The Power & Authority of Jesus Christ

John 2:12-25
6-9-2024

Introduction: v.12

- ***What kind of power and authority does Jesus Christ have?***

I. *Jesus had power (authority)* to cleanse the Temple (v.13-17)

II. *Jesus had power* to raise Himself from the dead (v.18-22)

III. *Jesus had power* to perform the miraculous (v.23)

IV. *Jesus had power* to know the hearts & minds of men (v.24-25)

Conclusion: If Jesus Christ has such power & authority, does He rule your life?

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v. 12
John continues his day by day and week by week chronicle of the life and ministry of Jesus.

"His mother and His brethren" – Mary (without Joseph, who had apparently died by this time) and her other children (Jesus half-brothers) accompanied Jesus down the mountain range from Cana to Capernaum (a city on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee).

- ***What kind of power and authority does Jesus Christ have?***

I. *Jesus had power (authority)* to cleanse the Temple (v.13-17)

v. 13
"Passover" - A Jewish holy day celebrating God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt (Exod. 12). This special time was celebrated on the 14th of Nisan (March-April), and it involved a "holy convocation" (a special meeting) for Jews from all over the world who would gather at Jerusalem for worship and sacrifice (Lev. 23:4-8).

Jesus, who as the Lamb of God would fulfill this feast, left Capernaum and traveled to the great, elevated city of Jerusalem.

It is by John's record of the three Passovers that Jesus participated in (2:13; 6:4; 12:1) that we know the duration of His public ministry – 3 ½ years.

v. 14
Because many Jewish pilgrims would travel great distances and would arrive at Jerusalem with a variety of foreign currency, many at Jerusalem would take advantage of the situation and have both animals for sacrifice and money for exchange.

Many at Jerusalem would take advantage of the situation and have both animals for sacrifice and money for exchange waiting for them.

Now there is nothing wrong with selling animals and there is nothing wrong with exchanging money. The problem was <u>where</u> and <u>how</u> such business would take place. God's Temple was no place for a market to sell animals and booths to exchange money.

However, then like today, many charlatans seek to use God and use religion for financial exploitation. What were supposed to be "holy days" were now turned into the biggest money-making scams of the year. Interesting how to this day, even the world recognizes Passover and Christmas etc. As the biggest money-making opportunities of the year.

No doubt the Temple salesmen could give good spiritual reasons for their "ministry": they were providing a service, they were helping traveling pilgrims, they were providing needed animals to sacrifice to Jehovah God!

"The condition of the temple was a vivid indication of the spiritual condition of the nation. Their religion was a dull routine, presided over by worldly minded men whose main desire was to exercise authority and get rich. Not only had the wine run out at the wedding feast, but the glory had departed from the temple." (Wiersbe, p. 292).

"No doubt, this 'religious market' began as a convenience for the Jews who came long distances to worship in the temple, but in due time the 'convenience' became a business, not a ministry. The tragedy is that this business was carried on in the court of the Gentiles in the temple, the place where the Jews should have been meeting the Gentiles and telling them about the one true God. Any Gentile searching for truth would not likely find it among the religious merchants in the temple." (Wiersbe, p. 292)

"Every Jew over nineteen was required to pay a temple tax, which could only be paid in Galilean or sanctuary shekels—hence, the need for moneychangers. The corruption, however, was not in the system but in the exorbitant rate these unscrupulous financiers changed. Adding to the corruption was the way sacrifices were approved. A fee was changed to inspect all animals brought to the temple for sacrifice. Most of the time, the inspectors found the animals blemished in some way, disqualifying it as a legitimate offering. This forced the out-of-town traveler to purchase an 'approved' animals at the temple for often ten to twenty times the fair market value. No wonder Christ was enraged." (Swindoll, p. 35).

v. 15
I wonder what Jesus would do if He entered many of the so-called churches today? If He was to "clean house," what "ministries" would He shut down and what "tables" would He overturn?

We have to be careful that no ministry, whether it be the bookstore, the printshop, or Bible Institute, become a means for financial gain and not a genuine ministry for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Our church must never lose its focus and shift from ministry to money, or from preaching to penury, or from evangelism to enterprise, or from the Word of God tot he wallets of men, or from discipleship to "denari," or from fellowship to "filthy mammon."

v. 16
Today (and ever since the veil was torn in the temple at Messiah's death), there is no man-made temple that God recognizes as "His." The only temple today is the believer's body (I Cor. 6:19-20). So to make specific spiritual application of this text, we must look

at our lives. Are we, who are supposed to be given over to God and prayer and His service, instead given over to the preoccupation of money and materialism?

Is financial gain our preoccupying objective?

Do we exist to "Make a buck" or to make disciples? Are we on this planet to use our time, energy, and talent for financial business or to do our Master's business?

We are not to allow the place where God dwells to become a house of merchandise—a loud, busy, deceptive place. It must be a place of prayer. . . a p[lace of sanctity. . . a place of worship, where we can commune with god in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23). What do you allow to enter your 'temple'? Does it enhance God's dwelling place—or does it defile and desecrate?" (Swindoll, p. 35)

Those who **"sold doves"** were especially targeted by Jesus because doves were the sacrifice of the <u>poor</u> (Lev. 12:8; cp. Lk. 2:24). These religious hucksters were exploiting the poor on God's property.

The problem was not that animals were sold and money exchanged. The problem was that it was done at the temple, ad this enterprise overshadowed the true purpose of the temple. Namely: it was to be a "house of prayer" (Mt. 21:13).

v.15

This is the first time that Jesus cleansed the temple as He starts His public ministry (Jn. 2:13-16). 3 ½ years later as He finishes His public ministry He cleanses the temple for a second time (Mathew 21:12).

The temple which was to be a place of blessing had become a cursed place.

"Before the thousands of worshippers, the bewildered merchants, and the priests who happened to be present, Jesus made a shambles of the bazaar and declared the shame of those who profited from it. The whole arena was in confusion and disarray, with animals running loose, doves flying around, and money of all kinds rolling across the courtyard (leaving the merchants powerless and speechless)" (MacArthur, Matthew p. 269).

"poured out. . . overthrew" - such actions paint our Lord as a revolutionary; as extremely serious and upset about the wickedness that went on in His house, the Temple.

Jesus was meek, but He was not weak! He was not a passive Messiah who overlooked the wickedness of His chosen nation.

Many would erroneously interpret Christ's actions as <u>unloving</u>. However, no one can love God without hating sin! *"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil"* (Ps. 97:10)

"Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise - (Is. 56:7; Jer. 7:11) the Temple was not for merchandising and ripping people off.

In Matthew 21:13, Jesus stated the phrase ***"You have made it a den of thieves" -*** Many would come to the money-changers to exchange their currency for Hebrew shekels so that they could give to God's house, only to be cheated by false balances and swindlers.

"What had begun as a service and convenience for visitors from other lands soon turned into a lucrative business" (Wiersbe, Matthew p. 77).

If the Lord responded this way over the defilement of a building, I'm sure he is deeply upset by a lot which goes on in the name of Christianity today!

--the materialism of religions
--the exploitation of the cults
--the chaotic confusion of the Charismatics
--the liberalism that is invading mainline Evangelicalism
--Women preachers
--Schisms and divisions over doctrinal deviations
--the cultic tendencies of some who claim to be fundamentalists

Is such harsh, strict, zealous behavior characteristic of the Messiah? Absolutely! Note: Psalm 2

II. *Jesus had power* to raise Himself from the dead (v.18-22)

v. 17
The disciples remembered what David said in Psalm 69:9. That Psalm has messianic implications.

Just as David was consumed with God's place of worship (a place to be built by his son Solomon), so Jesus is preoccupied and totally concerned with one thing: that is zeal for God's House (which today is His people – your life!

v. 18
The only sign Jesus would ever give to many of the religious leaders was the **"sign of Jonah"** (Mt. 12:39ff).

v. 19
Christ's sign that He had the authority to cleanse the temple would be His resurrection.

It is interesting how Jesus used the context of the temple to use a play on words and speak about the temple of His body.

"I will raise it up" – Who raised Jesus?

One part of the Bible says God the Father raised Him up from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10); another, the Holy Spirit (I Peter 3:18). And here Jesus says He would raise Himself. The entire Trinity was involved in the resurrection.

v. 20
How could Herod the Great's temple, which was started in 20 B.C. and completed 46 years later be torn down and raised up in 3 days?

v. 21

> False witnesses were hired at the trial of Jesus who said, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." (Matthew 26:61) Although Jesus was misquoted by what He said, it is important to note that He did <u>not</u> say the words *"<u>I am able to</u> destroy"* nor did He qualify the temple with the words *"<u>of God</u>" "Temple <u>that is made with hands</u>"* (Mk. 14:58). Rather He said, *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*
>
> When He said this, He was not referring to the physical religious place of worship, but to *"the temple of His body"* (Jn. 2:21).

v. 22
The "Scripture" and the "Word" of Jesus are one and the same.

III. *Jesus had power* to perform the miraculous (v.23)

v. 23
A miracle is a supernatural wonder, whereby the natural order of tings is suspended, whether it be a law of gravity (Jesus walked on water) or the law of thermo-dynamics (Jesus made the deaf to hear and the blind to suddenly see).

The unrecorded miracles that Jesus did at Jerusalem deeply impressed Nicodemus (Jn. 3:2).

The **"belief"** of verse 23 was not a real, genuine faith as is evident by verses 24 and 25. There is a "faith" that is dead, Ja. 2:28,; there is a belief that does not save (Acts 8:13) and is in vain (I Cor. 15:2).

"Throughout the Gospel of John, you see the Jewish people divided over the meaning of these miracles (jn. 9:16; 11:45-46). The same miracles that attracted Nicodemus to Jesus caused some of the other religious leaders to want to kill Him! They even asserted that His miracles were done in the power of Satan!" (Wiersbe, p. 293).

IV. *Jesus had power* to know the hearts & minds of men (v.24-25)

v. 24
The word **"commit"** in this verse is the same Greek word translated "believed" in v. 23. Jesus did not entrust Himself (disclose who He was) to them, because they never really entrusted themselves to Him.

They were "unsaved believers." They responded to a miracle, but never entrusted their souls to Jesus Christ.

Jesus only commits Himself to those who genuinely know Him.

"Jesus . . . knew all" – He is omniscient. He knows everything and everyone. He knows everything you do, every place you go, every word you say, every thought you think.

As Peter testified: "Lord, thou knowest all things" (Jn. 21:17).

v. 25
No one can stand up and defend any person before Jesus Christ, because He knows all about every man. He knows about the sinful nature, the depraved heart, the wicked motives of all.

"**'He knew what was in man'** is a statement that is proved several times in John's gospel. Jesus knew the character of Simon (Jn. 1:42). He knew what Nathanael was like (Jn. 1:46ff), and He told the Samaritan woman 'all things' that she had ever done (Jn. 4:29). He knew that the Jewish leaders did not have God's love in their hearts (Jn. 5:42), and that one of His disciples was not truly a believer (Jn. 6:64). He saw the repentance in the heart of the adulteress (Jn. 8:10-11) and the murder in the hearts of His enemies (Jn. 8:40ff). Several times in the Upper Room message, Jesus revealed to His disciples their own inner feelings and questions." (Wiersbe, p. 294).

Conclusion: If Jesus Christ has such power & authority, does He rule your life?

"Thus saith the Lord:

You call me Light and
You see me not.
You call me the Way and
You follow me not.
You call me Truth and
You believe me not.
You call me Just and
You trust me not.
You call me Mighty and
You fear me not.
You call me Salvation and
You honor me not.
You call me Rich and
You ask me not.
You call me Worthy and
You praise me not.
You call me eternal and
You seek me not.
You call me Master and
You obey me not.

When you force me to condemn you,
blame me not.

Jesus is God Almighty!"