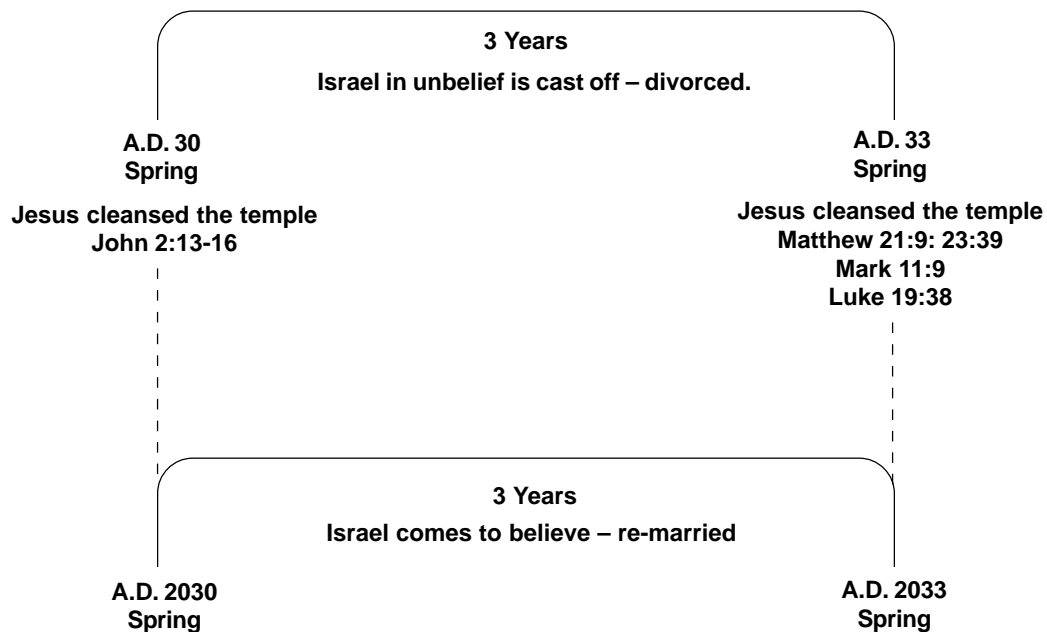


Jesus Cleanses the Temple

There has been confusion regarding the times when Jesus cleared the temple of the greedy money-changers, and their unlawful practices. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of this happening at the end of Jesus' ministry, but John records it as happening at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Which is correct? Or did it happen at the beginning and again at the end? And, most importantly, did it have prophetic meaning?

The answer to the last question is "Yes." Simply put, it was prophetic of the events in its parallel time: Autumn 2029 to Spring 2033. The simple diagram below will show this harmony.

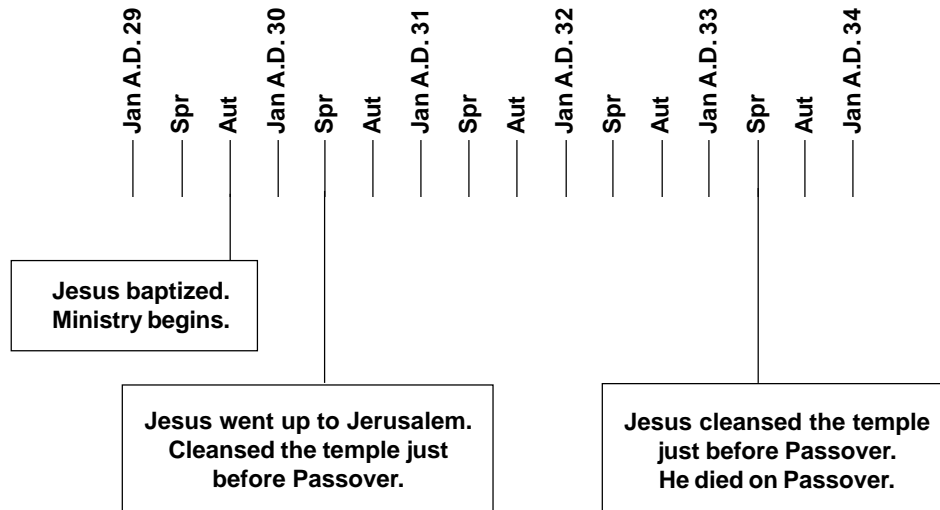


The Temple is the house of God – the dwelling place of God. In addition to being a physical building, it is also a spiritual building, composed of a heavenly phase and an earthly phase.

Jesus went into the Temple at 12-1/2 to be about his Father's business. Six months later, on his 13th birthday, he became a Son of the Law, giving him full legal status as a man, and the right to marry. That marriage would complete the heavenly phase of temple-building. It equates with the building of the foundation and the altar of Zerubbabel's temple in 537 B.C. Then there was a 17-year gap until work began again on the temple in 520 B.C., when the remaining parts of the structure were completed, and dedicated, in 516 B.C. This second phase of temple-building is the teaching of Israel to believe, and their re-marriage to God between the years 2029 and 2033.

Now let's go back and look at the two times Jesus "cleansed" the temple. He did not actually cleanse it (it remained defiled), it is only a picture, or symbol, of something greater.

The account written by John (chapter 2) tells us that just before Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem. This would be the spring of A.D. 30 – six months after his baptism.



“When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!’ His disciples remembered that it is written: ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ Then the Jews demanded of him, ‘What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.” (NIV)

Jesus knew there would be three more years until his resurrection, so he said he would raise the “temple” of his body in three “days.”

During the 3-1/2 years of his ministry, Jesus preached to Israel. Some heard and believed, but as a nation they rejected his teaching. Had they accepted his message, Israel could have been reunited with her husband (God), but they would have none of it. So, after 3-1/2 years, the divorce was finalized.

But a parallel 3-1/2 years (between Autumn 2029 and Spring 2033) is marked for Israel’s return and to enter into a new marriage covenant. It equates with the 3-1/2 years of the completion of Zerubbabel’s temple (520 B.C. to 516 B.C.). It is all about temple-building.

The time frame of these two events was the beginning and end of Jesus’ ministry. It relates to a future beginning and ending of a ministry to Israel. That first ministry was specifically to Israel – and if Israel had come to believe at that time, the Kingdom could have been set up then. But they killed him instead. But during the future parallel to these events, Israel will indeed come to believe, and so, instead of receiving condemnation they will be blessed with the inauguration of the Kingdom in their midst. In other words, the first time the “cleansing” did not make them clean, but in the parallel time (2029-2033) they will indeed be made clean.

The fact that it was the Temple that was to be made clean, tell us that the cleansing of Israel will be a part of the “temple-building” process; that is, the completion and dedication of the New Jerusalem Temple (Jesus and his Bride being the heavenly phase; and Israel being the earthly phase after they are re-married to God).

These two phases of the temple-building process were mentioned by the prophet Micah who told of the function of the Temple when he prophesied, *“The Law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”*

Psalms 45 is a beautiful description of the royal wedding of Jesus and his Bride. And after describing the glory and beauty of the Bride, verse 16 tells of her “sons.” Yes, she will have children, and this verse tells us who they will be. *“Your sons will take the place of your fathers.”* In other words, the ones who had been the fathers will now be the sons of Jesus and his Bride. But the writer of this Psalm went on to describe who these “sons” of the Bride will be. *“You will make them princes throughout the land.”* They are to become rulers. Other prophecies portray them as “teachers.” The ancient fathers of Israel will then be the sons of the Bride, and will be the teachers of Israel. When Israel recognizes who they really are, they will listen and be taught. God told Malachi that He would *“turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers.”* These “princes” were also spoken of by Isaiah: *“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice.”* (Isaiah 32:1) Amazingly this statement has a Gematria value of 2030. I don’t know if this was intended to give us a date for the beginning of this event, but it surely fits the obvious time-frame.

Then Isaiah goes on and describes the teaching process:

“Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen.”

Yes, Israel will listen to their fathers, and will come to believe. Then they will pledge their wedding vows to God as is expressed in the entire 119th Psalm.

Interestingly, the Psalm which precedes this sets the time for this event.

“The stone the builders have rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this and it is marvelous in our eyes.” (The “stone” is Jesus—Cephas the crowned King.) *O Lord save us, O Lord grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

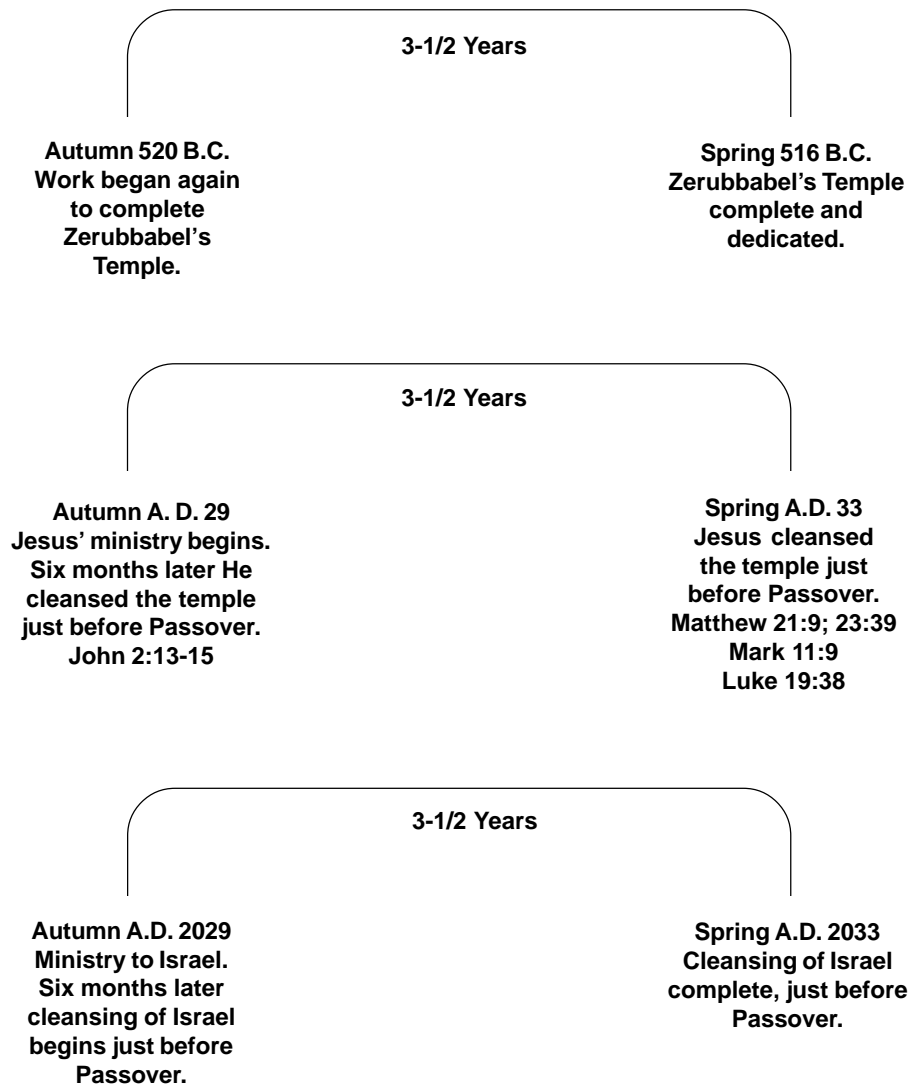
The disciples of Jesus thought that Jesus had come to set up his kingdom at that time, and so as Jesus rode up to Jerusalem on the donkey they shouted, *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”* But when he came into the city they would have none of it – so he went into the temple and drove out those who were defiling it. Then he gave them “a piece of his mind” and called them hypocrites, vipers, and white-washed tombs full of dead men’s bones. Then he pronounced the final lament over them:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate (divorced). For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

And Psalm 118:26 prophesies that they will say this after the topstone has been put into place. If that topstone is Jesus and his bride, then that royal wedding will have already taken place prior to Israel saying *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”* Yes, because the “sons” of

that royal union will be the resurrected fathers of Israel, who will be made “*Princes*” and “*Teachers*” of the people. They will teach Israel to believe. Then, and only then, will Israel come to God and pledge her wedding vows to Him, as is beautifully presented in Psalm 119.

Thus the entire 3-1/2 years, from the Autumn of 2029 to the Spring of 2033 will truly be a time of cleansing the temple, and when it is truly clean it will parallel the time when Zerubbabel’s temple was dedicated – in the Spring of 516 B.C.



But there is yet more to the story. Notice that both times Jesus “cleansed” the temple it was just before Passover. Why is this important to the story?

According to the Law given to Moses, every Israelite home must be freed of leaven before the Passover. As well as it being a requirement of the Law, it had also become a ritual. After the family had gone through the house and carefully removed every piece of leavened dough, the father of the household would go through the house and inspect to make sure all the leaven had been removed from the house.

Just so Jesus, just before Passover, cleansed the temple of “leaven.” Leaven, in the Scriptures represents sin – anything that is unlawful. And sin surely was happening on a grand scale within the temple grounds.

It was necessary that there be “money changers” because those who came to offer sacrifice needed to change their foreign money into the special currency of the temple. But those thieves and extortioners were not giving equal value for value, but were actually robbing the people who came to buy. Some people who lived locally would bring their own animal for offering, but those animals had to pass inspection from the priests. It was common practice for the priests to reject an animal and pronounce it unsuitable for sacrifice, so that the helpless citizen would be forced to buy one from their ample supply, at an exorbitant price.

The same sins that had befallen man from the beginning – greed and selfishness (getting rich by robbing the poor) – was being practiced rampantly in God’s house.

So Jesus drove them out. He cleansed the temple from the sins of the priests. Jesus was doing what the head of every household did before Passover – he was getting the leaven out.

Since the two times that Jesus cleansed the temple are paralleled by the beginning and ending of the 3-1/2 years that parallel his ministry, namely 2029 to 2033, what can we look for that will fulfill this cleansing act?

First it must be noted that one half of the first year of his ministry had already happened before this first Passover in A.D. 30. So we are left with three years until its completion. Thus we should look for some type of cleansing work in Israel beginning in the Spring of 2030 and ending in the Spring of 2033, prior to Passover. Exactly what manner of cleansing it will be cannot be known until the time, but it will be thorough, and will be like the wedding Mikvah, the ceremonial cleansing of a Jewish bride before her wedding. It will be the work of the “*teachers*,” the “*fathers*.”

The first chapter of Isaiah is descriptive of this time of purging (cleansing of Israel), and the second chapter is descriptive of the time following the cleansing, when the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is set up in Jerusalem. So let’s look at the first chapter in an attempt to understand what this cleansing of Israel is all about. Verses 1 through 7 describe Israel’s guilt. Verses 8 and 9 state that unless God intervened, there would be no survivors.

“The Daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a field of melons, like a city under siege. Unless the Lord Almighty had left us some survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”

Jesus said the same thing in his Olivet discourse that “*unless those days be shortened, no flesh would be saved,*” but for the elect’s (Israel’s) sake they would be shortened. Then in verse 10, after describing Israel’s guilt, God says to Israel:

“Wash and make yourselves clean (Mikvah bath). Take your evil deeds out of my sight (get rid of the leaven). Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.”

Then in verse 18 God invites Israel to accept the cleansing benefits of the blood of Christ.

“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

Then comes the cleansing, which appears to begin in the Spring of 2030 and end in the Spring of 2033.

“I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. I will restore your judges (ancient fathers) as in the days of old, your counselors as at the

beginning. Afterward you will be called The City of Righteousness, The Faithful City.”

The three years ends in success. Israel will be purified and rejoined to God in marriage.

“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies, and never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled; but those who harvest it will eat it and praise the Lord, and those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.

Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones, raise a banner for the nations. The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: Say to the Daughter of Zion, See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted.” (Isaiah 62:1-12)