

SCRIPTURE READING FOR JANUARY 16, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

John 2:13-25
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

¹³ It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ He found **IN THE TEMPLE** those who were selling cattle, sheep, and doves, as well as those involved in exchanging currency sitting there. ¹⁵ He made a whip from ropes and chased them all out of the temple, including the cattle and the sheep. He scattered the coins and overturned the tables of those who exchanged currency. ¹⁶ He said to the dove sellers, "Get these things out of here! Don't make MY FATHER'S HOUSE a place of business."

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written, *Passion for your house consumes me.*

¹⁸ Then the Jewish leaders asked him, "By what authority are you doing these things? What **MIRACULOUS SIGN** will you show us?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up."

²⁰ The Jewish leaders replied, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But the temple Jesus was talking about was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he had said, and *they believed* the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

²³ While Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, many believed in his name because they saw the miraculous signs that he did. ²⁴ But Jesus didn't trust himself to them because he knew all people. ²⁵ He didn't need anyone to tell him about human nature, for he knew what human nature was.

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The gospel of John one of the four stories of the good news of Jesus (Gospel means good news) which tells his life, actions, words and mission. It's believed that John's account is the last one written as his retelling of the story reflects considerable theological reflection and uses metaphors and poetic language. One example is the play with light and darkness throughout the story. John's account also contains only seven miracles – or signs as they're called. A symbolic number in Jewish tradition that represents the divine and also recall the days of creation in the foundational story of Genesis.

IN THE TEMPLE :: The text specifies that this takes place in **THE TEMPLE PRECINCTS** (hieron) meaning the outer court of the Temple, the Court of the Gentiles. The Temple was surrounded by courtyards where different people could access...such as women, and Gentiles, and with Jewish men being able to access further in. The Temple proper, the building or sanctuary, is mentioned in verses 19-21. See the image on the back for more info.... The point is that Jesus is the courtyard where everyone can come...with the most people present.

those who were selling cattle, sheep, and doves, :: These animals were sold to be scarified (as people wouldn't bring such animals with them when they traveled far to Jerusalem). The doves or pigeons were the sacrifices reserved for the poor (as they were the cheapest to buy) – as specified in Leviticus 5:7. This may explain the milder treatment by Jesus of the dove sellers (who aren't whipped but merely talked to)

those involved in exchanging currency :: Because of the imperial or pagan portraits that they bore Roman and Attic (Greek) coins were not permitted to be used in paying the temple tax of a half-shekel (Matthew 27:27). The money changers exchanged these coins for legal Tyrian coinage and made a small profit in the transaction.

a whip from ropes :: No sticks or weapons were allowed in the temple precincts. Jesus may have fashioned his whip from the rushes used as bedding for the animals. Only John among the gospel writers mentions this.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE :: The Temple is frequently described in the Hebrew Scriptures as "the house of God".

Passion for your house consumes me.:: This is a word for word citation of Psalm 69:9.

MIRACULOUS SIGN :: The word here is the Greek sémeion

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- How do you think those people selling the animals reacted to Jesus? How about the money changers? Imagine the people who had come to the Temple to make sacrifices and prayers to God....how might they have responded to Jesus' actions and words?
- Why do you think Jesus was really so indignant and irritated?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

which became the Latin “signum” (from which we also get “signal,” “insignia” and “signature.”) Signum can mean anything from an “identifying mark” (think “X marks the spot”) to “proof” and even a “banner to follow.” John uses this word for the word “miracle” or “act of wonder” that the other gospel writers use. Here the religious leaders seem to be asking for some sort of miraculous apologetic proof for those who disbelieve what Jesus says.

they believed :: throughout the gospel of John coming to belief in Jesus is portrayed as choice between life and death, recalling the majestic words of the prologue in John 1:12-14: “¹² But those who did welcome him, *those who believed* in his name, he authorized to become God’s children, ¹³ born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”

THINKING DEEPER....

In her book “The Great Emergence,” Phyllis Tickle argues that Christianity is currently undergoing a massive upheaval as part of a regular pattern that occurs every 500 years, in which old ideas are rejected and new ones emerge. Ultimately, the old expression of Christianity is refurbished and revitalized, while a new, more vital form also is created, she says. We see that the forms of stability in our culture and society aren’t able to provide the same authoritative stability that they used to. Think of how few people now interact with church communities, or are even literate in terms of the Christian story. Think of the division over our government – national, state and local. In the first century of our era we know the Israelites were also in a time of great transition, adapting to rule under the Roman Empire and the large economic inequality in their society. Rather than remaining silent about this, Jesus seems to speak prophetically with his actions. What might that imply for us in our situation today?

