



SERIES: September 2022 – February 2023 Believe

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Saturday, September 17, 2022

Scripture: John 2:18-22

TITLE: Jesus – The Ultimate Authority

Have you ever done an escape room? Escape rooms, in case you don't know, are these puzzle rooms where you're locked in a room, and you have an hour to solve the puzzles and escape. I think people enjoy them because it challenges our thinking and helps us accomplish something out of the ordinary.

Well, 2,000 years ago, Jesus provided his own puzzle that only His followers could solve. But this was only in hindsight. What was that puzzle? Let's turn back to John 2:18-22 for the answer.

So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" 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.

You may remember that in the previous verses, Jesus has come into the temple and found people exploiting Jewish people who wanted to pay their taxes and make their sacrifices. Jesus overturns the tables and drives out the animals. So here the temple police ask Jesus, "What sign do you show us for doing these things." It's not really a question. They are saying, "Who do you think you are to upset our business? You're no one."

They didn't arrest Jesus but are clearly upset with Him. They say, "What sign do you have to prove your credentials." But what they missed was his cleansing of the temple as a sign in and of itself. He had the authority because He was the authority.

And then Jesus gives them an answer in the form of a puzzle. He says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up." They are astonished by His statement. The temple they were in was the second temple, and it had taken forty-six years to build and was still not finished. How could He rebuild it in three days?

But John provides the answer: it was a prediction of His death, burial, and resurrection. His disciples were just as confused as the temple police. That was until they witnessed His death and resurrection. Then like a movie montage, they recalled His words and the events that transpired.

Jesus Christ had the authority to cleanse the temple. It was His Father's house. God didn't want religion or religious exploitation. He wanted people's hearts and commitment. The blood of animals couldn't bridge the gap to God. A temple tax was beneficial for the work but incapable

of buying peace with God. Peace with God is made possible through Jesus Christ alone. His death, burial, and resurrection provide the way.

So here's my challenge for you today: celebrate God's presence in your life today. If you're a Christian, you don't need to go to a building to find God. The Holy Spirit lives in you. You don't need to do religion to connect with God. Jesus came to you. Celebrate this reality.

If you're not a Christian, I encourage you to evaluate what you've discovered about Jesus. In the first two chapters of John, you've witnessed His pre-existence, His dwelling with us, His first miracle, and His counter-cultural relationship with God. What is it you are thinking and believing about Jesus? Could He be the answer you've been looking for?

Jesus is one of a kind who had the authority over everything. That is a reason to celebrate and believe.