

John 2:19-22

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 April 2012

Preacher: Hywel Jones

[0 : 00] John chapter 2, and reading from verse 10 to the end of the 22nd verse.

John chapter 2, verses 10 through 22. As we read, try to transport yourselves to the place where the events recorded occurred.

We'll be thinking together about them. John chapter 2 and verse 13. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the temple courts, he found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle.

He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, get these out of here.

[1 : 24] How dare you turn my father's house into a market? The disciples remembered that it is written, zeal for your house will consume me.

Then the Jews demanded of him, what miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all these things?

Jesus answered them, destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.

The Jews replied, it has taken 46 years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days? But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

[2 : 33] Amen, and may God bless to us his word. He has come to Jerusalem on the occasion of the Passover from Cana in Galilee, and the wedding that had taken place there.

His disciples are with him. And there in the outer court of the temple, he finds a beast market and a bank.

The high priest had given permission that on every Passover occasion, facilities were to be provided for those who had traveled a distance to Jerusalem to worship.

They would need various animals for sacrifice, and they would need a particular form of currency in order to pay the temple tax.

Tyrian money was required because its silver was more valuable. And so this facility was provided to enable them to buy whatever it was that they intended to sacrifice, and to exchange their own coinage for Tyrian currency, which was acceptable and required.

[3 : 57] And Jesus is evidently so concerned about all this that he throws the whole event into consternation.

He makes a whip of cords, and doubtless, with a look as well as the use of an arm, he drives all the animals out and turns the tables upside down.

His disciples realize from the Old Testament that here is a fulfillment of a prophecy, zeal for your house has eaten me up, a messianic psalm, Psalm 69.

And Jesus then explains to all who are present, take these things hence, make not my father's house, a house, which is to be for prayer, a house for trade, and commerce.

Now the Jewish teachers instantly recognize that here is someone claiming a superior authority in connection with the temple, and calling it his father's house.

[5 : 21] and so they demand a sign from him, something miraculous in order to authenticate this striking act that he has done.

This was, as I've mentioned, so early in his ministry, that perhaps it's not correct to imagine that already these Jewish leaders are antipathetic.

They've formed an adverse opinion about him. They make this request and on the basis of it open up the possibility that if a sign, something supernatural, were to be done there and then in addition to what has just been done, then his messianic credentials would be authenticated and, let's say, recognized by them.

But the deed was eloquent and there was a word of scripture that they as Jewish teachers ought to have known from Psalm 69 that predicted the sufferings of the Messiah.

There in verse 9, zeal for your house has consumed me. And this was an act of zeal. It was an act of jealousy for the honor of his father's house.

[6 : 54] That should have been enough for them. If that were not enough, then the very last portion of Old Testament scripture predicted, behold, the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, and he shall purify the sons of Levi.

Here was an act of purification of the house of God and the servants of God being symbolized by the Lord, by the messenger of the covenant himself.

but that wasn't enough for them. Now, are you like them this morning?

Are you wanting to give the impression and perhaps even verbalize it that if only something stupendous were to be done, then you would believe in Jesus?

Something supernatural, something scientific, something otherwise inexplicable? Isn't 2,000 years of history sufficient for you?

[8 : 28] Isn't the death of Jesus and his resurrection enough? What about the long history of the Christian church that in spite of its waywardness at times and its weakness at others, nevertheless has maintained Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and he was buried and on the third day he rose again according to the scriptures?

that univocal, unanimous, core testimony in spite of all the world religions, in spite of all the differing ideologies has stood firm and fast and is today.

That's why we are here. Jesus died and rose again and it was in accord with the scriptures.

If that isn't enough for you then I doubt whether anything will convince you because the problem isn't lack of evidence.

the problem is an unwillingness to face historical fact, uniform testimony, international testimony that crosses the nations that has drawn converts from all the world's ideologies and false religions down through the years.

[10 : 08] face the real issue. The issue is not lack of evidence. The issue is unwillingness, moral perversity, refusal to bow to the king, the lord Jesus Christ.

And so they make this request and Jesus answers them and his answer is there in verse 19. Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it again.

It's cryptic, isn't it? The words are not difficult to understand but it operates on two levels.

Two things conceivably are being referred to here deliberately. Here is Jesus' cryptic reply to a cynic, to a skeptic.

if you have an honest question, a real difficulty that you would be glad to bring to Jesus, to get him to answer it in holy scripture, he'll give honest answers, he'll give straightforward answers to honest questions.

[11 : 54] you pretend and he will confront you with a challenge. Time and time again in the gospels, when questions were put to him, he didn't answer the questions, he dealt with a questioner.

And this is what he's doing here. You want a sign, he says, I'll give you a sign. Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again.

And immediately, of course, they think of this temple that has been in construction for 46 years.

Herod the Great wanted to appease the Jews and curry favor with them. And so what he decided to do was to build a magnificent temple.

temple and it had been in construction for 46 years and it hadn't been completely finished when this event took place. And so these Jewish leaders says it has taken 46 years to build this temple and you are going to raise it in three days?

[13 : 11] Oh, preposterous, how impossible. And you can see how right we are to challenge this man's claimed messianic authority. The whole thing is ridiculous.

And they didn't even see how blind and mistaken they were. Even the disciples, because they grew in understanding and faith, didn't they?

Through the earthly ministry of even the disciples were perplexed by what Jesus had said. It was only afterwards.

that they realized and they remembered and they understood and they believed. You see, what Jesus was doing here was giving a sign in advance.

The Jews wanted a sign there and then. He was giving them a sign in advance in order to test them as to their genuineness.

[14 : 21] Would they wait for this sign? It would come, destroy this temple. Literally, you destroy this temple, you do that and in three days I will do this other thing.

I will raise it again. Now, what Jesus said happened, didn't it?

And therefore, it's his word to us this morning, to each one of us. Here is a sign that he isn't a false messiah.

Here is a sign that he is the messiah of God. What he predicts occurred. That is what we remember.

That is what we confess. His body was destroyed, i.e. death.

[15 : 31] But he, he raised it up. indestructible. On the third day, the Jews are thinking bricks and mortar.

Jesus is thinking bones and muscles. And that's his word to you, to me.

if we will not believe him on account of this, may God have mercy on our souls.

Let's think first of all then of the temple destroyed, what we were thinking about last Friday. while the Jews had not been physically, as it were, involved in his crucifixion, their hands were steeped with blood, his blood.

Do you remember what the leader said? His blood be on us. that's bad enough, isn't it? But that wasn't all they said.

[17 : 00] His blood be on us and on our children. What, what fury, what madness.

what they said. And they took Jesus to Pilate because they did not have the right to put anyone to death.

They took him to Pilate before they didn't call that kangaroo court. when Pilate asked for a charge, they said, we wouldn't have brought him to you if we didn't have one.

They intended him to be put to death. And they had been planning it for a long day.

this statement of his that's before us this morning, destroy this temple, is only used in John's gospel.

[18 : 17] What I mean is it's not found in the accounts of our Lord's ministry, but it recurs in his trial.

This was the statement that somehow had been repeated by those who heard it on this occasion to others.

In the process, of course, it had got a little mangled and misinterpreted. But this deceiver said, I will destroy this temple.

Didn't say it. He said, you destroy this temple. I will destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again, not made with hands, Mark records.

That's an addition, isn't it? But you see the point, the fact of the claim had impressed people and it had stuck out because it is a stupendous statement.

[19 : 19] we passed over it. I must have passed over it many, many times. But here is someone saying, three years in advance of an event, equivalent to if you destroy this temple, I will raise it up on the third day.

but that is what they did. And they did it not just at the trial, they did it on Good Friday itself, the first Good Friday.

You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and we'll believe you. were some of the same people present at both occasions?

The words are being cast in his teeth while he is dying. And he bowed his head and a spear wound proved that he had died.

And a corpse was taken down from the cross. And buried in the tomb with great haste because Passover was coming.

[20 : 41] The temple was destroyed. That body became lifeless. So that we read in the book of Acts that it was with wicked hands peace.

That Jesus had been slain. Jews had accused of complicity in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They'd killed the prince of life. And then after he had died they go to Pilate and they say we remember the disciples hadn't.

We remember that this deceiver said while he was alive make sure put a stone set a guard not put a stone Joseph put the stone set a seal put a guard what's likely to happen is that his disciples are going to break in take the body and then spread another lie lie number one I will raise it.

Lie number two he is risen and that's worse more effective. And you know what they did we heard the reading they paid the soldiers money and everybody got to know what had been done.

[22 : 17] You know it's more difficult to believe in alternatives to the resurrection than to believe in the resurrection itself. But there the temple destroyed. Jesus was crucified.

Then the temple rebuilt. Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again. Now you remember that an angel came down from heaven in connection with an earthquake.

Symbol of God's presence. house and it was the angel that rolled the stone from the tomb not to let him out but to let people in to see that he wasn't there.

and they went in and they saw and Peter and John went in and saw. And what they saw John records they saw the linen strips in which he had been in which spices had been folded and he had been bound all laying by themselves and the napkin that was about his head not with those strips but folded in a place by itself.

He'd got up. That's what had happened. You remember Lazarus three days in the tomb Lazarus come forth and he comes out grave clothes and all and Jesus says loose him and let him go.

[24 : 20] Jesus loosed himself no one untied those bands of cloth no one removed the napkin about his head he did it himself.

No one saw him rise. Do you know the difference between us who believe in the resurrection of the body of Jesus and those disciples is just this.

They saw and believed. We believed without seeing. But no one no one actually saw him rising as they saw him dying.

and yet he proved himself alive to them by many infallible proofs.

Handle me he says touch me a spirit or a ghost has not flesh and bone tangible things you see not flesh and blood can't feel blood but you can feel flesh and bone this is body this is as real a body as you and mine a ghost doesn't have flesh and bone and he ate some honey with them and he ate a bit of boiled fish with them here is someone embodied this same Jesus has lived and died is raised is alive and yet there was something about that body which made it different.

[26 : 40] There were these similarities but there were differences too because on two occasions the first Easter Sunday evening so to speak there are the disciples in the upper room behind closed doors for fear of the Jews and suddenly Jesus was there the same Jesus has got out of the tomb before the stone had been rolled away and he's there in the upper room with him but Thomas isn't there and so a week later it happens all over again and time and time again by many infallible proofs Jesus revealed himself as alive to them the disciples the women and later we read don't we of 500 at one time think about that 500 you see this isn't this isn't somebody engaging in wishful thinking this isn't somebody being deluded and claiming to have a vision 500 flesh and blood individuals saw him embodied after his resurrection and Paul says some of them have fallen asleep many of them are still alive in other words go and ask them this isn't myth this is history it's as factual as birth and life and death destroy this temple and in three days

I will raise it again and he did how on earth could he how could he it's one thing to go into a let's say a bedroom and there's a little girl dead daughter of Jairus and Jesus says Talitha kumi little one rise it's another thing for him to go alongside a beer as a coffin is being carried out the son of the widow of Nain about to be buried touch the coffin he rose it's another thing to stand outside a sealed tomb three days after a corpse has been interred and say

Lazarus come forth but he was alive then he died and now he's dead careful careful yes his human nature his reasonable soul and his physical body were lifeless but it was still in union with his divine person the son of God who alone has immortality I destroy this temple and I this temple is mine but I am not just to be identified with it it is a temple because

I'm in it you know the tabernacle and the temple in the Old Testament Herod's temple too all constructed in the same sort of pattern holy spaces that's what they were this event the court of the Gentiles the outer court then there was the court of the women into which no Gentile could go then there was the court of the Jews into which no woman could go then there was the court of the priests into which no Jewish priest could go Jewish male could go and then beyond the court of the priests the holy of holies the holiest of all into which only one could go once a year and what's there nothing or no one yes there's the ark of the covenant yes there's the mercy seat yes there are those cherubim whose outspread wings form a throne but who's on the throne no one there is no image there at the center of that holy place is absence because god is infinitely greater and this is but a type it's but a picture of the greatness the ineffable being of god himself now destroy this temple and in three days i immanuel god incarnate will reanimate it he is the one who lives in the temple of his body in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily it was because he was who he was that he could say and do all that is recorded of him it was because he was the i am jehovah great i am that he's the bread of life that he's the water of life the true vine the lamb of god so on so forth and it's because he's the great i am that they're unseen but to be made visible they're in the darkness of death he arose that's what happened he reanimated that lifeless body and emerged triumphant from the grave the lord of life and death saviour god incarnate our great high priest and heavenly friend there's your proof proof there's your proof he said it would happen it did he said he would do

it he did it and if you will not believe it is because you will not believe why refuse to believe what's your answer to life what's your answer to death to time to eternity how can you face the grave without him how can you contemplate the throne of God without him as you were saviour from sin and guilt and hell it's madness it's the same madness that destroyed him that will destroy you or it's the sublimest reason the wisest faith to trust him and hand yourself over to him for time and eternity life down here life beyond forever he is the lord of life and death amen love so now and to far in morning

[36 : 50] The glory is the concrete sun, And this is the victory, Thou on earth must come.

Angels in bright ravens Call the sun away, Then the folded rain flows Where thy glory lay.

Thine be the glory, Risen from great sun, And blesses the fears we Thou on earth must come.

O Jesus, Jesus, Risen from the tomb, Lovingly he brings us, Sadness clear and blue.

Let the church with gladness, Hymns of triumph sing. For the Lord now living, Death has lost his sting, Blindly the glory, Risen from great sun, Endless is the victory, Thou o'er dead must come.

[38 : 34] O glory doubt thee, Glorious prince of life, Thine is not without thee, Greatest sin of strife, Make us for the darkness, Through thy endless love, Bring us safe through Jordan, Till thy home alone.

Thine be the glory, Praise and comfort serve, And blesses the victory, Thou o'er dead must come.

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God, The fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all this day and forevermore.

Amen.