us the explanation as to why there was a *disconnect* between Jesus and the Jewish authorities.

The Jewish authorities who considered themselves “the experts in the Law of Moses” (Luke 10:25-37; 11:37-54) should have been the first to recognize the Truth about which Jesus was speaking of. **But they didn’t.** Why? **Because they were operating in the flesh!** The Old Testament scrolls they were carrying foretold about the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. They should have been the first to recognize Him and accept His Message. **But they didn’t.** Why? **Because their thinking was carnal!**

3. **vv. 23-25: God Knows than Man Needs Faith to believe in Miraculous Signs**

We need to reflect on a couple of aspects raised in verses 24 and 25 before we deal with verse 23. We need to deal with the question: **What is in man?** Until man is redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, there is only sinfulness, doubt and ignorance of the Truth **in man.** ***We know all these things lead man to destruction!***

- a) **v. 24: God Knows Everything About Man.** God knows that man is sinful. God knows that man is incapable of saving man. God knows man needs Salvation. God knows that for sinful man to be saved, Jesus must offer Himself as the Passover Lamb! Jesus knew that He was revealed in the flesh to be **the Lamb of God.** Therefore, Jesus already knew that He cannot “entrust Himself to man.”
- b) **v.25: Man Needs to Know Jesus to Testify about God.** In John 1:4-5, 10-11, Scripture tells us that “In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ... He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.”
- c) **v.25: Man Needs Faith to Believe in the Miraculous Signs!** Jesus performed numerous miracles among the Jews and Gentiles. ***But not all the Jews believed in Him!*** As a matter of fact, the Jewish authorities crucified Jesus in spite of the numerous miraculous signs and wonders He performed! Even after Jesus was Resurrected, many of the Jews refused to believe what their own eyes have seen! ***The Carnal Cannot Understand the Eternal! Let there be No Confusion in God’s House! Salvation!***