

John 2:19

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. (*NASB*)

1. Many verses plainly state that it was *the Father* who raised Jesus, and the Bible cannot contradict itself.

2. Jesus was speaking to the Jews after he had just turned over their tables and driven their animals out of the Temple. This was the first of the two times when he did this, and this occurrence was at the beginning of his ministry. He did it once again at the end of his ministry, and that event is recorded in other Gospels. The Jews were angry and unbelieving, and Jesus was speaking in veiled terms, so much so that the Gospel of John has to add, “but he was speaking of the temple of his body,” (John 2:21 - *NASB*) so the reader would not be confused. Since Jesus was standing in the actual Temple when he said, “Destroy this temple,” the natural assumption would be the one his audience made, that he was speaking of the Temple where he was standing at the time.

3. The fact that Jesus was speaking in veiled terms to an unbelieving audience should make us hesitant to build a doctrine on this verse, especially when many other clear verses say that *the Father* raised Jesus. For example, 1 Corinthians 6:14 states: “By his power, God raised the Lord from the dead.” Jesus was not in a teaching situation when he was speaking. Tempers were flaring and the Jews were against Jesus anyway. It was common for Jesus to speak in ways that unbelievers did not understand. Even a cursory reading of the Gospels will show a number of times when Jesus spoke and the unbelievers who heard him (and sometimes even the disciples) were confused by what he said.

4. We know that Jesus was speaking in veiled terms, but what did he mean? He was almost certainly referring to the fact that he was indeed ultimately responsible for his resurrection. How so? Jesus was responsible to keep himself “without spot or blemish” and to fully obey the will of the Father. In that sense he was like any other sacrifice. A sacrifice that was blemished was unacceptable to the Lord (Lev. 22:17-20; Mal. 1:6-8). Since this event in John was at the start of his ministry, he knew he had a long hard road ahead and that obedience would not be easy. If he turned away from God because he did not like what God said to do, or if he were tempted to the point of sin, his sin would have been a “blemish” that would have disqualified him as the perfect sacrifice. Then he could not have paid for the sins of mankind, and there would have been no resurrection. The reader must remember that Jesus did not go into the Temple and turn over the money tables because he “just felt like it.” John 2:17 indicates that he was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy and the will of God, which he always did. Had he not fulfilled the prophecy spoken in Psalm 69:9, he would not have fulfilled all the law and would have been disqualified from being able to die for the sins of mankind. Thus, his destiny was in his own hands, and he could say, “I will raise it up.”

5. It is common in speech that if a person has a vital part in something, he is spoken of as having done the thing. We know that Roman soldiers crucified Jesus. The Gospels say it, and we know that the Jews would not have done it, because coming in contact with Jesus

would have made them unclean. Yet Peter said to the rulers of the Jews, “you” crucified the Lord (Acts 5:30). Everyone understands that the Jews played a vital part in Jesus’ crucifixion, so there really is a sense in which they crucified him, even though they themselves did not do the dirty work. A similar example from the Old Testament is in both 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Chronicles 11. David and his men were attacking the Jebusite city, Jerusalem. The record is very clear that David had sent his men ahead into the city to fight, and even offered a general’s position to the first one into the city. Yet the record says, “David captured the stronghold of Zion.” We know why, of course. David played a vital role in the capture of Jerusalem, and so Scripture says he captured it. This same type of wording that is so common in the Bible and indeed, in all languages, is the wording Jesus used. He would raise his body, *i.e.*, he would play a vital part in it being raised.

6. Christ knew that by his thoughts and actions he could guarantee his own resurrection by being sinlessly obedient unto death. That made it legally possible for God to keep His promise of resurrecting Christ, who was without sin and therefore did not deserve death, the “wages of sin.”

Racovian Catechism, pp. 362 and 363
Snedeker, pp. 413 and 414

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