



THE LIFE AND TIMES

of

JESUS OF NAZARETH

If You Missed a Week Where We've Been

Prophecy and fulfillment

1. The Old Testament contains a unified pattern of promises and prophetic expectations pointing forward to a coming Messiah who would redeem His people
2. These prophecies described His lineage, birthplace, mission, suffering, and ultimate victory long before He entered human history
3. Jesus Himself taught that the entire Old Testament points to Him, not merely in isolated predictions but in a coherent redemptive storyline
4. After His resurrection, Jesus declared in Luke 24 that everything written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled concerning Him
5. Christianity is not built on religious sentiment or moral aspiration, but on fulfilled promises anchored in real history
6. The coming of Jesus was not accidental or improvised, it was the unfolding of God's eternal plan in time
7. The Old Testament does not merely anticipate Christ, it testifies of Him.



If You Missed a Week Where We've Been *(continued)*

Before Bethlehem: The Word Before Worlds

1. John begins his Gospel not with the birth of Jesus, but with the eternal existence of the Word before creation itself
2. The Word is the agent of creation, through whom all things were made and by whom all things continue to exist
3. The term Logos was familiar in the ancient world and especially influenced by Stoic philosophy which spoke of the Logos as a rational principle governing the universe. John reveals that the Logos is not a force, but a living Person, Jesus Christ
4. John uses the language of the culture as a platform and expands it with divine truth, showing that the true source of life, order, and meaning is the Son of God
5. A central theme in John chapter 1 is witness: God sends witnesses to testify publicly to the truth about Christ
6. John the Baptist is a man sent from God to bear witness to the Light so that all might believe
7. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, meaning that the eternal God entered human history as a person.



If You Missed a Week Where We've Been *(continued)*

A Carpenter's Son in a Cradle: Genealogy, Mary, and Witnesses

1. The birth of Jesus is surrounded by a remarkable series of witnesses placed by God to confirm the identity of the promised Messiah
2. Angels announced the birth of the Savior, declaring peace on earth and glory to God in the highest
3. Shepherds became the first public witnesses of the good news after seeing the child in Bethlehem and spreading the report widely
4. Simeon recognized the infant Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise and praised God for allowing him to see the Lord's salvation
5. Anna, a faithful prophetess who had waited many years for redemption, witnessed openly about the child to all who were looking for deliverance
6. All these witnesses demonstrate that God revealed His Son publicly and through credible testimony, not quietly
7. The early years, including Jesus' growth in wisdom and presence in the temple, show His life unfolding under the



If You Missed a Week Where We've Been *(continued)*



Waters and Wilderness: Baptism's Blessing and Triumph over Temptation

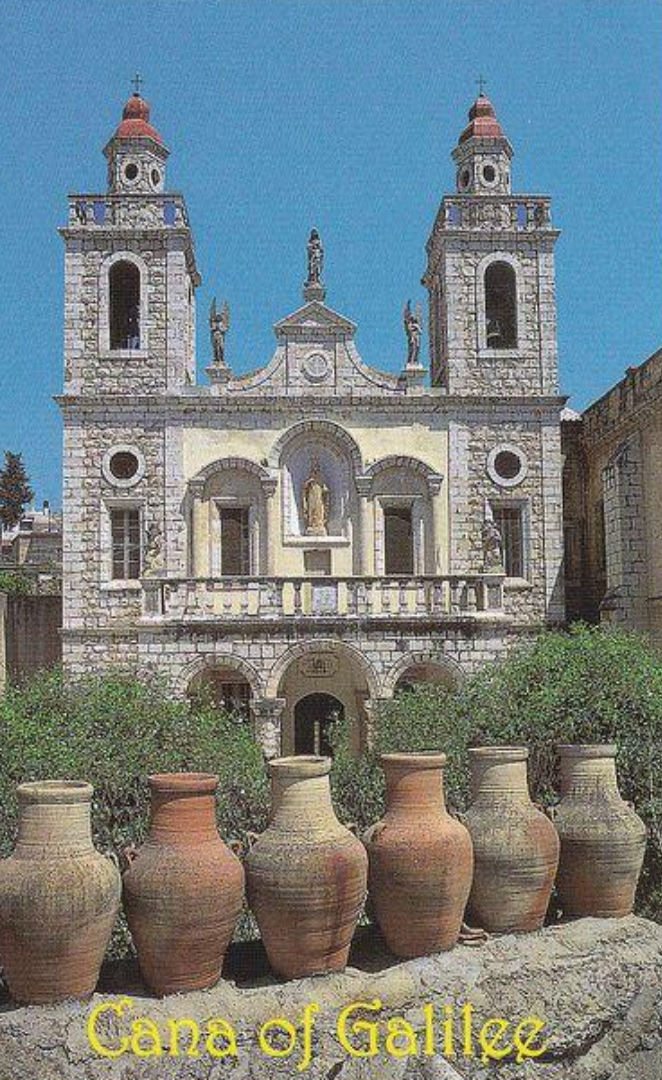
1. At His baptism, Jesus publicly identified Himself with sinners and began His public ministry in obedience to the Father
2. The heavens opened, the Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," providing one of the clearest displays of the Trinity in Scripture
3. Immediately after His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to face direct confrontation with Satan
4. Satan offered shortcuts to power, glory, and authority without obedience to the will of God
5. Jesus resisted every temptation by relying on the written Word of God, demonstrating faithful obedience where Adam and Israel had failed
6. The wilderness became the setting where the obedient Son showed His readiness to carry out the Father's mission
7. Before the ministry advanced publicly, the Messiah was revealed by God and proven faithful under testing.

Zeal for His Father's House Two Cleansings of the Temple *Can You Hear Me Now?!*

You remember those old Verizon commercials? The guy walking around, holding up his phone, repeating over and over, "Can you hear me now?" He just wanted to make sure the signal was clear, crystal clear.

In a far more profound way, that's exactly what Jesus is announcing in these passages. For centuries God had spoken through the prophets, calling His people back to worship, to repentance and righteousness, to holiness.

The message was there, but so often it sounded like static because the people weren't really listening. This is why Jesus would later ask, "And having ears, do you not hear? (Mark 8:18, NKJV). Now the Son Himself has come, and as Jesus cleanses the temple it is as if God is saying through Jesus, loud and clear, "Can you hear Me now?" Jesus is making God's desire for righteous worship impossible to miss.

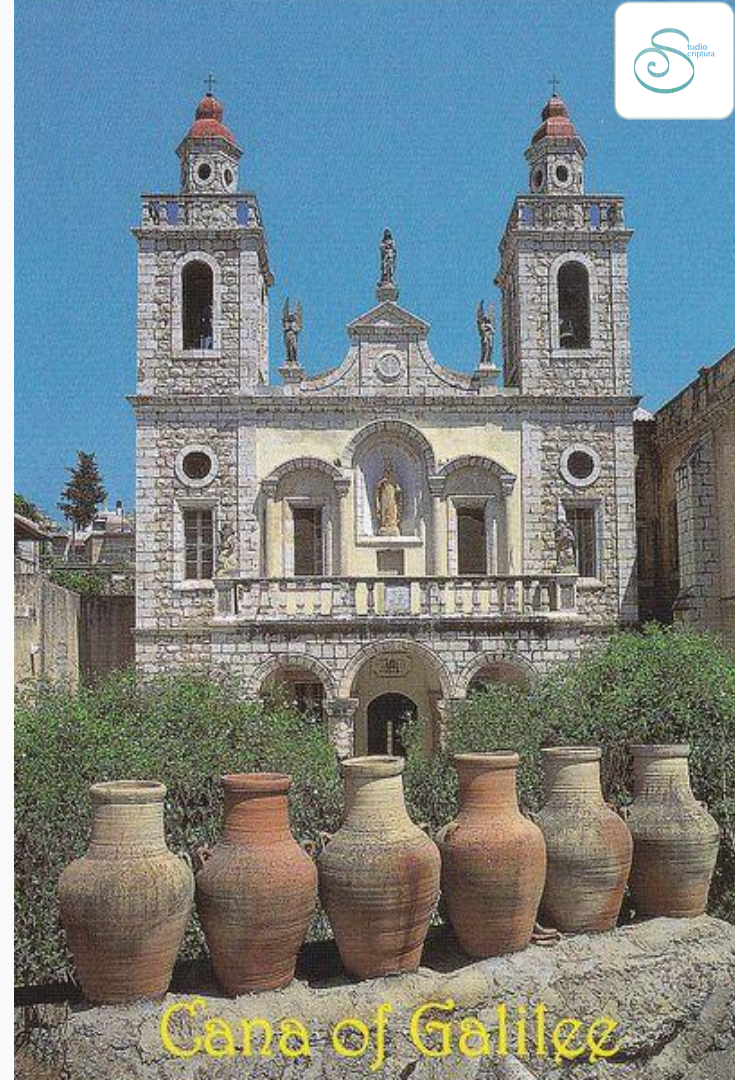


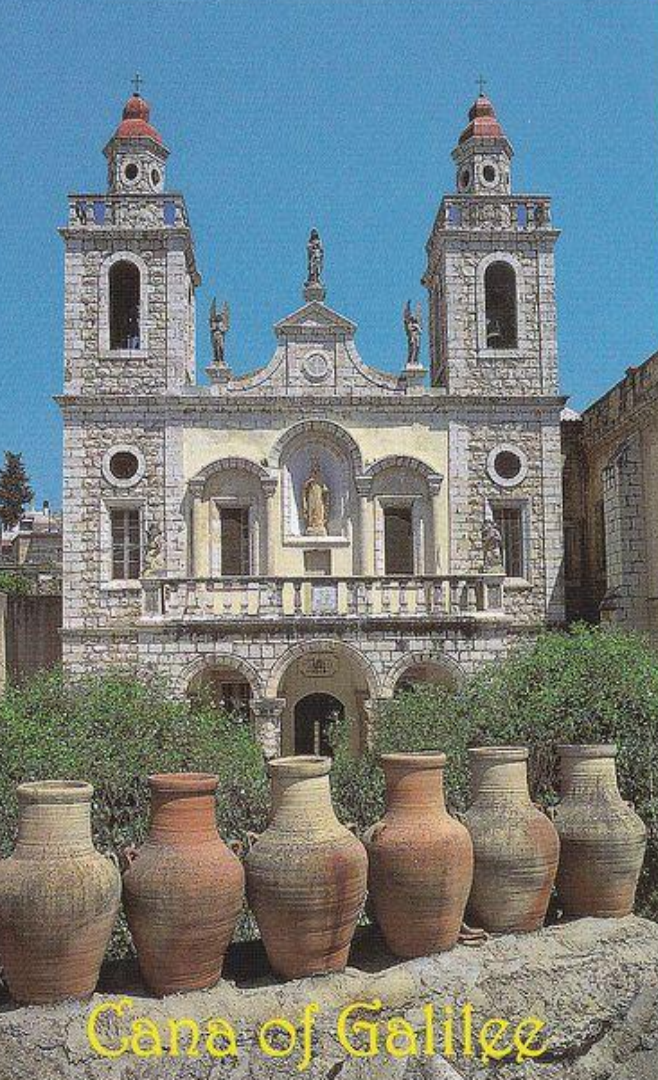
Cana of Galilee

We're going to explore one of the most dramatic and revealing and well-known moments in Jesus' earthly ministry, but before we dive into the Temple itself, let's begin with some context from the early *start* of His public work. That context comes from a simple village wedding in Cana of Galilee.

It sets the stage beautifully for everything that follows, showing us how Jesus moves from the quiet simplicity of a small Galilean town to the grandeur and corruption of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem. And how, in both places, He makes an unforgettable impression.

John chapter 2, verses 1 through 12.



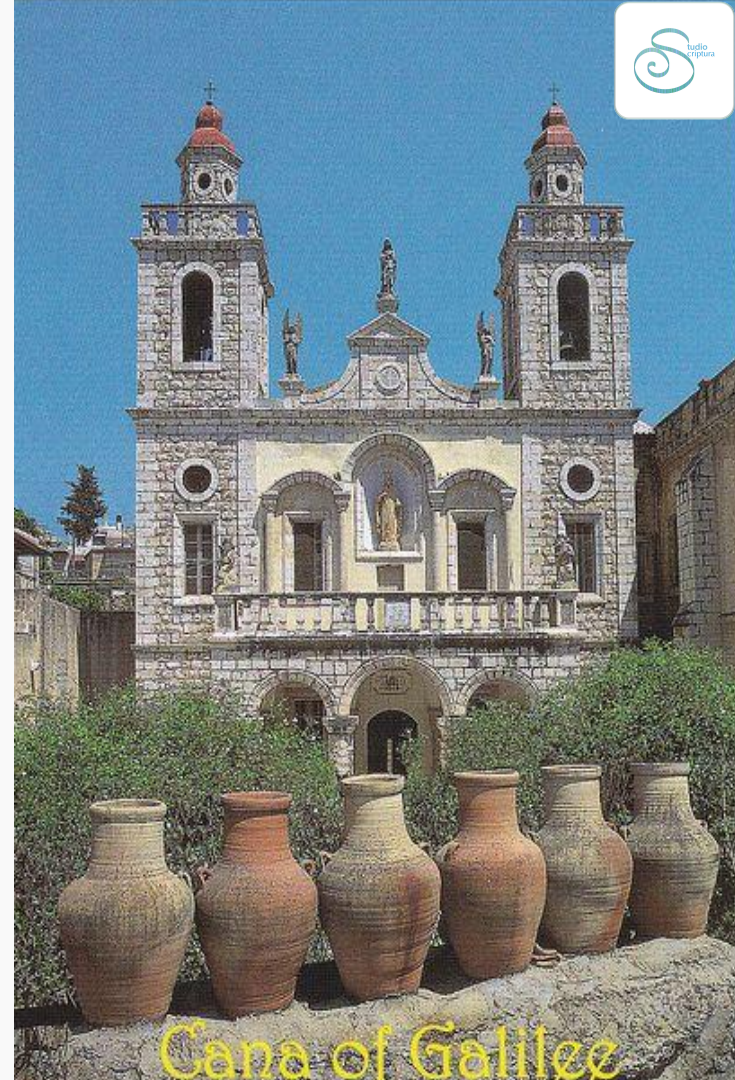


In first-century Galilee, weddings were not brief ceremonies but community celebrations that often lasted several days. These events drew the entire village, and frequently people from surrounding villages, together for extended feasting, music, dancing, and rejoicing.

In this tight-knit, honor-shame culture, hospitality was a fundamental social duty and one of the chief measures of a family's honor.

The groom's household (most likely) was expected to provide abundant food and, above all, plenty of wine, which symbolized joy, divine blessing, and prosperity. Running out of wine midway through such a multi-day feast would have been humiliating for the hosts. In a society where reputation was important, that kind of visible failure could linger.

In Jewish thought, wine itself symbolizes joy, covenant blessing, and God's abundance. Psalm 104:15 says wine "makes glad the heart of man." So when the wine ran dry, it wasn't just an inconvenience, it meant joy had failed.



Cana of Galilee



Cana of Galilee was a modest-sized village in Galilee, home to only a few hundred people at most. It lay about 5 to 9 miles north or northeast of Nazareth; close enough that Jesus and Mary most likely with Jesus' brothers & sisters, and certain of the disciples could easily walk there in a couple of hours for the wedding. Cana was a simple, agricultural village.

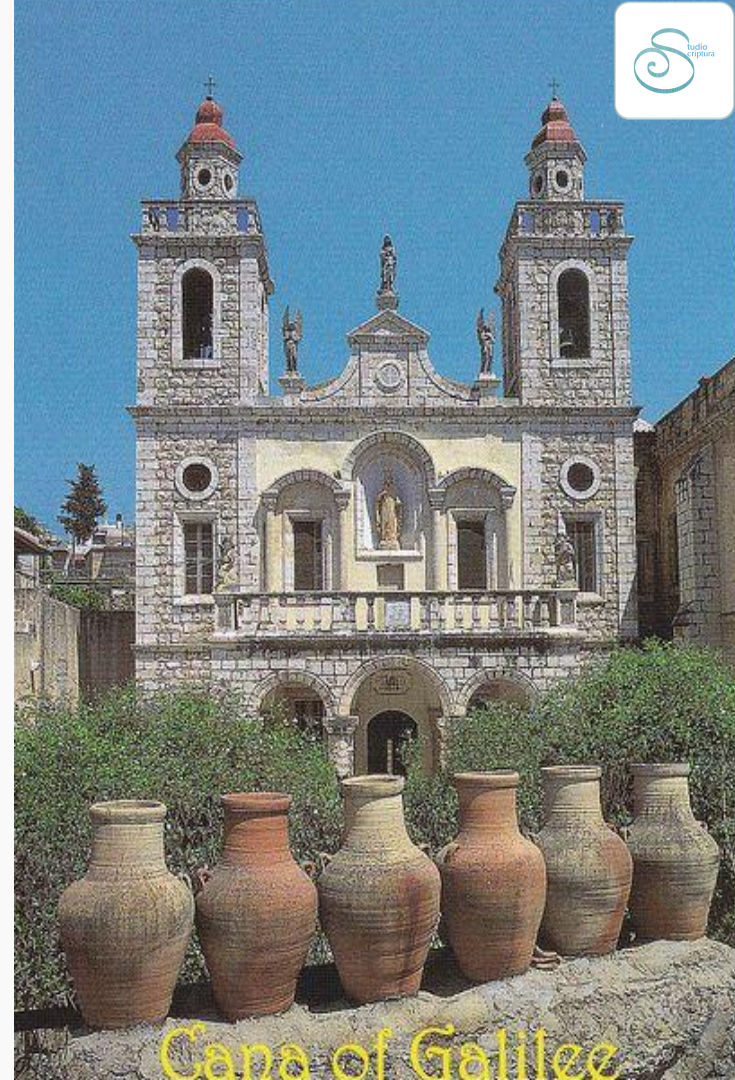
Mary, the mother of Jesus, quietly notices the problem and turns to her Son. She doesn't demand; she simply states the need. Jesus' reply: "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come". This might sound abrupt to our ears, but it's profound.

That phrase "My hour" is a recurring theme in John's Gospel. It always points forward to the appointed time of His glorification, ultimately the cross and resurrection.

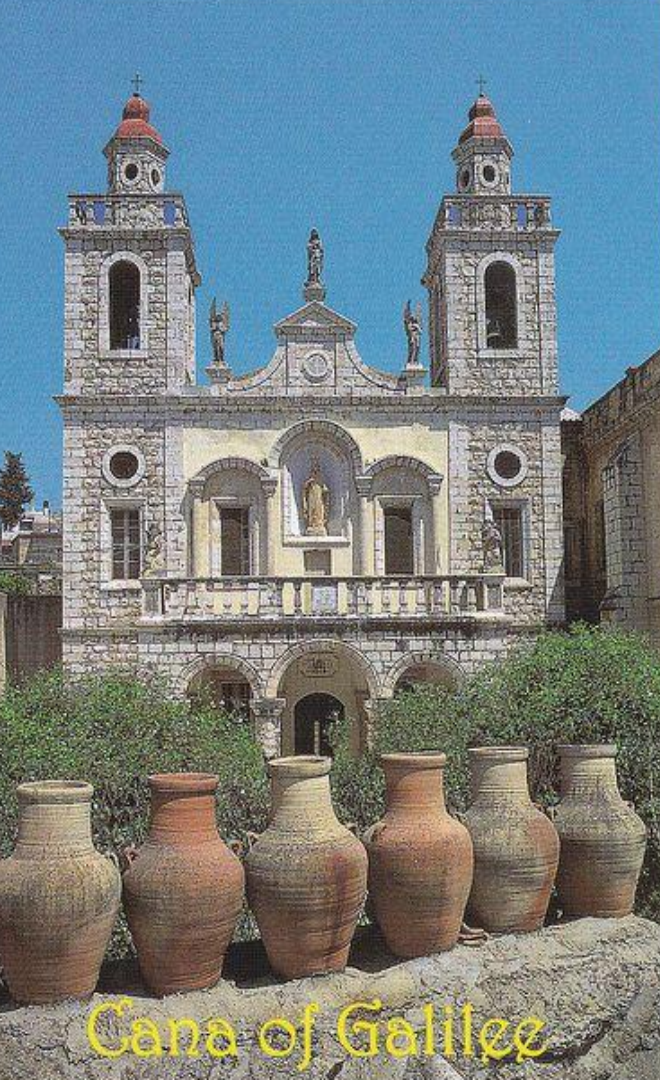
Mary models something beautiful here. She trusts completely. Look at verse 5: "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'"

Whatever He says to you, do it.

This is one of the most powerful pieces of advice in all of Scripture, and it applies as directly to us today as it did to those servants standing by the stone waterpots. Servants in that society would not have asked questions. They would not have delayed. They would have proceeded immediately with what Jesus directed. How applicable to our own lives. We should not question; we should obey whatever He says. Mary doesn't know the how. She doesn't argue or second-guess. She simply points the servants to immediate obedience.



Cana of Galilee



And what happens? They fill the jars (six of them, each holding twenty or thirty gallons, used for Jewish ritual purification) to the brim with plain water. Jesus then tells them to draw some out and serve it.

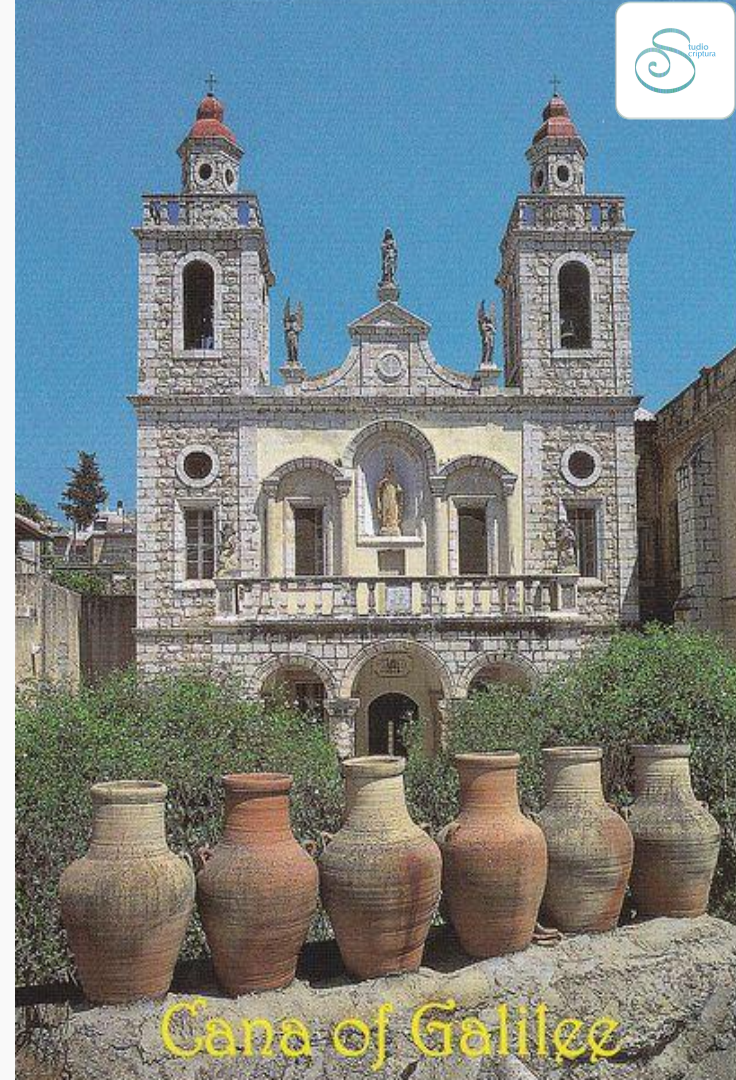
The master of the feast tastes it and declares it the best wine of the evening, better than anything served at the start. The servants knew the source, but the miracle pointed far beyond the wine.

This was Jesus' first miracle, the beginning of signs in John's Gospel, each one revealing His divine glory. Many believe it prefigures the great Messianic banquet in Revelation 19:9 the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Cana of Galilee

Jesus takes those old ritual waterpots (symbols of the Old Covenant's ceremonial cleansing) and fills them with new wine of joy and abundance. The old forms are fulfilled and transcended. The disciples see it and believe. In the humble simplicity of a small village wedding in Cana, Jesus makes a profound impression. He turns potential shame into overflowing joy. No crowds, no Temple, just ordinary servants obeying a simple command.

Yet the same Jesus will soon walk into the grandeur of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem and make an even more dramatic impression, one that shakes the religious establishment to its core, even today. Whether in a quiet Galilean village or the architectural wonder of the Temple, Jesus leaves no one unchanged. He makes an impression no matter where He is. That's the consistent pattern of His ministry: the Light shines, and darkness cannot overcome it. Darkness cannot ignore it. *Can you hear me now!*



Cana of Galilee

Now, we turn to John chapter 2 to verses 13 through 22, because after Cana, we see Jesus head to Jerusalem for Passover. This is the first cleansing of the Temple, the one that signifies the beginning of His public ministry.





To understand the weight of this moment, we need a brief historical background on the Temple.

First came Solomon's Temple, built around 950 BC, a magnificent structure covered in gold, a wonder of the ancient world that symbolized God's glorious presence among His people. That Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

After the exile, the Jews returned and rebuilt the Second Temple in 516 BC under Zerubbabel. But it was smaller and far less glorious than Solomon's; those who had seen the original wept when they compared the two. It felt like a disappointment. Ezra 3:12 records that many of the older priests and Levites "wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes."

Then, Herod the Great essentially undertook a full-scale rebuild and expansion of this second temple. By Jesus' day it was still under construction (forty-six years in, as the Jews point out) and it had become an architectural wonder.

The platform was enormous, the courts elaborate, the complex far grander than anything the people had seen since Solomon. Yet it was still called the Second Temple, now transformed by Herod into something breathtaking in size and grandeur.





No doubt many might have said, “We need to put up with Herod’s debauchery because, well, he is the guy who gave us this great temple and maintains it so wonderfully. So *wink, nod*, we look past his and his family’s wickedness.”

There are parallels to our own day whenever moral compromise is tolerated in halls of power because someone speaks with religious terms, and seems to deliver success and prosperity.

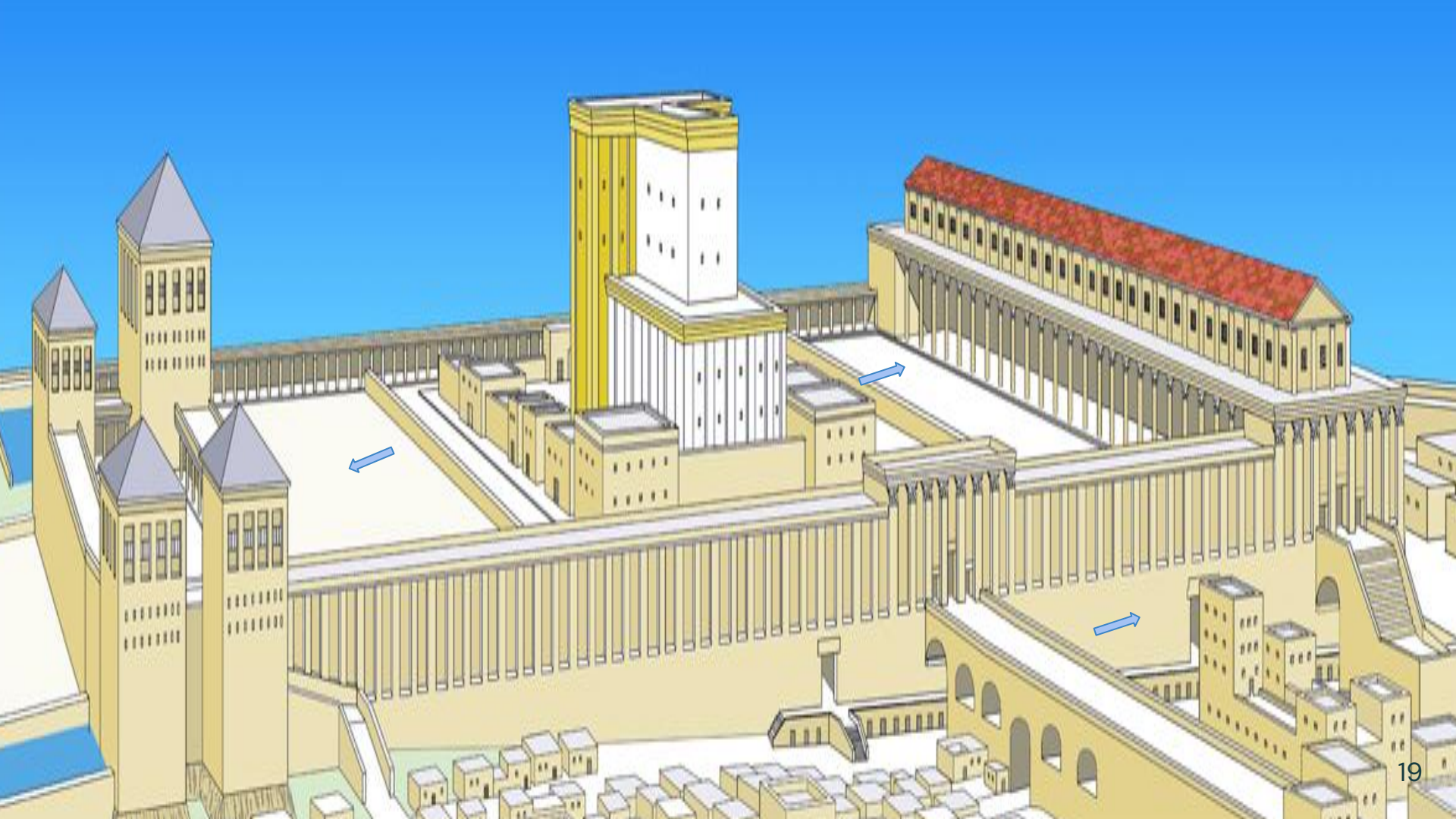
In the Temple the outer Court of the Gentiles was designed as a place where the nations could come and pray, exactly as Isaiah 56:7 promised: “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

But instead, it had been turned into a noisy, smelly marketplace.

Passover drew thousands of pilgrims from all over the empire, and they needed animals for sacrifice because traveling long distances with sheep, goats, or doves was difficult, risky, and often impractical.

Animals could become injured, diseased, or ceremonially unacceptable along the journey. Purchasing animals near or at the Temple ensured they met the required standards for sacrifice. They also needed the proper currency required for the annual temple tax.









That brings us to the money changers and merchants. Under Mosaic Law, every Jewish male over twenty paid a half-shekel temple tax for the upkeep of the sanctuary (Exodus 30:13–16). The temple authorities required payment in approved coinage that met recognized standards of weight and silver purity. Money changers therefore provided the exchange service so pilgrims could participate in worship according to the established system. The service itself was not the problem.

The corruption of the system was the problem. Fees were inflated. Prices were manipulated. What should have supported worship became a profitable enterprise embedded in the very courts designed for prayer. What was meant to be a house of prayer had become a profit-driven marketplace, exploiting the very people who had come to worship.

Worship had been commercialized, and the Gentiles' access to God was effectively crowded out.

Jesus' response is holy zeal, not impulsive rage. Righteous anger at defiled worship. He makes a whip of cords, probably from common reeds or plant fibers used for tying animals or making simple cords - twisted together on the spot. Not a weapon of war but a simple tool of authority - and He drives out the money changers, the animals, overturns the tables, pours out the coins. It must have been a melee to say the least. Merchants scrambling to gather their coinage, animals now scurrying all over the courtyard, people shouting in anger and confusion.

To those selling He says, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" The disciples remember Psalm 69:9 "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

This is no mild rebuke; it's the Messiah cleansing His Father's house with unmistakable authority. And through it all, everyone would have been asking, "Who is this guy?" And that is still a fair question even today: "Who is this Jesus?"

And Jesus was asking "Can you hear me now?!"





Now let's briefly look at the second cleansing, which happens at the very end of Jesus' ministry during His final week in Jerusalem. We see it in Mark 11:15–19 and Luke 19:45–48. These two accounts serve as bookends: one at the start of His public ministry announcing purity and judgment, the other at the end, intensifying the conflict that leads to the cross.

Some interpreters have suggested these accounts describe the same incident arranged differently by the Gospel writers. Others understand them as separate events. I take these as two distinct cleansings (one early in His ministry and one during His final week) each revealing the same unwavering concern for the holiness of God's house.

For this second cleaning think for a minute how the religious leaders would need to recalibrate their thinking about a coming Messiah.

Notice the phrase “den of thieves.” Jesus is quoting Jeremiah 7:11. In Jeremiah 7 the prophet stood at the gate of the Temple and warned the people that they could not keep living in unrepentant sin and then hide behind the building (or denomination), thinking, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.”

God called that hypocrisy a “den of thieves”: a safe haven to keep your unrepentant sin secure.

The religious leaders had turned God’s house into exactly that, a cover for exploitation while presenting themselves as righteous. The Court of the Gentiles, meant for the nations to seek God, had become a refuge for profit rather than a place of prayer. In Luke 19:45, Jesus “began to drive out” those buying and selling. The word describes forceful action, decisive removal with authority.

This was not a polite suggestion. It was a physical and deliberate act of judgment against corrupt meaningless worship.





At this point in Mark 11:18, the scribes and chief priests “sought how they might destroy Him.” The Greek word there conveys the idea of removing someone completely, eliminating the threat. They did not merely disagree with Jesus. They wanted Him gone. In effect, their attitude was, “Who is this guy? We don’t care. We just want Him gone.”

Together, these two cleansings show Jesus' unwavering zeal for pure worship. And they invite us to see a larger biblical theme. All the way back to Genesis, God has been in the business of separating light from darkness, of cleansing what is unholy from what is meant to be holy.

In creation, He separated light from darkness. In His ministry, Jesus calls people to repentance. And here, in the Temple, we see the Lord Himself separating - restoring the purpose of His Father's house.





This has a direct application for us today. We no longer sell doves in the Temple courts, but the modern Christian landscape can sometimes drift in similar directions. The question we must ask ourselves carefully is this:
Are we guarding the purity of worship, or are we allowing convenience, reputation, or financial interest to shape our priorities?

So what about us? We see the extent to which Jesus will go to sweep out compromise so that true worship can dwell in His house. We must guard our hearts as His temple. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Temple is no longer a building; we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. And that raises a searching question for each of us: What needs to be swept out, what needs to be cleansed, from our own lives?





Before we become too satisfied watching Jesus confront the money changers, we need to turn our gaze inward for a moment.

It is easy to say, “Yes, Lord, tell *them*,” and miss the deeper question He may be asking of us. The message of the temple cleansing is not only about corruption in Jerusalem long ago; it is about the corruption of the heart today.

Sometimes Jesus turns over tables in our own lives. It can feel uncomfortable, painful, disruptive. But those moments are not acts of cruelty; they are acts of His mercy. Perhaps He is exposing a sin we have tolerated for years, calling us to greater holiness, or urging us to serve Him more faithfully in some neglected area.

The question is not whether Jesus has the authority to cleanse the temple. The question is whether we will listen when He seeks to cleanse us. When He overturns a table or two in our lives, will we resist Him? Or will we hear His voice and respond? Whatever he says to me I will do!

Let's return to the question with which we began:
"Can you hear Me now?"

Do you hear the prompting of the Holy Spirit?
Let's lay the two scenes side by side. At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus turned potential shame into overflowing joy. At the Temple, He turned profit and worldly joy into shame. The contrast is striking: obedience brings joy; self-centeredness and profiting off the things of God brings shame.

May we choose obedience and may the Lord make His voice crystal clear to each of us:

Can you hear Him now?



This class was prepared through personal study of Scripture and careful engagement with trusted scholarship on the Gospel of John. Generative AI tools were used to assist with research, organization, and the drafting of phrasing. All final interpretations, judgments, and content reflect the author's convictions.