

Chapter 5: The Zeal of Jesus

John 2:13–25

If we imagined that Jesus would gently ramp into his public ministry with something non-confrontational to please the crowds and (hopefully) to start to win the favor of the authorities, we will be disappointed by the course of action Jesus takes. With the zeal of a Son who sees his Father's house desecrated, Jesus cleanses the temple during a Passover feast, driving out the animals and the merchants who have trespassed to take up residence there for their own profit. As with the sign that Jesus performed in turning water into wine in the previous passage, the sign of cleansing the temple is filled with important symbolism that points beyond this single day at the temple. Jesus *will* cleanse the dwelling place of his Father, even though it will cost him his life.

What does Jesus' zeal demonstrate about his identity and his mission? What should we learn from him as we see him drive out the merchants, the sacrificial animals for sale, and the moneychangers from the temple? How does this story fit together with the previous story of how Jesus turned the water into wine—and specifically, how does this temple *purification* tie in with the *purification* that the stone water jars at the wedding feast (John 2:6) had been intended for? Is Jesus destroying the most important institutions of God's covenant with his people Israel, or is his work accomplishing something more than the disruption that we see here? Finally, how should we respond to reading about all this? Let's answer these questions by studying the text together.

The Passover Lamb of God (John 2:13–17)

The first question we might ask is whether this temple cleansing in the Gospel of John refers to the same temple cleansing story that the Synoptic Gospels put at the end of Jesus' life, during Passion Week (Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–18; Luke 19:45–48), or whether this is a different temple cleansing that takes place at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. The problem is that John tells us that this story happened when the "Passover of the Jews" was at hand," but he does not tell us *which* Passover. Unlike the very clear sequence of days laid on from John 1:29–2:1, John does not tell us how closely *in time* the miracle at Cana was to this cleansing of the temple. Faithful Bible commentators through the ages have been divided on this question. On the one hand, biblical scholars have spent significant time analyzing the differences between how the Synoptic Gospel narrate the temple cleansing compared to John to put together an impressive list of evidence—albeit *circumstantial* evidence rather than *direct* evidence—that seems to point to two cleansings rather than one.¹ Furthermore, "the most natural reading of the texts" would point to two different cleansing events.²

On the other hand, it seems "highly improbable" that Jesus would perform virtually the exact same temple cleansing process twice in his life.³ Moreover, we must keep in mind that John tells us directly that he has not written a comprehensive history of Jesus (John 20:30–31; 21:25), but rather

an eyewitness testimony to the signs that Jesus performed so that we may believe in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. John's first interest is to communicate the truth about Jesus clearly, and a chronological narration of facts isn't always the best way to do that. Consider the way that many biographical documentaries pull forward an event from the end of a person's life to the front of the documentary. They are not falsifying the documentary by doing this, but instead they can provide a more compelling interpretation of that person if they are able to consider from the beginning details of where that person's life eventually goes.⁴ Or, consider a common technique of moviemakers who sometimes begin their movie by providing a cliffhanger from the climax at the end of the story. That filmmaker is not confused about the story's chronology; rather, the filmmaker wants you to watch the rest of the movie in light of where you already know that the story is headed. If John is indeed telling us about the event that happens at the end of John's life, we should reject any charge of an error or confusion on John's part in his narrative. Just as documentary and movie directors sometimes have valid reasons for telling their stories outside of a strict chronology, we should be able to give John the benefit of the doubt to tell his eyewitness account of Jesus in the sequence that he chooses rather than insisting that he adhere to our standards and expectations.

One possibility to consider is that John *wants* us to be asking this very question about why he would put this story here at the beginning of his Gospel, when the Synoptics are very clear that this event happened at the end of Jesus' life. Indeed, John completely skips over other events in the life of Jesus that are central to the Synoptic Gospels (Jesus' baptism, his transfiguration, and the institution of the Lord's Supper), and part of his reasoning for doing so may come because he does not feel the need to repeat what the Synoptic Gospels have described so well.⁵ John does not feel the need to retell what the Synoptic Gospels record, but he assumes them. Furthermore, John expects *us* to read his Gospel with the Synoptics in mind. In this light, it is possible that John may have deliberately misplaced this story in the chronological order of Jesus' life in order to draw our attention to it, so that we will ask ourselves, "Why is John giving us this story here, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry? What is he trying to communicate to us by including this story now?" If so, then John would be forcing us to pause a little longer on a story that we may think we know from having read it in the Synoptic Gospels. Hopefully, that extra time and attention will help us to understand how this story communicates something unique in the context of what *John* is trying to tell us about Jesus.

Regardless of whether there were one or two cleansings, our task is to understand this story in the broader context of John's Gospel. If John had wanted us to know conclusively how many cleansings happened in the life of Jesus, he could have done so, but he did not. John does, however, make his purpose for including this story at this point in his Gospel clear. As we discussed in the last chapter, John uses the *inclusio* (markers to signal the beginning and the end of a single pericope, or single cohesive unit of Scripture) of the "third/three day(s)" (John 2:1, 18–19) to tie this passage together with the sign that Jesus performed at Cana by turning the water into wine. In other words, the chief reason that the story of the temple cleansing shows up in John 2 because John wants us to read this story side-by-side with the miracle at Cana. This point will become increasingly clear through the course of our exposition of this passage.

The Passover of the Jews

Our first clue to John's purposes in this passage is that he calls this feast "the Passover of the Jews" (John 2:13; cf. John 6:4; 11:55). This phrase has perplexed commentators, since it sounds

redundant. Other than the Jews, who celebrates the Passover? This would be like saying, “the Easter of the Christians” or “the Ramadan of the Muslims.” Some, though, have argued that this phrase suggests the presence of an alternative Christian Passover during John’s lifetime, while others insist that this is nothing more than a brief explanation for the benefit of John’s Gentile readership.⁶ Still others take this reference to “the Jews” as a negative reference to the opponents of Jesus (cf. John 2:18), or as a distinction between the Passover celebrated by those living in Judea, rather than those living in Galilee or scattered through the rest of the world.⁷

But if we instead remember that John has deliberately linked the temple cleansing story with the miracle at Cana through the “third/three day(s)” phrase, then we find a clear point of connection between this Passover of the *Jews* and the stone water jars used for the *Jewish* rites of purification (John 2:6).⁸ In the previous story, Jesus saved a wedding festival by transforming jars for the Jewish rites of purification filled with water into the wine that was lacking. In this story, Jesus disrupts the Passover festival of the Jews by purifying (emptying) the too-full temple. Both stories are telling us something about how God will purify his people, but we will have to keep reading to see the fullness of how they are working together.

First, we must pay attention to the wider context of the Gospel of John, since the very proclamation that John the Baptist made concerning Jesus was, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Jesus, the great Passover Lamb of God, here cleanses the temple in preparation for the feast.⁹ The Passover feast marked the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and each year’s feast began with a time of cleansing every bit of leaven from the houses of the Israelites: “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your *houses*, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel” (Ex. 12:15). Now, leaven eventually became a symbol of evil, corruption, and hypocrisy (cf. Matt. 16:5–12; Mark 8:14–21; Luke 12:1–3; 1 Cor. 5:6–8; Gal. 5:9)—probably in no small part due to this annual ritual. In this light, Jesus’ words, “do not make *my Father’s house* a house of trade” (John 2:16), take on new significance, for it seems that Jesus here is simply cleansing the leaven (that is, the evil) out of his Father’s house (and therefore also *his* house) in preparation for the feast.

Also, as we discussed earlier, when John the Baptist declared that Jesus is the Lamb who “takes away” (*airō*) the sin of the world, he probably could not comprehend at the time that his words would eventually bear witness to the substitutionary, atoning death that Jesus would die for the sins of his people. His words *do* mean that, but he almost certainly did not *know* that they would mean that when he uttered them prophetically. Rather, the Baptist likely imagined simply that Jesus was going to clean up Israel by “taking away” the sin of the pagan Romans and the rebellious Israelites—and when Jesus cleanses the temple, he does exactly that by driving out the animals and money changers polluting the temple, saying “*Take* these things *away* (*airō*)” (John 2:16). Behold, the (Passover) Lamb of God is *right here* taking away the sin of the world!

Finally, the Passover feast will bookend the public ministry of Jesus in John’s Gospel. Whether Jesus cleansed the temple twice, both to begin and to end his public ministry, or whether John the Evangelist pulls this chronologically later story forward, John portrays Jesus’ public ministry beginning and ending during the Passover feast. During this scene, Jesus foretells his death (John 2:19–22), and during the final Passover, Jesus endures his death (John 19:14).

Cleansing the Temple

On a historic level, John narrates Jesus' cleansing of the temple to convey our Lord's zealous wrath and direct action. R. C. H. Lenski writes:

Jesus makes short work of this abuse....The public ministry of Jesus begins with an act of holy wrath and indignation. The Son cleans his Father's house with the lash of the scourge. No halfway measures, not gradual and gentle correction will do in a matter as flagrant as this. Here at the very start is the stern and implacable Christ. The aorists [verb tense of past, completed actions] of the narrative are impressive; they state what was done, done in short order, done decisively and completely, begun and finished then and there.¹⁰

Jesus spares no effort, and neither does he apologize for his actions. We know that the sale of these sacrificial animals and the trade of money for the local currency was beneficial for travelers who could not bring their sacrifices with them or were not able to exchange their money until they arrived at Jerusalem; however, we also know that there were abuses as the merchants exploited these traveling worshipers to make a profit." Nevertheless, Jesus' concern is not over the relative profit margin of these transactions, but that the transactions are happening here at all. The merchants were running their businesses in the house that God had commanded should be reserved for prayer.

Jesus' specific actions point to the larger reality of the work that he came to do as the Word made flesh whose body would be destroyed, but then raised up after three days (John 2:19–20). Nevertheless, Jesus' zeal for his Father's house challenges us. When we come to worship, do we come with hearts filled with prayers and praises to our heavenly Father, or for something else? Are we tuning out during prayers or during the reading and preaching of God's word as our mind floats to our businesses, our to-do lists, or our pleasures? If *we* are the temple of God where God's Spirit dwells as we gather to worship (1 Cor. 3:16), then shouldn't we prepare to come into worship by cleansing the leaven of our sin from our hearts? Do we pray that God would give us hearts to worship? Do we prepare our minds as we come before him? What would Jesus cleanse from your life this week before *you* next attend worship?

The Temple of God (John 2:18–22)

Unsurprisingly, Jesus meets resistance. The religious leaders ("the Jews") demand that he authenticate his authority to cleanse the temple in this way, saying, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" (John 2:18). Again, when we read this story with the story of the miracle at Cana, we know that Jesus has *already* showed a sign to manifest his glory by transforming the water into wine (John 2:11), but that story makes it clear that knowledge of Jesus' first sign only reached a few people, including Jesus' disciples and the servants who helped to fill the water and carry the water-turned wine to the master of the feast (John 2:9, 11). What sign could Jesus perform now to prove that he did, in fact, have the authority to cleanse the temple in this way?

The trap that the Jews attempt to lay for Jesus is to give him two, no-win options. If he refuses to perform a sign to their satisfaction, then they feel free to reject his clear rebuke against their sin in the temple. But if, on the other hand, Jesus does perform a great sign, then they have still maintained

authority over him by judging the worthiness of his sign. Even though they have just witnessed the Lord himself delivering a verdict of wrath against *their* sin, they want to assert their imagined right to judge *his* sign. They get to tell Jesus to jump, and Jesus must ask them how high of a jump would satisfy them; under no circumstances do they believe that Jesus should have the right to tell them they are wrong. Accordingly, Lenski shrewdly observes that, “Whenever unbelief asks a sign to convince itself, it does so only in order to reject every sign that could be given it, save one.”¹² In fact, the Jews conveniently overlook the fact that what Jesus has done is, in fact, a sign in its own right, fulfilling not only Psalm 69 (John 2:17), but also Malachi 3:1–3: “And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple...and he will purify the sons of Levi.”¹³ As William Hendriksen writes, “Instead of asking Jesus by what right he had cleansed the temple, they should have confessed their sins and thanked him.”¹⁴ Their request, then, reveals the worst kind of domesticated view of God, as though God were desperate and needy, willing to do anything (just one more sign!) to try to win our allegiance.¹⁵

“Destroy this temple...”

Jesus refuses to cater to these demands, but he nevertheless tells them that he will give them a sign: “Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’” (John 2:19). This is a *mashal*, that is, a veiled, pointed, paradoxical riddle—similar to the *mashal* that John the Baptist had spoken when he said, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me’” (John 1:15).¹⁶ How could Jesus *both* be after him and before him? By this paradoxical riddle, the Baptist challenges us to think through the implications of Jesus’ pre-existence as the eternal Word of the Father (John 1:1).

In the same way, Jesus’ riddle challenges the Jews to consider carefully the nature, purpose, and authority of the temple. On the surface, Jesus’ words sound like those of a madman, and the Jews respond accordingly: “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it up in three days?” (John 2:20). After a clear indictment of their wickedness through the cleansing of the temple, the Jews probably breathe a sigh of relief, believing that they can dismiss this crackpot who believes that he could lead a 46-year-long construction project to completion in only three days. Because their hearts are hard, their minds are therefore unable to penetrate the paradox that Jesus proposes. Then, rather than pondering Jesus’ words with humble fear and trembling in light of his sign of cleansing the temple, they put their minds to rest after superficially evaluating what he has said.

John tells us, though, that Jesus’ words had much deeper meaning than a shallow reading could discern: “But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken” (John 2:21–22). The sign Jesus promises is the sign of his own death and resurrection. Not even Jesus’ disciples understood his meaning at the time, but after Jesus performed that decisive sign, his disciples believed both the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken at this point in time.¹⁷ The Jews, on the other hand, persisted in their unbelief after the resurrection, confirming that their request for a sign was never an honest intellectual question, but a hard-hearted, pre-emptive rejection of Jesus’ authority over them.

The Hour of Jesus

It is here, then, that we see the final clue in connecting this story of the cleansing of the temple with the story of Jesus' miracle at Cana. At the wedding feast, Jesus delayed performing a miracle because "My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4), where his "hour" serves ultimately as a reference to Jesus' death on the cross (John 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1). Just as the disruption of the ceremonial cleansing use of the water jars (by turning that water into wine) marked the beginning of Jesus' hour of public ministry that will culminate at the cross, so the disruption of the Passover feast serves as a sign that anticipates the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁸

But where the disciples believed in Jesus after Jesus manifested his glory during his first sign (John 2:11), the Jews here reject Jesus. Köstenberger captures this irony well: "Tragically, the very place where God's glory is to be revealed—the temple—becomes the site where his glory in Jesus is rejected by his people, the Jews (cf. 1:11, 14; 2:11)."¹⁹ This is another reason why John's mention of the faith of the disciples in John 2:22 is so important, since we read that they "believed" both the Scripture and the word of Jesus after his death and resurrection. For them, the destruction and raising up of the temple of Jesus' body (Jesus' "hour") was not proof to reject Jesus' claims, but the fulfillment of the sign that the Jews had themselves demanded. True disciples believe Jesus not because of an endless number of confirmation signs that they insist Jesus should perform for them, but on the basis of the signs that Jesus chooses to perform for the confirmation of our faith—namely, Jesus' death and resurrection.

To bring the paradox of Jesus' riddle full circle, we should recognize that Jesus' death and resurrection (that is, the destruction of the temple of his own body) did indeed bring about the destruction of the stone temple as well. Hendriksen is worth quoting at length on this point:

The meaning of the entire saying may be paraphrased as follows:

"Even though you, Jews, by your wickedness, are clearly breaking down the sanctuary of my body...—and even though, as a result, you are also destroying your own temple of stone and the entire system of religious practices connected with it—; nevertheless, in three days I will raise up that sanctuary (referring to his resurrection from the dead)—and, as a result, I will establish a new temple with a new cult [in this context, cult="system of worship"]: the Church, with its worship of the Father in spirit and in truth."

The type and the Antitype cannot be separated. Israel's physical temple (or tabernacle) was the place in which God dwelt. Hence, it was the type of Christ's body, which also, in a far superior sense, was the dwelling-place of God. If anyone destroys the second, Christ's body, he also pulls down the first, the temple of stone at Jerusalem. This is true for two reasons: a. when Christ is crucified, the physical temple and its entire cult cease to have any meaning (when Jesus died, the veil was rent!); also b. the terrible crime of nailing him to the cross results in the destruction of Jerusalem with its physical temple. Similarly, the raising again of the body of Christ (cf. 10:18), so that the resurrected Lord now sends forth his Spirit, implies the establishment of the new temple which is his Church (the sanctuary made without hands, cf. Mark 14:58).²⁰

This riddle is at the heart of these first two stories of the beginning of Jesus' "hour." Everything he does is to bring about the new wine of God's eternal wedding feast with his people, but the path toward that feast runs directly through the cross. The cross is not a flaw in the plan, but the ultimate

revelation of the glory of God in Jesus, for at the cross we behold the fullness of the zeal of Jesus Christ that consumes him to purify the temple of his extended body, the Church. Jesus will not settle for driving out a few animals and merchants from the old covenant temple of stone, but he will give up his own life to bring his people into their eternal dwelling place with God in the new heavens and the new earth.²¹

This is why Jesus tells us in no uncertain terms that following him means taking up our *own* crosses to die (Matt. 16:24–28; Mark 8:34–38). It is not that we have the same mission of becoming sacrificial lambs of God who will take away the sin of the world, but rather, this is an acknowledgement that Jesus will not rest until *we* have been fully cleansed. The law of Moses, with all of its sacrifices, washings, and festivals portrayed this need for full cleansing in shadows, but Jesus brings the reality. His atoning, cleansing death on the cross spells death for our sin nature, and his resurrection means that he will raise us up with him to walk in newness of life. Jesus may seem stern in turning over tables here in the temple, but this is nothing to his holy zeal to purify and sanctify us in preparation for living in the new heavens and the new earth. And yet, for those who love and trust Jesus, this zeal is a kindness and a mercy. For those who do not love and trust Jesus, on the other hand, this zeal is so frightening that hardened hearts will do anything to reject the claims that Jesus would make over them—insisting on endless signs, dismissing Jesus as a lunatic, or pretending that our own processes for self-purification through ritual and religion are just as powerful.

Do you trust Jesus to cleanse *you*? Do you believe that the stern zeal of Jesus *now* is better than the wrath of Jesus on the last day? Are you willing to endure the suffering he brings for the sake of gaining the purity he promises? Do you have eyes to see his correction as kindness?

Genuine vs. Fleeting Faith (John 2:23–25)

In fact, it is the easiest thing in the world to believe in some version of Jesus that promises glory *apart* from the cross. The Jesus who performs signs and miracles and healings—the Jesus who challenges authorities and takes the role of a reformer or a revolutionary—is a pretty attractive figure. Throughout history, many have wanted *this* Jesus, without really wanting the *fullness* of Jesus. Put another way, many have wanted glory, but not the cross.

In this way, these exciting, public actions draw increasingly more attention to Jesus. John tells us that many people begin to follow Jesus from this point, but with an important qualification:

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. (John 2:23–25)

John makes a play on words between “many *believed* in his name” (John 2:23) and “Jesus on his part did not *entrust* himself” (John 2:24), which come from the same word in Greek. In other words, while the crowds began to *trust* in Jesus, Jesus did not *entrust* himself to them. Why would this be? Shouldn’t Jesus be grateful to draw new followers?

The explanation comes in the contrast between the reason *behind* the faith of the people (“... when they saw the signs that he was doing”; John 2:23) and in Jesus *knowledge* of people (“...because

he knew all people...for he himself knew what was in man"; John 2:24–25). The signs of Jesus did indeed bring faith, but Jesus recognized that the faith of the people following him was not true, lasting, saving faith. Indeed, by John 6:66, many of Jesus' early disciples will turn back from following him, never to return. And yet, Jesus' core disciples remain with him (John 6:68–70), which makes the faith response of *those* disciples to the earlier sign of turning water into wine (John 2:11) different somehow than the faith of these new believers who do not gain Jesus' reciprocal trust. So, which is it—is faith on the basis of Jesus' signs legitimate (John 2:11), or not (John 2:23)?

In fact, the entirety of the Gospel of John is written to present the *signs* that Jesus performed to bring about faith: "Now Jesus did many other *signs* in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these* are written so 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 20:30–31). We cannot say that John believes that any faith arising from signs is false, because he believes that the signs are the evidence that we should look at to support and confirm our faith. Instead, John is saying something much more nuanced than that.

On the one hand, John will give extensive evidence that some people will refuse to believe in Jesus even *despite* seeing signs. The Jews who confront Jesus here have seen a very clear sign performed by the Lord of the Temple, so when they demand another sign, their demand arises not from curiosity but from unbelief. Later, the Jewish leaders will not even believe in Jesus after they see him raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:45–57). Not only do they seek to kill Jesus after he performs this miracle, but they even seek to kill Lazarus in an attempt to get rid of the evidence of what Jesus has done (John 12:9–11). Hard-hearted unbelief is the only explanation for such illogical behavior.

On the other hand, John will also draw a contrast between those who believe in a surface-level, bandwagon, glory-seeking way, versus those who believe in a deep, lasting, cross-centered way. When following Jesus becomes increasingly hard (cf. John 6:60), the first group falls away, while the second group remains faithful, even when they do not know where exactly Jesus will lead them. John includes this note about Jesus' understanding of the crowd who begins to follow him so that we can start to watch out to see who ultimately falls into which group.

More than that, John includes this note because he wants us to evaluate our own faith. Do we believe in Jesus because (for the moment) faith is easy and we seem headed directly for glory, or do we, like the disciples who stick with him, recognize that in some way no other choice makes sense, no matter how difficult things get in the shadow of the cross? When Jesus asks his disciples whether they too will leave him in John 6, they reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68–69). Persecution, suffering, and loss are painful, but genuine faith nevertheless recognizes that the way of the cross is still our best option if it marks our only path to gain the real Jesus in the end.

This kind of genuine, unshakable, saving faith can only come through the work of the Holy Spirit. Thankfully, we do not always find ourselves in places that test the outer limitations of our faith, but that does not mean that studying the promises of Jesus in the Scriptures has no value until we meet with some kind of suffering. Indeed, Jesus' true disciples are seeing Jesus perform these signs, and on the basis of what they see Jesus do and hear him say, their faith is being built up. Wisely, they are using this time to do whatever they can to get to know him and to begin bringing others to him (John 1:35–51), and the investment that they are making now will pay dividends when

following him begins to get difficult.

Unsurprisingly, peace-time preparations usually become a decisive factor in war-time victories. The better we get to know Jesus now through studying his word, and the more we allow the Holy Spirit to teach us how the words of our Savior actually do provide for us eternal life, the more equipped we will find ourselves by the word and the Spirit to trust Jesus when he calls us up to follow him into difficult places. Do whatever it takes to know Jesus as closely as possible before suffering comes, and pray that the Holy Spirit will teach you now and keep you in your faith on the day of trouble.

Notes

1. “Murray makes the point that, at the trial before Caiaphas, there was difficulty in establishing the words used by Jesus on this occasion (v. 29; Mark 14:56–59). This is intelligible if the reference is to an event that occurred two or three years earlier; scarcely so if it had taken place within the week. The differences in the wording of Jesus’ protests in the two accounts may also well point to two occasions, especially if Murray is right in seeing in ‘you have made it “a den of robbers”’ a reference to the determination of the authorities to kill Jesus. This would have been true on the second occasion, but not on the first. Tasker finds two cleansings and thinks of this one as explaining the mission of the scribes sent to Galilee to oppose Jesus. The mission is mentioned, but no reason given for it in Mark 3:22. R. G. Gruenler discovers two cleansings and regards this as important: ‘There are two cleansings in the gospel accounts, appropriately framing the beginning and the ending of his redemptive ministry....’” (Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 168–69.)

2. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 178.

3. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 115.

4. Earlier, we cited Maryanne Meye Thompson, who argues that the Gospel of John is like a “docudrama”: “Thus the gospel of John is in part a deliberately crafted and artistic story about Jesus. In modern terms, one might compare the gospel to a dramatized documentary (‘docudrama’; Stanton). The docudrama makes use of historical data and material, but presents it in such a way as to engage the viewer’s attention and interest, while presenting the director’s unique interpretation of the events recorded. Some incidents, persons, or themes may be treated in great detail; others can be glossed over more quickly. Events need not be recounted in strict chronological order, although at some point an overview of significant incidents leading up to a main event or grand finale will probably be included. The end product, if well done, will be carefully and deliberately crafted, shaped by the director’s interests as well as by the subject matter and form, with the hope that it will inform, entertain, and involve the viewer.

Like the docudrama, the gospel of John uses historical data and material, sifted through the sieve of the author’s viewpoint, the readers’ interests and concerns, and the standard conventions that govern the particular form of art or literature. It is not created out of whole cloth, any more than a docudrama is. But creative freedom is exercised in telling the story. The gospel writer has been selective in his use of material (20:30; 21:25), arranging it in a broadly chronological framework with interpretative freedom. The book makes explicit its retrospective vantage point; that is, it interprets the story of Jesus, already knowing how that story ends, and in light of the events that follow after Jesus’ death and resurrection (2:22; 7:39; 13:7). Ultimately, like the docudrama’s intent to engage its viewers, the point of the gospel is to engage and involve its readers. From beginning to end, the gospel is not merely narrating ‘what happened then,’ but what can and does happen now.” (Thompson, “John,” in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, 409–10.)

5. “The author assumes that the reader has sufficient general knowledge of the tradition as background for

understanding the events that he has selected.” (Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 114.)

6. Leon Morris disapprovingly cites the first option, while commending the second. (Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 169.)

7. D. A. Carson disapprovingly cites the first option, while commending the second. (Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 176.)

8. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 519.

9. “The hour has come for Jesus to step forth publicly before his nation. His first great public act would take place in the capital, yea, in the Temple itself. The great Paschal Lamb, of whom the Baptist had testified to his disciples, attends the great Paschal Feast and there foretells his own death and sacrifice.” (Lenski, *The Interpretation of John’s Gospel*, 203–04.)

10. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John’s Gospel*, 205.

11. Köstenberger, *John*, 105–07.

12. Lenski, *The Interpretation of John’s Gospel*, 213.

13. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 124.

14. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 124.

15. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 181.

16. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 124.

17. “For our insight into the origin of the faith of the Christian church and of the gospel, this concluding verse [22] is of special importance. It does not say that the roots of the Christian faith and of the way the historical Jesus was described lay in the experience of the resurrection. The Fourth Gospel emphasizes the manifestation of the glory of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, during his earthly life. It is not just the glory of the resurrection that retroactively shines over his earthly life. It is the glory with which he ‘dwelled among us,’ the glory of the Word that became flesh, to which the Gospel consistently testifies.

But the disciples’ understanding of that glory did not keep pace with the revelation.” (Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John*, 121.)

18. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 517–19.

19. Köstenberger, *John*, 102.

20. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, 125, original emphasis.

21. “The eschatological order is achieved not through the ejection of traders but through that to which the action leads: the death of the Father’s Son.” (Beasley-Murray, *John*, 39.)