

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

John 2:12-22

*For the zeal of Thy house has consumed me,
And the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me. (Psalm
69:9).*

Passover. It was sometimes described as the “Festival of Freedom.” It looked back to the time when God had freed the Jews from their slavery in Egypt. It was a time of remembrance and of celebration. It was to Israel what to Americans is the 4th of July, Christmas and Thanksgiving, all rolled up into one. From all over the ancient world, Jews would gather to the temple at Jerusalem to celebrate this happy occasion. It was to be on such a time that Jesus would make His first public presentation of Himself and His ministry.

SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM

*After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His
brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days. (John 2:12).*

The name “Capernaum” is from the Hebrew *Kaphar Nachum*, meaning “the village of Nahum” or “Village of Comfort.” This ancient village was located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee on the frontier between the domains of Antipas and Philip. There was a Roman garrison in the village (Luke 7:1-10 and Matthew 8:5-13), indicating it to be one of the more important towns of Galilee.

This passage tells us that Jesus and His disciples came here to Capernaum *and there they stayed a few days*. I can only imagine what the disciples would have been thinking: “Wow, that miracle at Cana was really something else! If this is a sample of what the ministry of Jesus is going to be like, then we are in for an exciting time.”

They are full of anticipation. But then, as they travel down to this quiet village by the Sea of Galilee, no miracles follow. There is no repetition of the sign that took place at the wedding feast of Cana. Instead, the days are spent in quiet meditation and calm discussion. I can visualize the disciples growing impatient as they wonder what Jesus is waiting for: “Why isn’t He out in the village streets or in the synagogue proclaiming the fact that He has come? Why isn’t He announcing that the kingdom is at hand?”

If it is true that the disciples had such questions, I think that there may have been at least one who did not. It was Mary, the mother of Jesus. She had received her answer back in

Cana of Galilee. The words of Jesus would still echo in her heart.

“My hour is not yet come...”

With this phrase, Jesus had indicated that His ministry and His entire life had been ordained according to a divine timetable. Why did He not proceed directly to Jerusalem to present Himself to the religious leaders? It was because His hour was not yet come. It was not time for Him to go. He would await the proper time.

There is a principle here for you. It is that God has His own plan for your life. This often creates a problem when God’s plan comes into conflict with our own plans and goals. You need to realize that God does have a plan. His timing for His plan is perfect. We sometimes get to thinking that our own timing would be better than God’s timing. It is especially true when we are in Capernaum.

If you have been a Christian for any length of time, then you have probably been in Capernaum. It is that quiet place where the Lord brings you to be with Him. When you first go there, you are expecting great things. You are ready to see miracles and answered prayer and mighty teaching. Instead it is quiet. After a while, you begin to fidget and to look for things to occupy your time. You feel as though you ought to be doing something for the Lord. What you have not yet come to realize is that Capernaum is that place where the Lord is doing something for you and in you. It is that quiet place where you sit in the presence of the Lord and get to know Him?

Have you been to Capernaum lately? Jesus is there, and He is waiting there for you. He invites you to come and to spend some quiet time with Him.

THE MESSIAH IN THE TEMPLE

13 And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise.”

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Thy house will consume me.” (John 2:13-17).

This incident of Jesus cleansing the Temple and driving out the moneychangers and those who were buying and selling is echoed in the other three Synoptic Gospels. There is an

important difference. The other three accounts describe this incident as having taken place at the end of the ministry of Jesus. They describe it taking place as Jesus comes to Jerusalem during His final week of life on earth. By contrast, John places this at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus.

There are some who hold that these are one and the same event. To maintain this is not a violation of the inerrancy of Scripture, for we understand that it is the nature of such an account to place the events into a topical rather than a chronological order and the Synoptics can understandably be seen to keep all references to Jesus in Jerusalem to the close of their accounts.

On the other hand, I think it entirely possible that Jesus cleansed the temple on two different occasions. There are instances in which Jesus performed similar actions on different occasions. Matthew tells us that there was an instance in which He fed 5,000 and that, on another occasion, He fed 4,000. Matthew was aware of both instances, but if he had recorded only one while another writer had recorded the other, we might have been tempted to hold that they were one and the same event. The same situation faces us here.

| The Synoptic Gospels | The Gospel of John |
|---|--|
| Jesus and His disciples cleanse the temple | Jesus is the only one seen cleansing the temple |
| Takes place at the end of the ministry of Jesus | Takes place at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus |
| No mention made of a scourge or whip | Jesus utilized a scourge of cords |
| No mention made of Jesus and His zeal of the Lord | The disciples remember a prophecy of the Messiah's zeal for the house of God |

This is the second Passover recorded in the gospel accounts. The first is recorded in the book of Luke and took place when Jesus was twelve years old. At that time, Jesus was approaching His Bar Mitzvah, the time when He would become a "son of the covenant." Now, as He comes to the temple again, He stands at the threshold of His public ministry.

Why did Jesus wait until the Passover to come to Jerusalem and publicly present Himself before the Jews? One reason might be that this was the one time of year when there were the most Jewish pilgrims at Jerusalem. The city would be packed with people from all over the world who had come to celebrate the Passover. If you are going to start a new ministry, there is no better time for maximum exposure than the one time of year when there are the most people present for it to be exposed to.

I think that an even deeper reason lies in the true meaning of the Passover itself. On the one hand, the Passover looked back to the freeing of the Jews from their slavery in Egypt. It looked to that fateful night when the angel of the Lord passed over those houses that had the lamb's blood smeared upon their doorposts. That same angel became an angel of judgment and of death as he put to death the firstborn of each house that was not marked in this manner.

The point of the Passover was that all of the firstborn of Egypt were under the sentence of death. It did not matter if they were man or animal, Jew or Egyptian. All of the firstborn were to die and the only way of escape was through the application of the blood of a lamb.

What was true of the first Passover is also true of another Passover -- a spiritual Passover. This Passover looked, not to the past, but to the future. It looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel. This Passover dealt with the fact that, not only all firstborn, but all mankind lies under the sentence of death. Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb who has died in our place. His blood does for us what the blood of the lamb did for those in Egypt.

Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Just as the blood of the lamb on the doorposts caused the angel of death to pass over the homes of those for whom it was applied, so also the death of Jesus has the same effect. His blood applied to our hearts causes God's judgment to pass over us.

Just as the ministry of Jesus was made public on the Passover, so also He would be arrested and crucified for the sins of the world on the Passover. As the blood of a thousand lambs would run red over the cobblestones of the Temple, this rabbi from Galilee would hand on a cross outside the city as the supreme sacrifice for your sins and for mine.

1. The Temple: *And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated (2:14).*

The scene is a dramatic one. Jesus and His disciples arrive in Jerusalem and make their way toward the Temple. The streets of the city are packed with Jews from every nation. They have come to celebrate the Passover. They make their way up the steps to the Temple Mount.

The main entrance to the temple was from the south. There were pools here for ceremonial cleansing located here on the steps leading up to the Hulda gates.

Jesus and His disciples might have paused here to wash and cleanse themselves before continuing through the gates and up the steps into the outermost court of the temple.

This was known as the Court of the Gentiles. It was called this because it was the only area into which uncircumcised Gentiles were permitted. Gentiles who wanted to worship the Lord but who had not undergone the ritual of circumcision could come here to worship. As you stood here and approached the temple, you would come to a low retaining wall with a sign posted at each gate leading inward. The sign warned, upon pain of death, that no Gentiles were to be permitted past this point.

The Jews had come to utilize the Court of the Gentiles as a not-so-holy place that could serve the needs of the worshipers. In past times, the Jews had conducted this buying and selling of sacrificial animals and money changing outside the Temple, either in the marketplace of the city or even on the slopes of the Kidron Valley below the temple area.

But in recent times, it had been deemed more convenient to allow these merchants into the Court of the Gentiles. After all, it could be argued that the buying and selling in which they were engaged was for the benefit of worship. It had a utilitarian aspect and it made worship more “user-friendly.”

In taking such a stance, the Jews had not only commercialized their worship, but they had also made unholy that part of the Temple that was open to the Gentiles. They would not have dreamed of conducting the same sort of business operations in the inner courts of the temple, but they thought it acceptable to do so in those areas frequented by the Gentiles. They were showing but such action that they considered Gentile worship to be less worthy than their own worship.

2. The Retailers: *And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated (2:14).*

The business that was done in the Court of the Gentiles fell into two major categories, both having a function for those who had come to worship.

- a. The sellers of oxen and sheep.

This describes the merchants who sold animals that were to be sacrificed in the temple. When you came to offer a temple sacrifice, you were allowed to bring your own animal or even to purchase one in the marketplace of Jerusalem.

However, any animal that was to be sacrificed had to be first examined by a certified examiner from the temple. He would examine the animal to make certain that it had no spot or blemish. Unless he approved the animal, it could not be accepted as a sacrifice. The other alternative would be to purchase a pre-approved animal from one of the merchants who had purchased from the temple authorities a franchise to do business within the Court of the Gentiles.

Since the high priest controlled the examiner and since he profited from those merchants who had their franchises with the temple, it was often a losing venture to attempt to avoid the higher prices by bringing your own animal. The system had developed a vested self interest in protecting its source of revenue.

b. The Moneychangers.

It had been ordered by the temple hierarchy that the only coins that could be permitted for the payment of the annual temple tax were Jewish coins. It is interesting to note that an exception was made for the coins of Tyre, even though they bore the image of Baal.

Practically speaking, this meant that pilgrims coming from foreign lands were unable to utilize their foreign currency for worship and were required to change their money into Jewish currency. Naturally, the exchange rate was marked up significantly so that the moneychangers could see a financial profit.

As Jesus enters into the Court of the Gentiles, He sees the clamor of bargaining merchants and takes in the stench and filth of countless animal stalls. The tables of the moneychangers are piled with their profits. There is nothing wrong with business, but this is not the place of business. This is the place of God. This is supposed to be a place of worship.

3. The Reaction of Jesus: *And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables (2:15).*

Too many times, religious artists have portrayed Jesus as an anemic 90-pound weakling. Such a picture is not consistent with what we read here. This man was a carpenter by trade (Mark 6:3). He did not have power tools. This was a man who knew a full day's work. He was a craftsman; a builder; a construction worker. This sweet, gentle Jesus wades into this crowded mob of people, swinging His scourge and driving the merchants and the moneychangers from the temple.

As I read these words, my first impulse is to say, “Go Jesus! Get those guys!” But then, I cannot help but to pause and to wonder what would be the reaction of Jesus if He were to come to my church this Sunday. What would He think of us all dressed up in our Sunday finery, or in the way we might turn up our nose at one who was not dressed as we are dressed or who might not smell as we smell? What would He say about our grumblings when the pastor’s sermon goes a little long? What would be His reaction as He looked into our hearts and examined our spirit of worship? Would He be pleased? Or would He make a scourge of cords to drive us out?

You see, the Jews considered themselves to be faithful to the Lord. The moneychangers and the merchants selling animals and the Levites and the priests all thought of themselves as doing the Lord’s work. Over the years, they had blinded themselves to the hypocrisy and greed and the lack of reverence that took place in their midst. That can happen to us, too. When it does, look out because God’s judgment is going to come.

I also want you to notice that there were a lot of places in the ancient world that were a lot worse than the temple in Jerusalem. The world of that day was full of idolatry and paganism and the worship of false gods. There was immorality and corruption in government. But Jesus did not turn His scourge toward any of these areas. Instead, He went to the temple. There is a reason for this. It is because judgment must always begin at the house of God.

Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt, 2 “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.” (Amos 3:1-2).

Why does judgment begin at the house of God? It is because they are the people of God and they are supposed to know better. Jesus sets forth this principle in a parable about two slaves.

And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. (Luke 12:47-48).

If you have been coming to church and enjoying the hearing of the word of God and the warm fellowship of God’s people, but you have not made a commitment to

follow Jesus, then you be careful. The longer you hear the truth proclaimed, the more responsible you will be when you stand before God.

On the other hand, if you are already a believer, you might be thinking to yourself, “When I became a Christian, I didn’t sign up for this. They told me that I was going to trust in Jesus and that everything would be sweetness and light. They didn’t say anything about whips and scourges and judgment. How do I get out?” I want you to know that, as bad as God’s judgment may seem on the inside, it is a lot worse on the outside.

For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? (1 Peter 4:17-18).

When it is time for judgment to begin, it will begin at the house of God. That means we are in for some difficult times. But when you start to get discouraged, you remember that if things are going bad for the people of God, they are going to be a lot worse for the rest of the world.

4. The Reason for the Reaction: *And to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise” (2:16).*

When Jesus had been in the temple at the age of twelve, He had told His parents that He had to be about His Father’s business. He is now an adult and He is back in His Father’s house and He is doing His Father’s work.

Notice the sensitivity of Jesus to sin. There were a lot of other people who had been coming to the temple for a long time. They were people who loved the Lord and who had come here out of a true desire to worship Him. Yet no one else had ever been moved enough to take action in cleaning up the temple. I think there is a reason for this. It is because people had become accustomed to it. They had developed an insensitivity to sin.

One of the things I dislike the most in this world is going to the dentist. It strikes me as the modern world’s answer to medieval torture. You sit in this chair and the dentist comes in with a three-foot needle that he is going to use to deaden the pain. He puts this needle in your mouth and fills it with novocaine. After a while, your mouth feels like it has swelled to twice its original size, but when the dentist touches it, you cannot feel a thing. Sin is like that. It has a deadening influence. At first, it seems really bad. But then you get used to it. Finally, you hardly notice

it at all.

How can you counteract that deadening influence of sin? How can you develop a sensitivity to sin? I want to suggest that it is only by first spending some time in Capernaum. It is only when you have first been alone with the Lord that you can begin to see things with the same clarity with which He sees them.

5. The Remembrance of the Disciples: *His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me." (2:17).*

As the disciples of Jesus watch Him single-handedly clear the temple of these profiteers and merchants, a portion of the Old Testament Scriptures comes to their mind. It is taken from the Psalms.

*For zeal for Thy house has consumed me,
And the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me.
(Psalm 69:9).*

What were the disciples thinking? They could see that Jesus had a great zeal for the purity of the house of God. Perhaps they are waiting to see that zeal consume Him as the priests call out the temple guards to arrest Him and take Him away. Sure enough, as they stand there, Jewish representatives approach Jesus and His party.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE JEWS

The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?" (John 2:18).

Throughout his gospel account, John mentions "the Jews" as a special, localized body (John 1:19; 5:10; 5:15-18; 7:1, 11, 13, 15, 35; 18:12). In this passage, it seems to refer to the Jewish authorities; perhaps representatives of the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of Israel.

This delegation comes to Jesus and they are upset. If you want to capture the feeling that is going on here, imagine how you would feel if a man walked into your Sunday morning church service and started laying into people with a two-by-four. In light of this, it is noteworthy to observe the specific way in which they challenge the actions of Jesus. They do not say that what Jesus had done is wrong. Instead, they ask, "*What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?*"

Perhaps it was obvious to them that the temple needed cleaning from the pollution of the

merchants and the moneychangers. In any case, they do not challenge Jesus on the basis of His action. Instead, they challenge Him on the basis of His authority. This challenge is put in the form of a question.

What sign do you show?

Where are your credentials?

Do you have a doctorate in temple-cleaning?

I fear that the church hasn't changed that much in the last two thousand years. We refuse to hear someone preach or to publish his book unless he has graduated from an acceptable seminary. We want to know how many degrees are behind his name before we allow him to proclaim the word of God. We have Christian denominations today that have structures that would exclude the ministries of Jesus and all twelve of His disciples (they might take Judas Iscariot if he had the right degree).

THE SIGN - RAISING THE TEMPLE

19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

20 The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken. (John 2:19-22).

The Jews asked Jesus for his credentials; now He is going to give them His credentials. They had asked for a sign; He is going to give them a sign. It is a sign involving the temple. He is standing in the temple. The temple is the place where sacrifices were offered. It is the place where sin was covered. But this is not the temple to which Jesus refers. He is speaking of another temple. He is speaking of the temple of His body. That temple is also a place where sacrifices are offered and where sin is forgiven.

The sign is that this temple that accomplishes all of those things is going to be destroyed in the accomplishing of those things and then it will be raised up again in three days.

1. A Sign of Destruction: *Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (2:19).*

This cryptic remark of Jesus is all the more striking when we realize that there were two possible words He could have used to describe the temple.

- ἱερός: This is the most common word for the temple. It is used to describe the entire temple area, both the inner sanctuary as well as the outer courts. It is the word used in verses 14-15 when we read that the money changers and the merchants were in the temple and that Jesus drove them out of the temple.
- Ναός: This is a more specific term, normally indicating the inner sanctuary. When it is used in the New Testament, it usually refers to the inner part of the temple where only the priests were permitted to enter.

It is this second word -- the ναός -- that Jesus uses here to speak of that which will be destroyed. Jesus is the inner sanctuary. He is that special place where the presence of God resides.

2. A Sign Misunderstood: *The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" (2:20).*

The Jews missed the whole point. Jesus was not speaking of Herod's temple. He was speaking of his own body. It is His body that is the inner sanctuary of God. The Jews did not realize that. They thought He was claiming to be a master builder. I can hear them now: "We know that you are a carpenter, but don't let it go to your head!"

Herod the Great had begun the project of rebuilding and adding onto the various courts of the temple. That work had begun in 20 B.C., long before the birth of Christ. That work was still going on at this time. These building projects had been going on for 46 years and they were still not completed. They would not be finished until 64 A.D.

3. A Sign of Significance: *But He was speaking of the temple of His body (2:21).*

Jesus was referring to His own body as a temple. Neither the Jews nor His disciples grasped the significance of this at the time. It is only by hindsight that we can understand this prophecy.

This tells me something about prophecy. Prophecy is a lot easier to understand after it has been fulfilled. I sometimes have to chuckle at Christians who feel that they have God's entire plan for future prophecy all figured out with color charts and arrows. They miss the point that we are always missing the point when it comes to prophecy. Prophecy is a lot easier to understand after it has been fulfilled and, even then, it is not always so easy to understand.

This brings us to a question. Why does Jesus refer to His body as a temple? A

temple is a structure in which deity resides. It is a place where men come to meet God. You will remember that when the tabernacle was first completed in the wilderness, the glory of God moved into it with a brightness that was so intense that the priests were forced to move out. In the same way, when Solomon completed his temple, the cloud moved into the sanctuary, filling it with the glory of God.

The presence of God was no longer visible in the temple. Ezekiel's vision had pictured the presence of God departing from the temple and no vision ever was given to show that it had returned. Instead, there was a promise given. It was a promise that there would come a day when the Lord would return to His temple.

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

² "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness." (Malachi 3:1-3).

The Jews had waited for 400 years for the Lord to come to His temple. They knew that His coming would be preceded by a messenger and then the Lord would come. His coming would be fiery and it would be purifying and it would result in righteous offerings.

In the meantime, the presence of God was no longer in the temple. The structure was bigger and more glorious and more elegant than it had ever been, but it was missing something. It was missing the presence of God.

Now Jesus is on the scene. He has come, and with Him has come a presence. Within this human body, there is both man and God. It is here that men can come to meet God.

This brings us to a question. Where is the presence of God today? Where can we go to meet God? It is within the church. The gathering of God's people are collectively the temple of God.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is

what you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

What is a temple? It is a structure in which God resides. He resides today within the church, both within individuals (that is brought out in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20) as well as within the gathered church in its corporate sense. When God's people come together, He is in our midst. And just as Jesus took seriously a neglect of the temple, so also God takes seriously a neglect of the church.

4. A Sign that Produced Faith: *When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken (2:22).*

The disciples of Jesus did not understand at the time what He meant when He spoke of raising up the temple. It was not until after Jesus had risen from the dead that they would remember and believe. This faith was grounded in two things:

- They believed the Scriptures.

The Old Testament Scriptures had prophesied of the resurrection of the Messiah. Psalm 16:10 promised: *For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.* When this prophecy was fulfilled by the resurrection, the disciples would come to understand its significance and they would believe (Acts 2:28; 13:35).

- They believed what Jesus had said.

They would remember the words Jesus had spoken in the temple. They would remember and they would believe.

The account of the cleansing of the Temple is given on the heels of the wedding feast of Cana. We are meant to see these two narratives in contrast with one another.

| John 2:1-10 | John 2:11-22 |
|--|--|
| Cana of Galilee | Jerusalem of Judea |
| A wedding feast | A Passover feast |
| The problem was that there was no wine | The problem was that there was no reverence |
| The jars of water were for the purpose of ceremonial cleansing | The temple was a place where ceremonial cleansing took place |

| | |
|---|---|
| Jesus turns the water to wine | Jesus overturns the tables |
| Jesus said that His hour had not yet come | Jesus alludes to His temple being destroyed and raised again |
| Jesus is the water turned into wine when His hour comes | Jesus is the temple who will be destroyed and raised up again |

Both of these narratives point to Jesus and emphasize His true identity. The culmination of each of these accounts is that the disciples believed in Him.

I have already indulged in a certain amount of speculation as to what the disciples might have been thinking during this period as Jesus went up to Jerusalem to present Himself in the temple. From a human viewpoint, this visit to the temple would have seemed the perfect opportunity for Jesus to perform a dramatic miracle. I can imagine the disciples wondering why Jesus had not taken advantage of such an opportunity.

There is a principle here. God's plan always operates according to His own predetermined schedule. That schedule is not always clear to us. This is because of our own limited perspective. We are too close to the details of our situation to see clearly. It is like looking at a hand-woven rug through a microscope. For such a close perspective, it appears to be a vast jumble of twisted fibers and knotted threads. It is only when we back up and see from a distance that we can taken in the grand design.

So it is with God's plan. We look at it from our own limited perspective and it seems to be a meaningless tangle of isolated events, wrought by pure chance and with no ultimate goal in sight. However, if we were able to see it from God's perspective, we would behold a fantastic design as the Lord works in our lives through the circumstances he has brought our way.

The Lord is weaving you life into a heavenly pattern that you shall only truly appreciate when at last you stand with Him and look upon it from His perspective. Until that time, you can look at the circumstances of your life through eyes enlightened by faith, seeing the bits and pieces of the grand design and looking to the day when you can see it in its fulness.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12).