

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday Feb 28 for the 3rd Sunday of Lent

OPENING PRAYER: Blessed are you, God of the Covenant. You formed Israel as your covenant people. You invite us into a new covenant of love in your Son. Help us to live always in accord with your will. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL according to John

John 2:13-25

Cleansing of the Temple.

13^{*} Since the Passover^{*} of the Jews was near,^f Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
14^{*} He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves,^{*} as well as the money-changers seated there.^g
15 He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables,
16 and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”^h
17^{*} His disciples recalled the words of scripture,ⁱ “Zeal for your house will consume me.”
18 At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?”ⁱ

19 Jesus answered and said to them,^{* k} “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.”

20 The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years,^{*} and you will raise it up in three days?”

21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

22 Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.^l

23 While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing.^m

24 But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all,

25 and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.ⁿ

Notes

* [[2:13–22](#)] This episode indicates the post-resurrectional replacement of the temple by the person of Jesus.

* [[2:13](#)] Passover: this is the first Passover mentioned in John; a second is mentioned in [Jn 6:4](#); a third in [Jn 13:1](#). Taken literally, they point to a ministry of at least two years.

* [[2:14–22](#)] The other gospels place the cleansing of the temple in the last days of Jesus’ life (Matthew, on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem; Mark, on the next day). The order of events in the gospel narratives is often determined by theological motives rather than by chronological data.

* [[2:14](#)] Oxen, sheep, and doves: intended for sacrifice. The doves were the offerings of the poor ([Lv 5:7](#)). Money-changers: for a temple tax paid by every male Jew more than nineteen years of age, with a half-shekel coin ([Ex 30:11–16](#)), in Syrian currency. See note on [Mt 17:24](#).

* [[2:17](#)] [Ps 69:10](#), changed to future tense to apply to Jesus.

* [[2:19](#)] This saying about the destruction of the temple occurs in various forms ([Mt 24:2](#); [27:40](#); [Mk 13:2](#); [15:29](#); [Lk 21:6](#); cf. [Acts 6:14](#)). [Mt 26:61](#) has: “I can destroy the temple of God...”; see note there. In [Mk 14:58](#), there is a metaphorical contrast with a new temple: “I will destroy this temple *made with hands* and within three days I will build another *not made with hands*.” Here it is symbolic of Jesus’ resurrection and the resulting community (see [Jn 2:21](#) and [Rev 21:2](#)). In three days: an Old Testament expression for a short, indefinite period of time; cf. [Hos 6:2](#).

* [[2:20](#)] Forty-six years: based on references in Josephus (*Jewish Wars* 1, 21, 1 #401; *Antiquities* 15, 11, 1 #380), possibly the spring of A.D. 28. Cf. note on [Lk 3:1](#).

a. [[2:1](#)] [4:46](#); [Jgs 14:12](#); [Tb 11:8](#).

b. [[2:4](#)] [7:30](#); [8:20](#); [12:23](#); [13:1](#); [Jgs 11:12](#); [1 Kgs 17:18](#); [2 Kgs 3:13](#); [2 Chr 35:21](#); [Hos 14:9](#); [Mk 1:24](#); [5:7](#); [7:30](#); [8:20](#); [12:23](#); [13:1](#).

c. [[2:5](#)] [Gn 41:55](#).

d. [[2:6](#)] [3:25](#); [Lv 11:33](#); [Am 9:13–14](#); [Mt 15:2](#); [23:25–26](#); [Mk 7:2–4](#); [Lk 11:38](#).

e. [[2:11](#)] [4:54](#).

f. [[2:13–22](#)] [Mt 21:12–13](#); [Mk 11:15–17](#); [Lk 19:45–46](#).

g. [[2:14](#)] [Ex 30:11–16](#); [Lv 5:7](#).

h. [[2:16](#)] [Zec 14:21](#).

i. [[2:17](#)] [Ps 69:9](#).

j. [[2:18](#)] [6:30](#).

k. [[2:19](#)] [Mt 24:2](#); [26:61](#); [27:40](#); [Mk 13:2](#); [14:58](#); [15:29](#); [Lk 21:6](#); [Acts 6:14](#).

l. [[2:22](#)] [5:39](#); [12:16](#); [14:26](#); [20:9](#); [Mt 12:6](#); [Lk 24:6–8](#); [Rev 21:22](#).

m. [[2:23](#)] [4:45](#).

n. [[2:25](#)] [1 Kgs 8:39](#); [Ps 33:15](#); [94:11](#); [Sir 42:18](#); [Jer 17:10](#); [20:12](#).

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

- 1. Can you give an example where living the Gospel can make you look foolish to others? If you have a personal example, what gave you the courage to be true to your beliefs?**
- 2. How do you feel about people who show zeal for a particular cause? How is their behavior like or different from Jesus?**
- 3. When it comes to worship of God, there is always the danger that our worship becomes ritualistic. We go through the motions of prayer. What can help us to stop that from happening?**

Commentary

The Gospel for the next three Sundays will be from John. Many of John's stories have two levels of meaning which we will come back to later. Jesus' action in cleansing the temple was a protest against the commercialization of religion and the desecration of the Temple. But it went deeper. It was a symbolic action, in the fashion of an Old Testament prophet (see Jer 7:11; Mal 3.1), through which he passed judgement on the Jewish sacrificial system. He was declaring that temple worship, with its ritual and animal sacrifices, was irrelevant and could do nothing to bring people to God. He was replacing sacrificial worship with spiritual worship. He was also protesting at the way religion had become narrow, nationalistic, and exclusive. Israel had failed to fulfil her universal mission to humankind. It was God's intention that the Temple should be a house of prayer 'for all nations.' But the Temple remained the jealously guarded preserve of Israel. No Gentile dared venture, under threat of penalty and death, beyond what was known as the 'court of the Gentiles.' Jesus declared that salvation was not just for the Jews, but for all peoples." Above, we said that many of John's stories have two levels of meaning, a literal meaning and a deeper meaning. The literal or historical meaning is about the Jewish temple which had been destroyed for many years when John was writing his Gospel. On a deeper level, John is referring to the temple of Jesus' body which will be resurrected and become the new focus of his followers' worship life.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

