

# A comparative and exegetical analysis of the cleansing of the Temple across the three synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John

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4つの福音書に示されている神殿の浄化を比較対比する。これには、いくつかの聖書釈義の側面が含まれる。ヨハネの福音書の神殿の浄化が、3つの共観福音書の浄化とどのように異なるかが明らかになる。これは、福音書全般をよりよく理解することにつながる。

キーワード : Temple cleansing; Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-25

## 1. Introduction

This paper conducts a thorough analysis, in which the cleansing of the Temple, as presented in the four Gospels, is compared and contrasted, which shall include exegetical aspects. This event is found in the Gospel of John 2: 13-25, as well as in the three synoptic Gospels of Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-19, and Luke 19:45-48. It will become clear how the cleansing of the Temple in the Gospel of John differs from the cleansing in the three synoptic Gospels. This will lead to a better appreciation of the Gospels in general, as well as a better understanding of what this says about the person of Jesus, which will lead to a deeper understanding of what we might answer to Jesus' question: "*Who do you say that I am?*"

First, a word study will be conducted, whilst also referring to Jeremiah 7:11 and Isaiah 56:7. This will be followed by comparing and contrasting the scene in each Gospel, after which the location of the event in each Gospel will be looked at: in particular, it will be analysed how and why the cleansing of the Temple differs in the Gospel of John from the synoptic Gospels. An integrative conclusion will bring the findings together.

## 2. Word Study

In order to understand the larger context and then to identify the significant terms, a table of how these passages relate to each other was constructed. Four main parts can be found:

1. Matthew 21:12, Mark 11:15-16, Luke 19:45 and John 2:13-25 belong together (and Exodus 30:13 and Leviticus 5:7, 12:8 will be referenced here);
2. Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46 and John 2:16 belong together (and Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 will be referenced here);
3. Mark 11:18, Luke 19:47 and John 2:17;
4. Mark 11:19, Luke 19:48 and John 2:18-25.
5. The following shall identify words or details that are significant across the four Gospels, with

further connections to the Old Testament added. These important terms or details are highlighted with a grey background in the table, and will be explained:

Parts that belong together	Matthew 21: 12-13	Mark 11: 15-19	Luke 19: 45-48	John 2: 13-25	Old Testament addendum	Old Testament addendum
1)	<p><b>Matthew 21:12:</b> And Jesus entered the Temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves.</p>	<p><b>Mark 11:15:</b> When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple courts and began to drive out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those selling doves.</p> <p><b>Mark 11:16:</b> And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the Temple.</p>	<p><b>Luke 19:45:</b> Then Jesus entered the Temple courts and began to drive out those who were selling there.</p>	<p><b>John 2:13:</b> When the Jewish Passover was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.</p> <p><b>John 2:14:</b> In the Temple courts He found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and money-changers seated at their tables.</p> <p><b>John 2:15:</b> So, He made a whip out of cords and drove all from the Temple courts, both sheep and cattle. He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.</p>	<p><b>Exodus 30:13:</b> Everyone who crosses over to those counted must pay a half shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD.</p>	<p><b>Leviticus 5:7 and 12:8:</b> But if she cannot afford a lamb, she shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. Then the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.</p>
2)	<p><b>Matthew 21:13:</b> He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer', but you make it a den of robbers."</p>	<p><b>Mark 11:17:</b> Then Jesus began to teach them, and He declared, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations?' But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"</p>	<p><b>Luke 19:46:</b> He declared to them, "It is written: 'My house will be a house of prayer.' But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"</p>	<p><b>John 2:16:</b> To those selling doves He said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a marketplace!"</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 56:7:</b> I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar, for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations."</p>	<p><b>Jeremiah 7:11:</b> Has this house, which bears My Name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Yes, I too have seen it, declares the LORD.</p>

3)		<b>Mark 11:18:</b> And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.	<b>Luke 19:47:</b> And he was teaching daily in the Temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him,	<b>John 2:17:</b> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."	<i>(nota bene:</i> space limitations unfortunately prevent me to elaborate on 'zeal', which is important, such as only briefly mentioned in Healy, 2008: 228f.); do we bring the Church into the World, or the World into our Church? Is our parish morally corrupted by us? If our own body is our Temple: do we judge others? etc.)	
4)		<b>Mark 11:19:</b> And when evening came, they went out of the city.	<b>Luke 19:48:</b> but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.	<b>John 2:18:</b> So, the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"	<i>(nota bene:</i> space limitations unfortunately prevent me to elaborate on 'sign', which is important; please see Koester, 1989: 348 as to how faith, belief and their connection to signs – only available to believers – were important for the Gospel of John, which Koester calls "sign faith")	
<b>John 2:19:</b> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up."	<b>John 2:20:</b> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"	<b>John 2:21:</b> But he was speaking about the Temple of his body.	<b>John 2:23:</b> Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.	<b>John 2:24:</b> But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people.	<b>John 2:25:</b> and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.	<i>(nota bene:</i> to save space, all further quotations from John were put into one row)

- a. Drove out: Regarding this term, which appears in all four Gospels, Strong's Concordance gives the following definition: "1544: to drive out etc., with a notion of violence". This confirms that the English translations are correct. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, people were driven out; whereas in Luke, Jesus drove out sheep and cattle, and poured out the coins of the money-changers – it is not mentioned that he drove out people, although in the next verse Jesus said to those: "Get these out here": it is not clear whether he means the doves or the merchants.
- b. Money-changers: Strong's Concordance defines this as "2855: Kollubistes: money-changer, banker". Bromiley (1985: 830) states that these must have either been private or *official*. Roth (1960: 175) compares these with candle-sellers at the stairs of Catholic churches, meaning that he sees these money-changers and merchants as an integral and non-dispensable part of the services. Martin explains that it was Passover, and that massive crowds, often from foreign soil, had arrived in Jerusalem, who needed to exchange their coins, as those often bore the image of the king, and were, as such, not suitable to pay for, or buy, Temple offerings (2015: 63). Furthermore, in Exodus 30:13 we read that money needed to be exchanged for the compulsory sanctuary-shekel

Temple charges <sup>1)</sup> (thus, *official* bankers were there, too). Against whom, then, were Jesus' actions directed? In Mark 11:18 and Luke 19:47 we can read that the chief priests, scribes, and the principal men of the people felt offended; so, on the one hand, Jesus points at those that have corrupted it, and on the other hand, Jesus signals that they and their people, who have fallen from true belief, will soon be overtaken by divine judgement <sup>2)</sup> .

- c. Doves (mentioned Matthew, Mark, John, but not Luke), and cattle and sheep/lamb: Leviticus explains that lambs, or if a lamb is not affordable, two turtledoves or two pigeons, shall be used for burnt offerings to make a woman clean (is this woman or bride, us humans in our 'marriage' to the Lord?). Turtledoves, doves and pigeons are of the same animal family ('Columbidae'), and therefore the same; however, a perceived (but not real) difference is that doves are seen by many as smaller and white and therefore as a sign of peace and love. Ryken (1998: 216f.) explains that doves in the Bible are birds for an unpleasant ritual of sacrificial offerings by poor people since Abraham. Evans (2000: 1038ff.) lists burnt-, peace-, purification-/sin-, reparation-/guilt-, grain-, firstfruit-/firstborn-offerings, so when Jesus drove them out, – drawing a line to above-mentioned Roth – he deliberately interfered with the supply of offerings for these surely important purposes. What is the meaning behind this? Stuhlmüller reminds us that that only in Luke we find that his parents had brought a dove to the Temple when they presented him there as a child, and that in all four Gospels, a dove appeared above the head of Jesus at his baptism (1996: 225). So, the 'dove' has a multi-layered meaning, and we can see why it is even now associated with love and peace in general, and the Holy Spirit in particular. Regarding the other sacrificial animals: lambs or sheep or cattle (in ascending row of expensiveness, or then-perceived sacredness: the more expensive, the 'greater' the offering is, it results in 'greater' (perceived) spiritual benefit to the offering person, as I understand it <sup>3)</sup>), which were all more expensive than doves, Ryken explains that especially lambs symbolised gentleness, innocence and dependence and recalls that Jesus is the 'lamb of God' (Ryken: 484), as found in John 1:29, 36. (Stuhlmüller: 532) explains that we can find several meanings of the 'lamb', such as in the Eucharists' *Ecce Agnus Dei*, and indeed Schneiders quotes Pokes with regard to the *Dahingabe* (handing over) of Jesus to mankind (2011: 4, footnote 10). Similar to Stuhlmüller, Bromiley explains that Jesus' mother had brought a sacrificial dove to the Temple; so, if we combine our findings of the doves and the lamb, we can see that Jesus belongs to the low-ranking and humble (1985: 830), and that he is a symbol of perfect benevolence and innocence. Further, as the term *amnós* (lamb; Strong 286) appears four times in the NT (and always with reference to Jesus as the innocent sacrificial lamb, as well as the members of Jesus' community whom he loved), and that only in Luke 10:3 *arēn* (lamb; Strong 704) is used as an antithesis to wolves (symbolising one's dangerous and seemingly helpless situation but with divine protection), we can conclude that Jesus as *amnós* is taking away our sins by his self-offering, now extending this to all people (nations) (1985: 54). A

further connection we can make to animals as *symbols* is that Jesus said: “But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep [lambs are, biologically, sheep – only younger]. My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.... My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all... The Father and I are one.” (John 10:22-30).

- d. Three days, forty-six years: This is only mentioned in John, who teaches us clearly that the Jews grossly misunderstood him, as he would later rise from the dead after three days: “But he was speaking about the Temple of his body.” (2:21), “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.” (2:22). The number forty-six means a) that the Temple was not finished in its construction yet (see also Martin, 2015: 66), and b) we can calculate the relating dates from this, according to the BibleHub, for example, in Ellicott’s Commentary <sup>4)</sup>: A.D. 28-29 (although, I might add, there are certain variables: for example, we don’t know if it had been built without interruptions, or, indeed had been built night-and-day, or built only at certain times, when at other times it was used for ritual?). The ‘three days, forty-six years is a symbol that shows us that Jesus was severely misunderstood – this will be continued in the textual study part below.

### 3. Old Testament Background

Two sources are particularly intertwined here: Jeremiah 7:11 and Isaiah 56:7.

**Jeremiah’s** part “Has this house, which bears My Name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Yes, I too have seen it, declares the LORD.” (7:11) describes the long confrontation with Jehoiakim (609-598 B.C.E.); and because of idolatry and immorality of the Jews (such as stealing, murder, committing adultery and perjury, and sacrifices to Baal; v 8f), Mark quotes from Jeremiah “you have made it [the Temple] a house of thieves” (Jeremiah 7:11). So, the priests of the Temple wanted to execute Jeremiah (a clear reference here Jesus; however, Jeremiah escapes - only Jesus can become the ultimate Temple through his ultimate sacrifice). Indeed, Jeremiah’s warning of the destruction of the Temple happened in 587 B.C., and a repetition of that disaster would occur within forty years of Jesus’ words at the cleansing of the Temple (Healy, 2008: 228).

**Isaiah’s** part – also known as the Third Isaiah – was written around 500 B.C.E, when the Temple was rebuilt. He can be assumed to be a contemporary of Haggai and Zechariah (Duggan, 2010: 425). Isaiah 56:1-7 and 66:19-23 sandwiches how (righteous) gentiles enter the Temple (so, the future Temple in Jesus will also be ‘open’ for gentiles, too, and not only Jews). In Isaiah 56:7 we read: “I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar, for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations.” Jerusalem will be renewed, because YHWH is with them, and the “Holy Spirit” is only mentioned here in the prophetic books (63: 10-11) – anticipating the New Testament here? If we compare Isaiah 56:7 with Mark 11:17 (“my house...”), we can find that both mean that the House of

the Lord shall be open to all those that believe, and that the covenant shall be extended to *all* of them: “The foreigner (Isaiah 56:3) ... I will give them in my house (v5) ... then I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer (v7) ... others will I gather to them besides those already gathered” (Isaiah 56:8). And when we continue to Isaiah 58, we read that Israel’s worship had become degenerated, for example during Sabbath: “... following your own ways, pursuing your own affairs... “(v13). In all and every account, Isaiah and Mark (and the other Gospels, too, as will be shown below) are very similar in their insights.

#### 4. Textual Study – Comparing and Contrasting the Scene in each Gospel

By comparing and contrasting all four Gospels under the aspect of ‘what?’ (and especially its symbolic meaning), the following table could be constructed:

What?	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Temple cleaning is...	... Jesus taking over the temple, meaning that his messiahship is acknowledged.	... a symbolic judgement on the temple and on Israel	... Jesus taking over the temple, meaning that his messiahship is acknowledged.	... a sign of its destruction and raising of another temple: Jesus’ body; this means that Jewish institutions are meant to be replaced by Jesus.
Temple shall be ..., said Jesus	‘My house shall be called a house of prayer.’	‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations.’	‘My house will be a house of prayer.’	—
The temple is...	... a symbol of Israel’s national identity, and Jesus declares divine disfavour against the nation.	... seen as a sign if religious practice that has become hollow; the temple not only cleaned, but declared no longer valid.	... already destroyed (ca. 70 AD) by the time the Gospel of Luke is written.	... a symbol of the institutions of Israel, which have reached its end of life-span.
Actions of Jesus are described as...	... not directed against the temple, but against those that have corrupted it.	... collision with Israel herself.	... disassociating Jesus from the destruction of the temple.	... directed against the inner temple area ( <i>naos</i> ).
Actions of Jesus result in...	—	... a plot to kill Jesus by the chief priests and scribes, stating that Jesus wanted to destroy the temple.	... false witnesses claiming that Jesus said that he could destroy the temple (not that he had actually planned to do so).	... Jesus’ lawsuit, due to his prophecy of the eschatological catastrophe for Jerusalem.
A new temple...	—	... is foreseen as a new worshipping community with Jesus and his future disciples.	—	... in the form of Jesus shall replace the Jewish institutions.
Jesus cites scripture (Old Testament):	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	No. But speaks with authority about his “father’s house”.
Jesus wrestles with...	... the leaders who reject him; and the people, whose expectations are not fulfilled, and who will soon be overtaken by divine judgement.	... the leaders of the community: chief priests, elders, scribes, Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees.	... the money changers.	... people’s superficial faith, which he cannot trust, but which he sees clearly because of profound knowledge given to him by his father.
Jesus’ arrest...	... is caused by his cleaning of the temple.	... is caused by his cleaning of the temple.	... is caused by his cleaning of the temple.	... is caused by the raising of Lazarus.
Jesus’ trial is...	—	...referenced.	—	... referenced.

With regard to the synoptic Gospels, Mark sees the Temple cleaning as a symbolic judgement on both the Temple and Israel, whose religious practice had become hollow: Jesus declares them as no longer valid.

Whom does Jesus wrestle with, how are his actions described by the four Gospels, and what does his actions result in? In Mark, Jesus quarrels with the leaders of the community: chief priests, elders, scribes, Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees – his actions are described as a collision with Israel itself; in Luke, Jesus wrestles with the money-changers – thereby disassociating Jesus from the destruction of the Temple; in Matthew, with the leaders who reject him; and the people, whose expectations are not fulfilled, and who will soon be overtaken by divine judgement – so, Jesus' actions are not directed against the Temple, but against those that have corrupted it; whereas in John, Jesus wrestles with people's superficial faith, which he cannot trust, but which he sees clearly because of profound knowledge given to him by his father – his actions are described as being directed at the inner Temple (*naos*).

In Mark, these actions by Jesus result in a plot to kill Jesus by the chief priests and scribes, stating that Jesus wanted to destroy the Temple. In Luke, these result in claiming that Jesus said that he could destroy the Temple (not that he had actually planned to do so). And in John, they result in Jesus' lawsuit, due to his prophecy of the eschatological catastrophe for Jerusalem.

And finally, in all three synoptic Gospels, Jesus' arrest is caused by his cleansing of the Temple, whereas in John, it is caused by his raising of Lazarus.

In Mark, Jesus has the true authority to judge the Temple's leadership (Shae, 1974: 28). For Matthew and Luke, the Temple is a symbol of Israel's national identity, which Jesus takes over – an action, which acknowledges his messiahship – and therefore he is in the position to declare divine disfavour against the nation. Indeed, Barber describes Jesus as being identified in Matthew's Gospel with the cornerstone of a much larger, divine sanctuary, and quotes: "Something greater than the Temple is here" (12:6)." (2013: 943). So, Luke and Matthew do not foresee or describe a new Temple as such, whereas Matthew and Mark see a new worshipping community with Jesus and his future disciples as the new Temple: Jesus is the Davidic Messiah, who will build the ultimate Temple, that is, the community of his followers (Barber, 2013: 953). Important here is to note that Luke described these events not as a historian, but in view of his responsibility towards his Christian community (Baltzer, 1965: 276), and therefore the *Sitz im Leben* needs to be implemented in our understanding. Van der Waal expands on the *Naherwartung* (expectation of a close or imminent occurrence) in Luke: his Church, with the Jewish people, will ever expand, here and now. (1973: 56).

The above-mentioned 'spectrum of sacred' of sacrificial animals is an important finding: unfortunately, there is not enough space here to analyse this in-depth, which I would otherwise love to conduct, how believers perceived this in early Judaism and even more so in present-day lived Catholic religiosity. For example, Kaufman's *Consuming Visions. Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine*

(2005), and McDannell's *Material Christianity. Religion and Popular Culture in America* (1995) give interesting insights into costs and commercialism involved in pilgrimages, which both analyse, from different angles, *ex votos*, cemeteries, religious art and media, and religious clothing (sacred clothing for the ordained, as well as fashion items). What we need to reflect upon here in our context is whether in this 'spectrum of sacred' it is believed that 'cash value' (such as more expensive animals) could be converted into 'religious benefit'? Would one show more dedication to YHWH if the offerings are more expensive? So, if an ox is more expensive than a sheep, which is more expensive than a dove (and Leviticus explains in the verse given above that if one does not have enough money to buy other animals, then doves are sufficient), then their price would set them apart (slightly pointing to Durkheim's 'things set apart and forbidden' here) be used to define the level of 'sacredness'? In other words, an ox is more sacred than sheep, which is more sacred than a dove, and – thinking backwards – a dove is more profane than a sheep, which is more profane than an ox. Would this be one way that the believers in the Temple felt they could set themselves apart from each other in their faith (to continue the Durkheimian string) by using money to define the level or spectrum of sacred? Is so, this would be faith gone wrong, or, what Witherington calls a fraud regarding the Temple merchants in Jesus' times (2001: 315). Similarly, would it have been more 'sacred' or religiously significant if the pilgrimage to their Temple would have been done not only once but many times? And if more monetary coins would have been offered?

So, I need to ask: What would we see when we reflect upon ourselves and this 'spectrum of sacred', here and now? This question will be taken up in the Integrative Conclusion below.

Jesus' cleansing action in John shows that he was actually preparing the Temple for the beginning of the Messianic Age, in conformity with Zachariah 14:20 (Hiers, 1971: 87). So, indeed, once the old Temple was reformed and restored as the new, ultimate Temple, God's rule could be re-established (ibid: 90).

This would then give the reason why John mentioned this variety of animals explicitly: this could symbolise that not just some people (for example, only the rich), but *all* people have gone astray in their sacrificial offerings, symbolising their faith at large, which had become superficial. The only solution would then be, as John's Gospel tries to explain to us, to destruct the Temple and the other Jewish institutions, which have all reached their end of life-span, and to raise another Temple to replace them: the body of Jesus.

Combining this with the details of the event of 'three days' and 'forty-six-days' by John, we can understand not only that Jesus was at his times misunderstood (that the Temple would be destroyed and after three days be rebuilt: referring to Jesus's resurrection as the new Temple), but that Jesus will be our eternal Temple, for all people – not only rich, not only poor, not only those that can give expensive or cheap offerings, not only Jews, but everybody, unconditionally, for-ever, with Jesus being the ultimate sacrificial lamb for his sheep, terminating the need for sacrifice for, and any other outward means of proving one's faith for connecting with, God His Father.

## 5. Location in Each Gospel – and how and why does the cleansing of the Temple in the Gospel of John differ from cleansing in the synoptic Gospels?

The cleansing of the Temple is placed late in each of the Mark, Matthew and Luke. The three synoptic Gospels tell us that Jesus visited the Temple only once during his ministry (Martin and Wright, 2015: 64), and it follows that the event of the Temple cleansing must therefore be placed at the end – that is, the beginning of his visit to Jerusalem, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection. Mark shows self-control and moderation in giving a strong or vivid account of Jesus' actions (Hayes, 2016: 105) and, for example, leaves Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem uncommented; Matthew, on the other hand, quotes many passages from the Old Testament (Zachariah) to show how the prophecy is being fulfilled. Hayes calls these easy-to-follow sign-posts (106, 192), inserted for the reader for an easy understanding, which, according to Hayes, was one of the main reasons that Matthew was placed first in the New Testament (106).

However, the cleansing of the Temple is placed very early in the Gospel of John. Does this discrepancy account for a defect in the four Gospels? Wright and Martin argue that the ancient writers were not too much concerned with historically and correctly placed points on timelines, as their understanding of time and space was different than ours (ibid.). Only in John we are told already in the beginning that “the Word became flesh and pitched its tent [tent = our new Temple in Jesus and his Church, as I understand it] among us” (1:14). Also, already in John's first chapter we read that Jesus is “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (1:29-26). So, as Jesus is already identified in this manner for the reader at the opening of John, he needs to elaborate or substantiate this ‘claim’ in the following – and the only way to do so is to show that Jesus has full authority given to him by his Father, so that he can speak about his “father's house”, and so that he will replace the Temple. In addition, “Come and see” (1:46) invites the reader: here, look, start reading because here come the explanations! (see also Hayes, ibid.: 281). So, if we recall 1:14, this means that the Father has come to us through his Son to His House (Temple / us), and I understand that this is the reason why it is put at the beginning of John, unlike the other Gospels: it sets the stage to teach to us throughout John's Gospel the divine plan of God, having become flesh in Jesus, for all of us, in this world. Yes, on the *historical* time-line, as explained above, his cleansing and passion must be placed chronologically at the end, but it is here in John that this *theological* point is made very clear, and therefore he is not bound by our perception and use of our secular or physical, linear, ‘time-line’.

## 6. Integrative Conclusion

What does this research of the cleansing of the Temple say about the person of Jesus? And what does it say about us in relation to Jesus' actions after having compared and contrasted the four Gospels?

The Temple had become unholy, and Jesus protested and took action by cleaning it (and I would

prefer the word 'purified' here): Will we, too, actively take a stance against unholiness, or when we find that our parish has become, in whatever form, morally weak (as I briefly touched in the above table under 'zeal')? And, most of all: will we need to clean or purify ourselves, that is, recognise our shortcomings and then enter, with divine help, *metanoia*?

Jesus acted against the financial exploitation of the faith and its practice in the Temple: will we too recognise this when it is happening? I mentioned 'material Christianity' and 'consuming visions' above when discussing the 'spectrum of sacred'. Do we expect 'greater divine favour' the more money we spend? Do we somehow feel that the Eucharist received from, say, a Bishop, is greater in 'sacredness' than that received from a priest? And: do we accept unconditionally, without any kind of prejudice, anybody whom we notice (such as sitting next to us) who has less to give to church?

Jesus went against any form of discrimination whatsoever, for example, based on wealth, but also based on nationality or ethnicity. Whereas the inner Temple could only be entered by Jews, Jesus made the new Temple a house of prayer for all nations and all people. Will we, too, take a stance against similar forms of discriminations, based on nationality, ethnicity or skin-colour, level of education, or faith – and help, unconditionally, those that we find in need? Will we act today, here and now?

#### Footnote

- 1) See also Manson, n.d.: 276.
- 2) See Eppstein and *Sitz im Leben* and the social realities of early Judaism, who agreed with Roth (1964: 43).
- 3) Émile Durkheim and even David Graeber's *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value* and others could have found their place here, if space would have permitted.
- 4) <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/2-20.htm>

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