

'Signs of life'

The seven 'signs' in the public ministry of Jesus

"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

[John 20.30f]

John records seven incidents during the public ministry of Jesus which he describes as 'signs'. 'Signs', as John presents them, both *authenticate* (see Acts 2.22 for a similar perspective) and *illustrate*: that's to say they point clearly to who Jesus is and the significance of what He has come to do.

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".. 'Get these out of here!' .."

John 2.13-25

On the basis that the 'signs' which John records are (a) performed in public in the presence of witnesses and (b) specifically referred to as 'signs' in the narrative, we're taking the 'cleansing of the temple' as the second such sign.

This incident, like the other 'signs' John records, is a pointer not only to who Jesus is, but to what He has come to effect. As you read and reflect on the passage bear that in mind and be asking yourself what this incident is telling you about Him.

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1. **Read John 2.13-25.** The scene has shifted from a remote village in the north to Jerusalem in the south: the Passover was one of the three great festivals when everyone converged on Jerusalem.

If you had been present as an observer, what would have been your reaction to what Jesus did?

The Passover festival celebrated the people of Israel being freed by God from slavery in Egypt (see **Ex.12**): why do you think Jesus chose this festival as the setting for this action?

2. **Read John 2.13-17.** The trade was a necessary one - people needed to buy animals for the sacrifices they were required to make: it was the *location* of the trade which Jesus challenged.

Why did Jesus so publicly remove this trade from the temple courts?

What lessons might we learn for ourselves from the forcefulness of Jesus' action here?

3. **Read John 2.18-22.** The Jews request a 'sign' little realizing that Jesus' action was itself a 'sign'! He responded with a veiled pointer to His own death and resurrection.

What was Jesus suggesting by describing His own body as the temple?

How would this shift from seeing the temple as a building to seeing it being a *Person* change the way believers worshipped God?

4. **Read John 2.23-25.** The passage ends with a statement about the impact of the 'signs' on people, and a note about the impact of such faith on Jesus.

What has helped you to believe in Jesus?

People believed in Jesus - but He wouldn't entrust ('believe' - same word) Himself to them: what do you think John is pointing to in making this observation?

How does this whole passage (2.13-25) help you to understand better who Jesus is and what He came to do?