CHAPTER TWO

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

Jn 2:17

Texts

Jn 2:17

ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν· ὁ θηλὸς τοῦ οἴκου σου καταφάγεται με.

Ps 69:10 (MT)
ci-koma bithr acalath

Ps 69:10 (LXX B)
ὅτι ὁ θηλὸς τοῦ οἴκου σου καταφάγεται με

Ps 119:139 (MT)
ζεμαθην καταθη

Ps 119:139 (LXX B)
ἐξετηθέν με ὁ θηλὸς τοῦ οἴκου σου

After narrating the cleansing of the temple, Jn introduces the quotation in 2:17 with a unique formula: “His disciples remembered that it was written.” Cf. 12:16 where, after the quotation from Zech 9:9, Jn comments: “These things his disciples did not understand at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and that they had done these things to him.” In 2:22, after Jesus’ statement about destroying “this temple” and raising it up again, and after the comment, “But he spoke of the temple of his body,” Jn adds: “When, therefore, he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this . . .” Jn uses ἐστίν γεγραμμένον also in a formula in 6:31 (with καθώς), 45 (with ἐν τοῖς προφήταις); 10:34 (with ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν); 12:14 (with καθώς); cf. also 12:16.1)

The quotation occurs nowhere else in the N. T., but the second half of Ps 69:10 is cited in Rom 15:3. Although both Paul and Jn apply their

1) γεγραμμένον ἐστίν like γέγραπται corresponds to the Rabbinic formula בְּךָה (ץ) (Bultmann, op. cit., p. 87, n. 4).
respective quotations to Jesus, there is hardly sufficient evidence for supposing that this verse of the psalm was generally accepted and used messianically when these citations were made.\textsuperscript{1)}

It is difficult to determine the relation of the quotation to its context. Bultmann\textsuperscript{2)} says that the presentation is interrupted in vs. 17 by a remark of the evangelist, as in vs. 22 and 12:16, and that ὁ θύρα of vs. 18 joins it directly to vs. 16. He also says that the sense is hardly that Jesus' action is an expression of the zeal consuming him. Much rather, the evangelist has the following (i.e., „das Ganze des Wirkens Jesu“) in view and means that Jesus' zeal will lead him to his death. This may be partly true in view of vss. 18-25.\textsuperscript{3)} But it is difficult to follow Bultmann entirely, especially when he adds that this corresponds to the traditional use of Ps 69 in primitive Christian proof from prophecy and refers to Rom 15:3 where the second half of Ps 69:10 is cited. The fact that parts of Ps 69 are quoted in Rom 15:3; Acts 1:20; Rom 11:9 f.; and Mt 27:34, 48 hardly has a bearing on our problem since the quotation in Jn occurs nowhere else.

It is better to take our quotation in vs. 17 as belonging with the cleansing of the temple which precedes it rather than with the discourse of the Jews with Jesus which follows it. Jn's motive for including the quotation seems to be that of showing the fulfillment of an O. T. prophecy in an action or deed of Jesus.\textsuperscript{4)} Jesus' action in cleansing the temple is interpreted as a result of his zeal for the temple, his Father's house. This probably comes close to the original meaning of the vs. in the psalm.\textsuperscript{5)} Jesus' action recalls to the disciples' minds the words of the psalm, so they "remembered that it was written." This formula is only a literary device on the part of Jn to convey the point of the quotation which he took messianically.

Whatever the true relation of this quotation to its context, as it now stands it agrees literally with the LXX BN as against the MT. The readings of the LXX BN here probably do show influence from Jn 2:17

\textsuperscript{1)} Against E. Earle Ellis, \textit{Paul's Use of the Old Testament} (1957), p. 97, n. 4. Cf. also Barnabas Lindars who says that Ps 69 was an original part of "the Passion apologetic" (\textit{New Testament Apologetic} (1961), pp. 103-107.

\textsuperscript{2)} \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 87 and n. 3.

\textsuperscript{3)} So also Hoskyns, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 194.

\textsuperscript{4)} Cf. also 2:22 and 12:16.

\textsuperscript{5)} Cf., e.g., W. O. E. Oesterley, \textit{The Psalms} (1955), p. 330: "What had occasioned the immediate animosity of many who were otherwise in close touch with him seems to have been that the psalmist had forcibly prevented some unseemly proceedings in the temple..."