Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus Displays His Deity
Scripture: John 2:12-25
Code: 1505A

Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 2 this morning as we examine the passage that is before us. John chapter 2 verses 12 to 25 includes some very, very important passages in the thoughts of John and in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And they are not all easy to be understood. We shall endeavor to open them to you as best we are able as God has revealed to us what is located in this text, and there are some just exciting and thrilling things here.

Now remember that John has one point through His whole gospel, it's the same point in every chapter and it is, he wants to present Jesus Christ as God, and that's our message, too. Jesus is God. Jesus is not just a good teacher, good teachers don't claim to be God. Jesus is not just a good example, good examples don't run around with sinners, drunks and tax collectors. Jesus is not a religious paranoid, a fanatic. Man men don't speak those words, mad men don't have those clear thoughts and mad men don't show that kind of love. Jesus is not a religious phony, phonies don't rise from the dead. Jesus is not a phantom, you don't nail a phantom to a cross and it has to blood to shed. Jesus is not a myth, myths don't set the calendars for history. Jesus is God in a body come to this world to show us what God was like and then to redeem us. He's God. That's John's message. And John has been trying to show us the proof that He is God.

You remember he told us He was God in chapter 1 at the beginning and then he said John the Baptist said He was God, Philip said He was God, Nathanael said He was God, Simon said He was God...or Andrew said He was God, right on down the line.

Then he not only used the words of these men to show that He was God but in chapter 2 verses 1 to 11 as we saw last week, He showed by the miracle of creating wine that He was God. Only God can create. Jesus created from nothing. Only God can do that.

And so, from the words of testimony of witnesses, He is God. From the works that He Himself did, He is God. And now as we come to verses 12 to 25 of chapter 2 we're going to see three other reasons to indicate that He is God. And each of them is an attribute of Christ. By three attributes of Christ, not mentioned as attributes but illustrated, three illustrations of three attributes of Christ John shows us beyond doubt that He is indeed God. Those three things are this, three things that show us He's God, His passion for reverence, His power of resurrection, His perception of reality. Each of these three is illustrated by one of these three incidents.

First of all, let's look at the narrative and notice His passion for reverence. In verse 12 it says, "After this He went down to Capernaum...that is, after they left Cana...He and His mother and brethren and His disciples and they continued there not many days." That verse is put there as a transition to get them from Cana back to Jerusalem. Verse 13 tells us that they arrived in Jerusalem for the Passover.

What happens in Jerusalem when He arrives is a tremendous insight into the very person of Jesus Christ because it's not the gentle Jesus, it's the very opposite. Jesus is absolutely totally intolerant of one particular thing and that is, Jesus never tolerates irreverence toward God. He has a passion for reverence. And here in the temple His righteous anger rages when God is not being reverenced. When He finds people who lightly approach God, when He finds people who have made merchandise out of the name of God, He literally becomes fierce in His anger. You see, God doesn't look lightly on people who approach Him in irreverence. Christ demanded reverence for God.

You see, all things were created for God's glory. Now a few Sunday nights ago we had a message on glory, one of the most important messages in all the Bible. God demands glory from everything He created. And there are only two rebels in the universe that don't give it to Him. Butterflies give Him glory. Birds give Him glory. Trees give Him glory. Only two things don't...fallen angels and fallen men. And you know what God does to those that don't give Him glory? He casts them from His presence forever. The whole story of the Bible is God's attempt to get man to see His glory. He revealed in the Shekinah. He revealed it in the His miracles. He finally revealed it in Christ. And men constantly refused His glory. Some day when He comes back in glory there's not going to be any option. There's going to be judgment.

God demands men's praise and reverence and that men give Him glory. And Jesus had this same passion for the reverence of God. God tolerates nothing less than reverence. And Paul even brings this to bear in a Christ's life when he says in 1 Corinthians 10, "Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do all to...what?...the glory of God." God demands that.

Now just to show you how important it is that God get His glory, Christ was basically a messenger of love because the Bible says God in love sent Christ, it says that in 1 John, it says that in the gospel of John. Paul says it. God loved and sent Christ. Christ is the gift of love. But listen, when Christ got here the first thing He did didn't even involve love. Jesus didn't come in to Jerusalem at the Passover and say, "Now I want to tell you all about love." There was no message of love until He had shattered the complacency of sin, that's where He had to start. And He came in there and He ripped apart their irreverence before He ever got around to love.

Nobody comes to God on the basis of love first until they see a sense of overwhelming sense of their own sin. Jesus didn't want to win a popularity contest, He wanted to tell it like it was. And He couldn't talk about love until He dealt with sin.

So, Jesus the gift of love, the messenger of love came giving no message of love until after He had shattered their sinful complacency and irreverence. And He hit them right in the pit of the stomach, right at the point of their religious hypocrisy, the most gross kind of sin. Man cannot accept love until he knows why he needs to be loved.

And so, Christ comes, first of all, in a temple and He doesn't even talk about love, He just grabs a whip and He beats people and sends them out of there. You say, "That's the messenger of love?" The message of love was meaningless until they awoke to their sin.

I want you to notice the circumstances of this first message of judgment. Verse 13 says, "And the Jews' Passover was at hand and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Now this was a standard procedure for every Jewish male over twelve years old. Every year at Passover time he went to the temple. Commentators, Barclay in particular, says there were perhaps two and a quarter million of them there. And they all went there to carry out the Passover. On the tenth day a male lamb was taken. On the fourteenth day between three and six o'clock the male lamb was slaughtered and that night they had a feast. The feast was called the Passover Feast and it was to commemorate the passing over of the angel of death in Egypt in the ancient history of Israel. God's test of His power in the Old Testament was always how God brought Israel out of Egypt. That was always God's test of power. He'd say to anybody who didn't recognize His power, "Don't you remember when I brought you out of Egypt?" That was always the touchstone of His power, just as in the New Testament the resurrection is the touchstone of His power.

So Jesus went as usual to the Passover. So during this time with all these people there and everybody wanting to get a lamb and everybody wanting to go through their sacrifice, there was a need for somebody to provide animals. And that led to the situation of verse 14. "Jesus went to Jerusalem and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting." That's a pretty sick situation.

Religion had become a business. It was crass. That is it was dull, it was hypocritical, meaningless. The priests were insincere. Annas, the high priest, has to go down in history as the all-time evil character. Caiaphas was just another Annas. They were materialistic, they wanted prestige, money, power. And they had turned the worship of Israel into a merchandise. They were irreverent. They were making money off the name of God. And when Jesus found that in the temple, He took fast and furious action.

Now they didn't know it, they didn't know anything for that matter, they never did, but basically they were seeing right in front of their faces the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. And I'll show you that prophecy. Look at Malachi 3:1, one of the most important prophecies in relation to who Christ is. Malachi 3:1, now this has a future fulfillment in the Second Coming of Christ, but it has an indicated

initial fulfillment in this action of Christ. "Behold, I will send My messenger and he shall prepare the way before Me," that's John the Baptist. Watch this. "And the Lord whom you seek, that is Messiah, shall suddenly come to His temple," and it says later on in a few verses that He shall refine and purify that place. Now you can go back to John chapter 2.

They didn't know it but what they were seeing was the prophecy of the Messiah coming suddenly to His temple fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The first place Jesus Christ went, He walked right into that temple as Malachi said He would and He took a whip in His hand and He began to beat people and animals and chase them out. He was purifying His Father's house. So you see, John by putting the incident of the cleansing of the temple here is saying from another angle Jesus is Messiah, isn't he? From the prophetic angle. Jesus came to the temple in direct fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. The cleansing of the temple, the refining of the temple was a fulfillment of God's promise.

The temple, needless to say, was a mess. With over two million people there, large crowds were everywhere. And, of course, they would all be pushing at the temple because that's where the worship would go on. Now when they use the word "temple," it came to mean the whole complex of building and courts and everything. The real temple, the temple itself was just one little area divided into two parts, one third and two thirds, which was the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, and only the priests could go there and only the high priests once a year could enter the Holy of Holies.

But around that was the inner courtyard, the outer courtyard, the court of the Gentiles, the buildings of the palace and all the other kinds of things. It was one complex. And all the population was pushing at the temple. In order to commodate everybody who wanted to make a sacrifice, they had set all kinds of shops in the Court of the Gentiles and they were selling things there. One writer, interestingly enough, says it is very likely that because business, you know, was competitive that they began to push closer and closer to the temple until perhaps the temple itself, the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place was surrounded with people with their little wares set up with just behind them would be the temple and the Holy Place. And they were all bickering for the sale of these animals to people who wanted to purchase them and it was kind of a monopoly. It's like when you go to the resort for your vacation, if you don't want to pay the prices you don't eat. And, of course, they were charging exorbitant prices.

One of the ancient commentators says, transliterating it today that nickel doves were going for $4.00 apiece. So you can see, there's something of the usuary that was going on. And you know how God feels about usuary...making money for things of God. And moneychangers were there. And they were sitting...it says they were sitting at the end of verse 14, because they sat cross-legged behind these little short stubby tables and they would have all their change sitting up on the tables, stacked up because, you see, they had to pay the temple tax in Jewish money and anyone coming from another part of the Mediterranean world would have to have an exchange. And, of course, there was a small fee for the exchange which fee went into the pocket of the moneychangers. The holy temple had

been intended as a place of worship and a place of prayer but they had turned it into a house of merchandise. Later on in the second time Christ cleanses it, He says you turned it into a den of robbers.

There was no spirit of worship and there was no reverence and Christ was angry. He demands reverence for God. This irreverent blasphemy brought out a righteous indignation in Christ like we see nowhere else in the New Testament, unless it be in the wrath that He brings when He comes in His Second Coming and treads out the winepress of the wrath of God. He demanded reverence for the majesty and the wonder of God. He would not tolerate this blasphemy and so in verse 15 look what happened. "When He had made a scourge of small cords," evidently with all the animals there there would be ropes lying around, "He took them and wove them together into a whip. He drove them all out of the temple." Who is them all? Pantos used many places in the Bible to refer to "all men." Listen, He did not save that lash for the sheep and the oxen, He put it to the back of the men. He drove them out AND the sheep AND the oxen. Jesus Christ went into that temple with a whip in His hand and went right and left and drove those people out of there. He cleared the temple.

Now He was some kind of a man...a monstrous mob in that temple, on man with one scourge cleared that place. And then you see these pictures of Christ and representations of Christ, He's some anemic little pusillanimous shrivelled-up little...not Jesus Christ of the Bible. He was a man's man. You don't take the scourge like He took it, then pick up a cross that probably weighed 250 pounds and march up a hill with it unless you're some kind of a man. And you don't walk into a temple and scatter a mob by saying, "Everybody out." There was a dynamic. The Son was cleansing the Father's house with a lash. There weren't any half-way measures. There weren't any delays in His action. This was Messiah at work. And listen, when Messiah goes to work, people move and they moved. With fire indignation He applied that whip right and left to those men and those animals, and then He walked over to those tables and undoubtedly kicked them over. And then in verse 16 He told the people with the doves to pick up their crates and take them out of there..."Take these things from here." They kept the doves in crates and He said, "Pick them up and get them out." Christ does not tolerate irreverence toward God. God demands glory.

And then He said to them in verse 16, "Take these things from here...now watch this, here's another indication of His deity...make not...what?...My Father's house." Who was He then? He was the Son of whom? Son of God. Don't make My Father's house a house of merchandise. He stated who He was. You see John jabbing us again with another fact of His proof of Messiahship. Moses never made a statement like that, nobody ever did, only Christ. He affirmed His divine Sonship and single handedly drove a whole mob out. Jerome, ancient Latin writer wrote this, "There must have been a certain fiery and starry light shining from His eyes and the majesty of the Godhead must have been gleaming in His face." This isn't the gentle Jesus.

Listen...listen, when the holiness of God is at stake, it's not the gentle Jesus. "My Father's house." Do you know that later on in Matthew, I think it's 23:38, you know what Jesus says? Now watch this, very important, He had cleansed the temple once here. He cleansed it again at the end of His ministry. Then He said, watch this, "Your house is left unto you desolate." It wasn't His house anymore. It wasn't even the Father's house anymore. Two times He tried to cleanse it. Two times they would not turn to God. He said, "Okay, it's over. It's not God's house, it's yours and it's desolate." And when He died on the cross the veil of the temple was split and God had never a thing to do with the temple again. It didn't take long for God to send along Titus Vespasian to flatten it and it's never been rebuilt. But there's no need for it. It's not God's house.

And so, He says, "It's My Father's house," but soon it wasn't. Remember what we said in our message about the glory of God? When men sin the glory leaves. It did. So we see Christ unmistakingly revealed as the Son of God in the words "My Father's house." We see Him unmistakingly revealed as the Son of God in the fact that He cleansed the temple which is exactly what Malachi said Messiah would do. We see Him as the Son of God in His passion for reverence. He demands it for God for He is God.

Another very interesting point in this attitude toward the temple. Do you know what He was indicating? He was indicating that for all intents and purposes the whole paraphernalia of animal sacrifice was out for when He died on the cross that was the end, wasn't it? And this was the beginning of the end...the beginning of the end. In fact, even from the Old Testament God absolutely hated the phony offerings of men, didn't He? Isaiah 1, I think, God says, "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, I've had it with this. I delight not in the blood of bullocks and lambs and hegoats, stop bringing Me your vain sacrifices, God said." And you remember Psalm 51 where the psalmist says, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offerings." What did God want? He wanted a broken and a contrite heart, that's what He wanted. And the hypocritical gestures of these sacrifices were meaningless and Christ was saying the whole system has gotten out of whack, you don't see the point, it's going to be destroyed. This was the beginning of the end of the sacrificial system. And if you really, if you have a Jewish friend that you're trying to win to Jesus Christ, ask him why the sacrifices aren't done anymore and what happened to them and when they stopped. And they stopped at the time of Christ and just after.

So Christ disrupts the sinful system. And at death He finally ended it when He split the veil of the temple and ruined their worship. A few years later He flattened the temple using a Roman to do it.

All right, then we see verse 17, look at the reaction of His disciples, they were really afraid. And you don't get this out of this verse unless you understand the interpretation. "His disciples remembered that it was written...where? Psalm 69:9, and they're quoting from David..."The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." Oh this is an interesting statement. Interesting. Now David was always defending God's honor, God's majesty. You know what David was saying? "God, I've been so zealous for Your

house that everybody's after me. I have been so zealous that everybody is hating me and persecuting me." And the disciples are saying...oh, if that's what happened to David when he was zealous, what in the world is going to happen to Jesus pulling something like this? They were afraid for Christ. They remembered how David had fear because of his zeal for the house of God.

You see, when you're zealous for the truth amidst error, you're really up for being shot at. Here is David in the midst of the sin of Israel standing for the truth of God and naturally he's going to get persecuted. Here is Christ in the midst of absolute hypocrisy, standing for truth and calling it what it was and the disciples said, "Oh brother, the world's coming after Him." And did they? You better believe they did. And they kept bringing up the same thing. You know, how many times after this, I think at least three or four times they say to Him, "You're the one that said You're going to destroy the temple." They keep bringing that same thing up. This thing at the beginning of His ministry, those Jews never forgot, it was the prime thing that brought about His crucifixion. "You're going to destroy the temple and the way we worship God and substitute Yourself." That's essentially what they said. "This man claims to be God," see. "He's going to bring us a new system."

So, the disciples remembered this and they became afraid. John might have said it this way, "We disciples were frightened because we remembered what happened to David when he tried to uphold God's holiness and we're afraid for Christ." They didn't really need to fear for Him, though.

So, Christ cleansed the temple. He cleansed it. And later on He cleansed it again. And then He destroyed its worship at His death because He ripped the veil from top to bottom. And then He destroyed it all together in 70 A.D. when it was flattened and wiped out and never been rebuilt.

You say, "Well, is there a temple of God today?" Yeah. You say, "Where is it?" Right here. You're the temple of God. Isn't that what Paul says? Don't you know you're the temple of the Holy Spirit? You're the sanctuary not made with hands. God's built a new temple. That's the believer.

So, we see, first of all, in that first little incident Christ's passion for reverence, don't we? And that tells us who He is, doesn't it? He demanded the glory that God was due.

Second thing we see here is His power of resurrection, and this is really fascinating. The answer that He gives these Jews in verse 18, now verses 18 to 22 are the power, His power of resurrection. And this is the second way that John shows Christ's deity by showing He had power over death. That only God has. All right, verse 18, notice these Jews now, now this is undoubtedly the Sanhedrin and the temple police, perhaps the Sadducees. And they come to Him after all this stuff has been going on, and undoubtedly it stirred some kind of problems. "Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, `What sign showest Thou unto us seeing that Thou doest these things?'" Now watch that statement. You know what they said to Him? "Now what gave You the right to do this?" Now it's interesting to me that they didn't say, "Go get that guy and let's kill him. What is he doing?" Not at all. Listen, Jesus did

that with such unbelievable majestic authority that they were dumbfounded. They knew He had authority to do it. That's why they said, "Show us a sign that proves to us that You had the right to do that." Boy, they were really stuck against the wall.

It was obvious from the power and authority that He carried when He did it that it was something more than human. And so they said show us a sign that You had the right to do this. They might have suspected maybe this is some prophet of God. Undoubtedly they thought that. This man did that with such boldness and authority...and wow. I mean, show us a sign, maybe this is a prophet of God. You've done this now show us what right You had to do it.

Now that question is interesting because it's both stupid and wicked. And I'll show you why. First of all, it's a stupid question. Here they are asking for a sign when they've just had a monumental sign, right? I mean, what kind of sign do you want? Read Malachi, there it is. What are other majesty do you want than to have one man clean out a whole mob? What kind of tricks do you expect? Typical unbelief.

You know who it is who asks for miracles? It's not belief, what is it? It's unbelief. Unbelief wants miracles all the time...do a trick, do a trick, do a trick. And they saw them all. Jesus did them for three years, He did miracles, right? At the end of three years in Matthew 12 they came to Him and said, "We've seen all Your miracles and we have a conclusion to make, You did it by Satan." See.

So, it was a stupid question in the first place. They had just seen a sign. Secondly, it was a wicked question. Do you know why? Because they knew good and well that that temple needed to be cleansed, didn't they? But they weren't willing to face their sin. They knew they were rotten. They knew that they were hypocrites. They knew that the whole operation was a merchandising on the name of God, they knew that. But they weren't willing to face their sin. Men who would degenerate to the desecration of the temple of God were utterly devoid of any sense of God and were blinded. And so Christ treats them in a blindness. They've been veiled by Satan. Christ keeps them veiled by talking to them in veiled language.

Do you know that He said so many things to them He must have left them spinning around for all the three years of His ministry. They never understood anything He was talking about. That's why He says in Matthew 13, "I spoke to them seeing who see not, hearing who hear not and don't understand." That's why He said, "I revealed these things to the babes and hidden from the wise and the prudent." He confounded them almost every time He confronted them. He answers them in a veiled statement.

Now look at the veiled statement and it's very interesting in verse 19, and, of course, they took it wrong, as usual, "Jesus answered and said unto them, `Destroy this temple and in three days I will

raise it up.'" And they said, misinterpreting obviously, "Forty-six years was this temple in the building, are you going to raise it in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body...John adds."

Now what's going on here, what is this all about? This is not an easy passage to interpret because there's depth of meaning in the statement of Christ in verse 19. Now notice it. "Jesus answered and said unto them, `Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up.'" What temple? Here is what we have, what we call in hermeneutics or interpretation a paradox. Christ is undoubtedly gesturing to the temple existing but yet in a greater way referring to His body so that this statement, this temple here in verse 19 refers both to the temple and to His body. In terms of His body He was saying this, "You may destroy Me, this temple, you may destroy it. Three days later it will come right out of that grave." And is that what happened? Exactly what happened, exactly.

You know what? If they wanted a sign in verse 18, brother, they got one, didn't they? The greatest sign Christ ever gave was His resurrection. Did they believe? No. Did Israel believe? No. It's unbelief that wants a sign.

And so, Christ says, "I'll give you a sign, kill me and I'll come alive in three days." Only He puts it in language that confused them. When Christ...but there's a deeper meaning to this, now watch this one. He was also, He must have also been referring to the temple cause that's the context. You know what He was saying to them? You destroy that temple there and in three days I'll raise a new temple. What do you mean by that? Listen to this, when Christ was killed on the cross, did you know that the temple worship was destroyed at His death? Why? Because the veil was ripped right from the top to the bottom. For all intents and purposes the temple worship was destroyed right then, wasn't it? And it was only a time later till the whole temple was destroyed.

So when they destroyed the temple of Christ's body, at the same instant they were destroying temple worship, weren't they? Because they were sacrificing the final lamb and there never would be another one of consequence. So He says to them you kill this temple and you're destroying that one.

But He adds to that this fantastic thought, "I'll raise it up." You say, "Wait a minute, three days later He didn't rebuild the temple." No, but you know what He did? By His resurrection power He built new temples didn't He? And who are those new temples? His church...His church. You see that deep, deep meaning in that statement. Jesus Christ doesn't make surface statements. And I know myself, I study these things and I think to myself, "If that's what I got out of it, what is really there? What kind of profound content must be in a statement like that?" God doesn't just say off-the-cuff things, Christ doesn't. He was saying you destroy Me you'll destroy your temple, but that's okay I'll not only raise Me, I'll raise another temple, believers, the church. And our life is the resurrection life of Christ, isn't it?

So, when they heard this, of course they didn't even know what was happening, and they replied in verse 20, "Well it took us 46 years to build it, we don't see how You can possibly do that." And they didn't get the message. But it's fascinating that they never understood. Just let me illustrate how man never understands the words of Christ. John 3, look at this, now watch this, John 3 verse 3, Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he can't see the Kingdom of God." And Jesus is talking about spiritual truth. And Nicodemus says, "Oh, how can a man enter his mother's womb and be born?" See, he's talking about physical truth. You have the same thing, you go over to chapter 4, it's always this way, I'm just giving you a few examples, it's everywhere in this gospel. Verse 14, Jesus talking to the woman at the well in Samaria and He says, "Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing into everlasting life." And the woman says in verse 15, "Sir, give me this water that I thirst not neither come here to draw." She thought it was going to quench her physical thirst, she wouldn't have to go to the well anymore when she got this water. See, He's talking spiritual, she's thinking physical.

And then you have it in chapter 6 and this is really a beautiful illustration of it. Verse 51, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever and the bread which I will give is My flesh." And the Jews said in the next verse, "His flesh, how can this man give His flesh?" They never get the message.

Then you go over to chapter 7 and they're all over the place. Verse 34 I think, "You shall seek Me and shall not find Me and where I am, there you cannot come." And they said, "Where's He going? Over to the Greeks?" They never get the message.

Chapter 8 verse 51, "Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep My saying he shall never see death." He's talking about spiritual death and they say, "Well, wait a minute, Abraham was a good guy and he died." See, they're talking about physical death. They never got the message. He always talked to them in veiled terms. In a sense they were blind and God judicially maintained that blindness. And so they never got it.

Well, a little side line. Verse 21, John clarifies the whole thing by saying He was speaking about the temple of His body. Then in verse 22, "When therefore He..." and this is interesting because the disciples, you know, you think, "Boy, the disciples were on the inside." Oh yeah? They didn't get the message either. Verse 22, "When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this," you know. "And they believed the Scripture," what Scripture? The Psalm where it says, "Thou shalt not suffer Thy holy one to see corruption." Whenever you see "the Scripture" in the New Testament it's always reference to the Old Testament, they didn't have the New Testament, it refers back. They remembered the prophecies of the Old Testament that foretold that He would die. Hosea's prophecy, the indication of Psalm 22, the indication of the Psalm where it says, "Thou shalt not...Psalm 16 where it says...Thou shalt not suffer Thy holy one to see corruption." They

remembered those Scriptures. And they remembered the word which Jesus had said right there that day in Jerusalem.

The disciples didn't really know anymore than anybody else did. Their mind was all fogged up. And the reason wasn't that they couldn't believe it, the reason was they didn't want to believe that Jesus would go away. You remember that. And they didn't believe in the resurrection. What happened when Jesus got crucified? Did they all wait around the tomb? They were gone, man, they had got out of there, they didn't believe it. They didn't believe it. In fact, when He was finally raised they didn't believe it, walking along the road He's walking, talking to them, they didn't even know Him.

But finally after His resurrection they woke up to what He was talking about three years before right here in Jerusalem. So John says, "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ God vindicates Him as Messiah." So we see two things. First of all, the passion for reverence that Jesus had shows us He's God. Secondly, the power of resurrection, only God goes into death and comes out the other side by His own power. By conquering death He proved His deity and established the new temple...the believer, the believer. That's why when often we refer to the church we call it the house of the Lord. This is not the house of the Lord. You are the house of the Lord. This is not God's house. God doesn't live here. God forbid. He lives in us. In the Old Testament He lived in a building. No, no more, He lives in a sanctuary not made with hands, believers.

All right, then thirdly, the third little vignette here in the insight that John gives us indicates Jesus' deity from a third angle and this is very interesting, His perception of reality. His passion for reverence, His power of resurrection, here's His perception of reality. Listen, you couldn't fool Jesus, He could read your heart like a billboard. And watch what He says right here, verse 23, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover," same time, same station, "in the feast day," this would be the day finally of the feast and the Passover lasted seven days, so this would be the last day, "many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did." You say, "Oh revival." No, no. Verse 24 tells us it wasn't. "Jesus didn't commit Himself unto them because He knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man for He knew what was in man."

Listen, He knew true faith and He knew false faith. You say, "But they believed." Yeah, what did they believe? What did they believe? What was it they were believing in? Evidently He had been doing many, many miracles, sufficient signs for those people who were looking for them in verse 18 but they didn't believe Him anyway. As I said, faith doesn't...disbelief looks for miracles, not faith.

What kind of faith is indicated there in verse 23, what kind of believing was it? Well believing isn't enough in that sense. It's one thing to believe, it's another thing to know Christ. For example, you have in John 1:12 where it says, "But as many as...what?...received." You see, it's more to it than just believing. More to it than just believing. There may have been people who actually believed that He was Messiah. But whether or not they commit themselves to Him is another story.

The Lord has given us a rich week this week. Now in the last four days I have had the privilege of sharing Christ with three people, all three of whom received Christ as Savior, three or four, I can't remember now. And in every single case, in every single case they all believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and never had any of them ever received Him as such and yielded and surrendered their lives to Him. That's the key. You know, Jesus didn't have any faith in their faith. It wasn't saving faith. He looked into their hearts and He could discern whether it was divinely granted saving faith. Listen, Jesus isn't dazzled by apparent successes. He knows what's genuine. And many people were willing to follow Jesus for His miracles. All those people got fed on the hillside. When Jesus went to the other side of the sea, they went too. You say, "Oh, isn't that wonderful, following Jesus." Right, they were going over there because it was dinner time. They had gotten a free lunch, they figured they could also get a free dinner.

You know what kind of faith that is? That's stony-ground faith, that's what it is. The first time a little trouble comes along, it's gone. It dies. Listen, if Jesus had stopped with all those that had believed on His name, as it says here, quote, and started to talk about self-sacrifice, surrender, repentance, a cross, death, bearing a cross...they would have been gone, fair-weather followers. So Jesus didn't even commit Himself to them.

You see, Jesus refuses to cash in on a moment's popularity. He knew human nature. He knew the fickleness and the instability and the selfishness of men's hearts. You know how to test a true disciple? Put him through a fire, see how he responds. You've got a lot of people following Jesus today, a lot of people jumping on the Jesus bandwagon. They like the identification. I'm not too sure they love the Savior but they like the identification. I don't know what's going to happen when trial comes in each case but I know that will be the proof of the pudding. For Peter says, "For hereunto were you called," to do what? "To suffer." Test of discipleship. He could read their hearts. This was God...this was God. Nobody came to Him with artificial faith and got away with it, nor do they come to Him today that way.

So, John says, "See, He's God. Look at the perception of reality, He could read a man's heart." You say, "Well, what is this saying to me?" All right, these three points are a beautiful salvation outline. Now watch, the first little story about the temple tells us that God hates sin, doesn't it? God hates sin and what's He going to do to sin? Punish it. God hates it and He will punish anything that doesn't give Him glory. But then the second illustration tells us that there's a way to escape that punishment because while God may destroy the system that doesn't give Him glory, He's provided a resurrection for those that want Him, hasn't He? See, the second one is power of resurrection, shows us that while He hates sin and will destroy it, there's still a way because He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." So Christ is going to judge sin, but secondly, by His resurrection He's provided new life and forgiveness of sin.

You say, "So what do I do about it?" That's the third account, verses 23 to 25 tells you, what do you do about it? You come to Christ with what kind of faith? Genuine honest faith. You see salvation in those three stories? Number one, God hates sin, that's the basis of salvation. You're a sinner, God hates it. Number two, God provides new life in the resurrection of Christ and forgiveness for sin. But the issue comes down to number three, verses 23 to 25, are you genuinely desirous of knowing Christ and surrendering your life to Him? Not just believing, devils believe, it doesn't do them any good.

Listen, Jesus Christ can see every heart, He can detect every indifference. He can see every hostility. He knows every superficial confession. And when you meet Jesus Christ, you meet Him honestly or you don't meet Him at all. Jesus isn't looking for a crowd of people cheering His miracles. He's looking for a little group of people who will die for Him...if that's the price He demands.

You can be a part of that little group. And incidently, if you're worried about dying for Him, that's promotion day. To die is to...what?...gain. To die is the easy part, it's the living that's tough. But you can be a part of that group by faith. God hates sin. God's provided a way of escape and forgiveness in His resurrection. If you come to Him with genuine faith and receive Christ, His salvation is for you. Christ is God. Do you see it?

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