

What Jesus said and Knew about the Resurrection

John 2:13-22

The first Passover that Jesus attended after His baptism by John was separated from that event only by Jesus' return to Galilee in order to attend the wedding in Cana. This was the first time that Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple as He was outraged by the profiteering the temple authorities were engaged in to the detriment of the people and in disrespect of the holy week. These temple leaders challenged Jesus' action and demanded, "What sign do you show us since you do these things?" Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jewish leaders responded, "It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" There is no further dialogue recorded from this conversation. Jesus let His answer stand for what it was. John's editorial comment is one that reflects what the disciples later came to understand, "But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

What Jesus knew was the end from the beginning. The anger of the temple authorities ignored the obvious truth demonstrated by Jesus' outrage over the misuse of the temple. The temple's function was to act as a bridge between the people and God. The money changers and the temple leaders used the spiritual need of the people and the tradition of the Passover as means for personal profit. When Jesus challenged their priorities, they attacked Him. This was a for taste of what was to come. This conflict would escalate and become the cross. Jesus could see the cross from where He stood but He could also see beyond the cross to the empty tomb, to rising from the dead and to ultimately being seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus used the metaphor of the temple, the edifice restored by Herod the Great, as a representative of Himself. Truly the temple's intended function was to be a bridge between the people and God. This was

what the people thirsted for as they came to Passover. But the corruption that Jesus confronted was no secret. The corruption was in the way of God's work. Everyone knew it even if they could not change it. And, the leaders didn't care.

"Destroy this temple..." Jesus said. He knew that no one would understand then that He was talking about His body as the temple. Jesus was engaging in deliberate doublespeak. In one sentence, He meant two things. "Destroy this temple..." an outrageous thought, absurd! The temple was new. The crowds were numerous and enthused. And yet, corruption was ruining the day. If the temple were not to accomplish its intended purpose then, what good was it? "Destroy this temple..." would be to destroy the system that was already failing. A self-serving hierarchy was using the temple for their own ends rather than for the work of God. "Destroy this temple..." what other action was possible? What else could be done to get back to the bridge-work that God had ordained?

What Jesus knew was that to "destroy this temple..." meaning His own body, was to "destroy this temple" meaning the edifice in which they stood and the now corrupt system that it had become. No one knew this. When they conspired with one another, when they planned the ways that they might employ in order to kill Him. When Caiaphas said in one such meeting, "...it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and not that the whole nation should perish..." he had no idea that the execution of his plan would bring an end to the temple. You see, the temple was God's building. Its every manifestation was for the work He had ordained. It was to be the location of the divine presence. It was to be the place where the devout, the observant, came to confess their sins and to make things right with their maker and redeemer. But Jesus was the person who was in Himself the divine presence. He came for the purpose of becoming the bridge that the temple had failed to be. In Jesus, sinners have a way to God. When they destroyed this temple (that is Jesus' own body) He became the perfect and final sacrifice for sin so that the temple offerings were now obsolete. Jesus was the Lamb of God, come to take away the sin of the world. Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." Hebrews 9:11,12 "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things

to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption." Hebrews 9:28 "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many..." In each of these passages there is the realization that Jesus has satisfied the demands of the law. His death was sufficient for all. He died for you. Your sins have been paid for. 2 Cor. 5:21 "For he who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Romans 3:23-26 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins That were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." They destroyed "this temple" and when they did, they destroyed the building they so admired. Its day was over. It was no longer needed. The sacrifices were now unnecessary. The building that only existed for the purpose God had given it no longer had a purpose and so within the lifetimes of many who witnessed Jesus' death, the temple was destroyed in 70 AD and it has never been replaced by a building. It was replaced by Jesus Christ.

But Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up." Later, the disciples realized that He had spoken of His body and His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection was the last and final act of our redemption. He died for our forgiveness and to destroy every aspect of sin and its curse upon us. Death only exists because of sin. The defeat of sin requires the defeat of death. Romans 6:4,5 "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection." Paul, writing to the Corinthians, gives witness to the literal resurrection Of Jesus from the dead. He gives a witness list of which the majority was alive at the time that he wrote his letter. He knew that Jesus was alive because he was also a

witness. 1 Cor. 15:17-19 "And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." It was Jesus death and resurrection that destroyed the temple. It became obsolete and so the force, the power, the God who had sustained this building whose purpose had always been to be that bridge between God and man and which had failed to do so and had in fact in Jesus day become such a center of corruption that Jesus took out a whip and drove the defilers out of the temple courtyard in a protest aimed at the corrupt system that the temple had become announced that when He was destroyed, so also would the temple, but that He would be raised up on the third day, and that when this happened, the work of reconciliation between God and man would be accomplished and completed. The temple's work would be done through a person rather than through a place.