

Extracts from **Crossways! A survey course of the narrative and major themes of the old and new testaments**

[pp. 411-412]

MARK MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

1. All but one of Jesus' miracles (as reported in Mark) were done in and around Galilee. Jesus performs only one miracle after leaving Galilee; He heals blind Bartimaeus near Jericho, 10:46-52. He performs no miracles in or near Jerusalem, that "city of opposition."
2. In Mark 8:27-30 Jesus puts two crucial questions to His disciples. The first is: "*Who do MEN say that I am?*" The second is: "*Who do YOU say that I am?*" He did not put that kind of questions to anyone prior to that time. Even so, prior to that time He *was* recognized – by the *demons!* 1:24, 1:34, 3:11, 5:7. Even *blind* Bartimaeus knew who He was. Though he could not see Jesus with his eyes, he could "see" Him with his heart and accordingly called out: "*Jesus, Son of David,*" 10:47.
3. The demons knew who He was. A blind man could "see" Him. But what about the people, the disciples? We do well to remember that often Jesus' actions carried a double message. He gave sight to a blind man, and in so doing declared Who He was. But His actions also said to those about Him: "*This man's eyes are shut, but he can see. Yours are open, but can you really see who I am?*" In Mark 8:22-26 He opened the eyes of a blind man "in stages." His actions ask: "*Can you see fully and clearly who I am, or do your eyes need to be opened still further?*"
4. On those occasions when Jesus was recognized, He warned the person or spirit who had recognised Him not to say anything to anyone about the matter. Why? First, Jesus wanted to make it very clear that in Him the Messianic Age had come, and that He was indeed the Messiah. Second, He wanted to make it abundantly clear *just what kind of a Messiah He had come to be*. The community contained many burning with desire to be rid of the Romans and to gain political independence for the nation. They were ready at the drop of a hat to declare "bloody war" on their Roman overlords. Jesus needed time to make it abundantly clear that He was not the kind of Messiah that would fit in with that kind of expectation. He had not come to be a political deliverer, see 1:33, 44; 5:43; 9:9; but note 5:19,20.
5. Nowhere in the Gospel does one read of Jesus doing anything to benefit Himself. He consistently refused to use His divine power to perform any miracle to service His own personal needs. Even when He was hungry, He chose to remain hungry rather than change stones into bread, Matthew 4:4. Jesus was always and ever "The Servant". He came to place Himself and His powers at the service of men. He manifested this spirit in all of His miracles. *The form of the Servant was the very essence of His total life and ministry.*
6. As He moved among people, Jesus demonstrated *remarkable compassion*. For example, before healing the outcast leper, He reached out and touched him, 1:40-45. By way of contrast, the Pharisees on occasion threw rocks at lepers and said that their suffering had come about as a result of some great sin that they had committed. Furthermore, He sought out the company of "*sinners, tax collectors, and the like,*" 2:15-17. No wonder the scribes and Pharisees were upset. They felt that if He really was the Messiah, He would seek out the "righteous" (namely, them) in the community. Finally, Jesus even went to the help of a Gentile woman, 7:24-30. The Jew/Gentile issue is of little consequence to us today, but at the time of Jesus it was *emotionally charged!* Jesus' concern for the Gentiles would have been repugnant to the many in Israel who believed that when finally the Messianic Age came, the Gentiles would be destroyed – or at best made slaves of the Jews.
7. Jesus claimed for Himself the right to forgive sins, 2:1-12. His claim incensed the scribes, who insisted that only God could forgive sins, 2:7. How right they were! Unfortunately for them, in their blindness they could not see Who it was that stood before them!
8. Again and again, Jesus ignored traditional attitudes concerning the observance of the Sabbath, 1:21, 2:23, 3:2. What mattered for Him was the well-being of people, not the keeping of rituals and traditions. This attitude on Jesus' part was bound to bring Him into headlong confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees, in that through His actions Jesus called into question the validity of their understanding of the Law.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

The concept of Jesus' *authority* plays a central role in Mark's gospel. The various ways in which Jesus' authority manifested itself are listed:

1. Jesus demonstrated His authority over the forces of nature, 4:35-41; 6:45-52. In so doing, He assumed the rights and powers reserved in the Old Testament for God Himself.
2. Jesus is described as *a Teacher with amazing authority*, 1:21-22. His approach was very different from that of the scribes and Pharisees. They tended to get bogged down in a multitude of minute details, and continually appealed to this or that rabbi to buttress their opinions. Jesus said simply, *"I say to you."*
3. Jesus declared Himself to be the One possessing authority *to reveal the secrets of the Kingdom of God*, 4:10, 11, 34. The Jews believed that somehow or other they could influence the coming of the Kingdom by their actions. Jesus said that the Kingdom broke in with Him. He made it known. It is given through Him.
4. Jesus set Himself *above the Law*. The Jews said that the link between God and His people was the Law. In setting Himself above the Law, Jesus claimed that He was the ultimate authority, the link between heaven and earth. See 3:14-17, 18, 19; 7:1-23.
5. Jesus asserted authority over *the Sabbath*, 2:27- 28. He insisted that what mattered was not the observance of ritual, but the meeting of need.
6. Jesus demonstrated authority over *the Temple*, 11:15-18. For the Jew, the Temple symbolized the perpetual presence of God among His people. It was the Sadducees' focus of piety. Jesus replaced the Temple with Himself. He was God's Presence among people. He was the point of contact between heaven and earth. This claim would have angered the Sadducees, just as His claim to have authority over the Law would have angered the Pharisees.
7. Jesus claimed authority over *Satan and the realm of the demonic*, 3:19-27; 5:1-13. Jesus declared that He had come to bind the strong man (Satan) and plunder his goods. In other words, He came to destroy the kingdom of Satan and establish the Kingdom of God.
8. Jesus declared that He had authority *"to forgive sin,"* 2:1-12. Many Jews thought that sickness was the result of some sin which had been committed. In the incident outlined in 2:1-12, the onlookers could have *said* to the paralytic, "your sins are forgiven," even as they could have *said* "take up your bed and walk." However, they could only *say* these things. Jesus could both *say* and *effect* them.
9. Jesus possessed authority *over death*, 5:21-43; 12: 18-27. He demonstrated that authority over death in others, and over death in Himself.

MATTHEW THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES

Matthew's general outline, and the way he structures what he has to say within that outline, suggest that he saw in Jesus a *New Moses*. His teaching supplants all that existed previously. His mission brought into existence *New Israel*. However, Jesus was more than a mere Lawgiver. He came to carry out a *New Exodus*, to free God's people from bondage to sin, Satan, judgments, and condemnation, and to lead them into that realm in which they would know the joy of living under their gracious God and the freedom that went hand in hand with taking *Christ's* yoke on them. (Note that the rabbis spoke of the yoke of the Law, Matthew 11:28-30).

It is significant that one of the first things Jesus does when His ministry gets under way is to take His new people to a mountain and proclaim to them the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. The directions for life that Jesus shared with His hearers on that occasion are not in any way to be understood as some new set of regulations His followers are to try to keep to persuade God to forgive and accept them. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount reflects the spirit of the events outlined in Exodus 19-20. On that occasion God gave His will to that people He had already declared to be His own; that people He had gathered to Himself in covenant mercy. Jesus, the New Moses, gave His new will to His new people in a similar spirit. He had gathered to Himself people who had no claim on Him whatsoever. He had summoned them into fellowship with Himself with the words, "*Follow Me*," 4:19. They were His, not because of any merit on their part, but because of His effective call. It is worthy of note that the first word Jesus spoke in His famous sermon was "*Blessed*," 5:3. He used it nine times within as many verses, 5:3-11.

It is significant that Jesus' first actions after giving the Sermon on the Mount were to heal a leper and a Gentile. The Pharisees used the *Old Law* in such a way that separation from lepers (*out-casts*) and Gentiles was a necessity for the "righteous man." They used the Law in such a way that it became a wall between themselves and those who needed their help. Jesus' actions, as outlined in Matthew 8:1-13, were living demonstrations of the path of true obedience to the will of His Father.

Jesus insisted He had not come to destroy the Law and the prophets, but to fulfil them, Matthew 5:17. In other words, He brought the Law to its intended meaning, purpose, and fullness. He reduced all commandments to the practice of love. Love is not merely a warm emotion about others. It is rather that act of the will which impels a person to seek nothing but good for his fellowman and to express that desire in concrete action. Love is not a lesser righteousness, but a greater one.

Note well that Jesus did not call people into the part-time service of God. His statement, "*But seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness*" (Matt. 6:33) would be more correctly translated: "*Seek ONLY God's kingdom and His righteousness*"; note 4:10, "*Him only shall you serve*." The parallel passage in Luke 12:31 reads: "*Seek His kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well*." Jesus insists there are to be no priorities in a person's life, no first, second, third, etc., priority, for the simple reason that a person is to seek to live *ONLY FOR GOD* by seeking to live *only for his neighbor*. That is what life under God in His Kingdom is all about.

Jesus flatly refused to accept (as did the Pharisees) the traditions of the elders, the Oral Law. He referred to the directions given in the Oral Law and then rejected them outright with: "*But I say unto you*," Matthew 5:21-28. These traditions tended to make the keeping of the Law an intolerable burden. The Pharisees, in particular, had reduced the union of man with God to a carefully fixed set of routine, external observances – to a manmade product. They denied man's sinfulness, because they did not really understand the Law. They polished the outside of the vessel, but they interpreted the Law in such a way that it did not touch their hearts, Matthew 23:25, 26; see all of chapter 23.

Jesus' description of the Final judgment is rich in overtones, Matthew 25:31-46. He assures His own that His meeting with them on that Last Day will be a *Welcome Home Day* ("Come, you blessed of My Father . . ."). Furthermore, He points to those things for which He will commend them: *simply, ordinary, everyday, down-to-earth acts of service for others that anyone can do*. Note well the complete lack of any spirit of work-righteousness in this passage. Those whom He welcomes and commends respond with, "*Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison?*" He commends His own only for what they have done for others, but in the final analysis those *others* are *Himself* ("Him only shalt thou serve," 4:10).

In Matthew 18:20 we read: "*For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them*." This statement should be compared with a saying in the *Pirke Aboth* ("The Sayings of the Fathers"); "*When they sit together and are occupied with the Torah, the Shekinah is among them*," 3:8. Jesus' words declared that He, His Person, His teaching, and His example replaced the Torah. Furthermore, He would continue among His own until the end of the age, Matthew 28:20. While His people wait for Him to come again, they are not to be idle. They are to seek to make disciples for Him from among all nations and to teach them to observe what Jesus has commanded them. Because the Jews rejected Jesus, the world was opened up for the proclamation of His Gospel. Israel itself should have proclaimed the Messiah to the world, but Israel would not accept Him. The Old Israel was therefore replaced by the New Israel, the Church. The New Israel was to see it that the will of its Lord was done.

LUKE CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTENT

1. Luke manifests a *universal concern* for all people of all nations. The Gospel is *Volume One* of a *Two Volume Work* whose overall concern is to show how that mighty saving work of God which began in the Jerusalem Temple (1:8f) eventually spread to Rome, Acts 28:14. Though Jesus does not preach to the Gentiles *Volume One*, He (as the Risen Lord working through the Church) preaches to them repeatedly throughout *Volume Two*.

Some of the ways in which this *universal concern* expresses itself are the following: Luke alone of the evangelists includes in the quotation from Isaiah, "*and all flesh shall see the salvation of God,*" 3:6; see Isaiah 40:3-5. Simeon speaks of the salvation which comes with Jesus as "*a light for revelation to the Gentiles,*" 2:32. The Samaritans are spoken of in a good light, 9:51-56; 10: 30-37; 17:11-19. Jesus refers to the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian leper as those to whom the prophets of old were sent (4:25-27), indicating that often foreigners received God's help when Israel did not. As in both Matthew (27:54) and Mark (15:39), the Roman centurion makes an admirable confession beneath the cross, 23:47. The lists of officials in 2:1ff and 3:1ff indicate that Jesus' ministry was to have international repercussions. Finally, Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam to point out that in Jesus (*the New Adam*) God was at work to make a new beginning to *the human race*, 3:23-38.

2. Luke presents Jesus as one demonstrating *great compassion*. He loves to be in the company of those the Jews want to avoid: the poor, the Samaritans, lepers, publicans, soldiers, public sinners in disgrace, and unlettered shepherds. But then, Jesus Himself went the way of the poor and lowly servant. When he came to earth, His arrival was not heralded by a cosmic fireworks display with a heavenly orchestra providing background music. He simply came quietly down the back stairs at Bethlehem and placed Himself into the crook of a woman's arms. One of the points Luke makes in 2:1-12 is that news about Jesus' birth was announced first to *shepherds*. They were looked on as "*nobodies*", as virtual outcasts, by the religious elite in Jerusalem. Even so, God saw fit to let them be the first to hear the good news about the birth of His Son! The poor and insignificant are chosen to play an important role in the life of Jesus. A childless and aged couple gave birth to the Forerunner, John the Baptist, 1:18. Mary and Joseph were without social standing. Those who acknowledged the infant Jesus in the Temple were an aged man and an elderly widow, 2:22-35, 36-28.
3. Luke is the Gospel of *The Great Pardons*. It tells how Jesus dealt with a "sinful" woman in a most compassionate way, 7:36-50. It records the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, chapter 15. In it, Jesus tells Zacchaeus that He wants to dine with him, 19:1-10. At Calvary, Jesus prays for His executioners (23:34) and makes a sublime promise to one of the thieves executed with Him, 23:39-43.
4. Luke is *The Gospel of Joy*. Matthew's Gospel is sombre and majestic; Mark's is urgent. However, Luke stresses the *joy* that comes to those who believe the gracious word of pardon that the Father speaks to them through His Son, 15:6, 7, 9, 10, 20-24, 32. Reference is made to how the crowds respond with admiration to Jesus' ministry, 5:26; 10:17; 13:17; 18:43.
5. In Luke, Jesus always has time *to show understanding and sympathy*. He pauses on the way to Calvary to speak with the weeping women, 23:27-31. He heals the servant whose ear Peter has cut off, 22:51. When Peter denied Him, He paused to look at him, 22:61.
6. A concern for the *well-being of women* is reflected throughout the Gospel. In Palestine, a woman was often merely a "thing" with no legal rights whatsoever. In Luke, Jesus comes into contact with them again and again and treats them with dignity and understanding: Elizabeth; Anna the prophetess; the widow at Nain, 7:11-17; the woman in Simon's house, 7:36-50; Mary Magdalene out of who he cast seven devils, Susanna, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza, 8:2, 3; Mary and Martha, 10:38-42; and the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, 23:27-31.
7. Luke's Gospel is *The Gospel of Absolute Renouncement*. Jesus' disciples must leave all things to follow Him, 5:11. They must be totally dedicated to Jesus, 9:62. Luke alone adds the word *wife* to the list of what some will be asked to give up for the sake of the kingdom, 14:26. The disciples must sell what they have and give alms, 12:33. They will have to carry their cross throughout life, 9:23. However, they are asked to endure nothing different from their Master Who must also "suffer," 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44. In this context note how Luke stresses again and again the threat that money and earthly possessions pose to discipleship, 12:13-34; chapter 16.
8. Detachment from the demands and standards of the world is only possible because Jesus and His disciples remain continuously dedicated to God in this *Gospel of Prayer and the Holy Spirit*. Jesus prays before every important step in His ministry: His baptism, 3:21; before choosing the Twelve, 6:12; before Peter's declaration that He is the Messiah, 9:18; at the Transfiguration, 9:28; before teaching His disciples how to pray, 11:1; in Gethsemane, 22:41. Jesus not only prayed with fervor Himself, but insisted that His followers be people of prayer also, 6:28; 10:2; 11:1-13; 18:1-8; 21:36.

9. Luke refers repeatedly to *the work of the Spirit*, 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25-27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12. The Spirit is now given, not only to special individuals like the judges of old but to John the Baptist (1:15, 80) and his parents, 1:41;67. Jesus' conception is brought about by the Spirit (1:35), and He himself is filled with the Holy Spirit, 4:1. What the Spirit did in connection with the life of Jesus continues on after His ascension in the church. The Spirit continues to work in the same obvious, prominent way throughout Luke's *Volume Two*, Acts. It is significant to note that the "good things" the Father will surely give to those who ask Him (Matt. 7:11), become "the Holy Spirit" in Luke 11:13.
10. The Spirit Who has taken up residence in Jesus spreads joy and peace among those who listen to Him. Luke's Gospel might well be called *the Gospel of Messianic Joy*. Terms like the Greek *Makarios* (translated by *happy, fortunate*) occur repeatedly, 1:45; 6:20-22; 7:23; 10:23; 11:27f; 12:37f; 14:14f; 23:29.
11. Matthew and Mark at times give the impression that they expected the return of Jesus in the very near future, Mark 14:62; Matthew 26:64. Note Luke's version of Jesus' words, "*But from now on the Son of Man SHALL BE SEATED at the right hand of the power of God,*" 22:67-69. Luke looked beyond the time of the Ascension to the time of the history of the Church. He suggested to his readers that it would be some time before the Lord returned.
12. Luke contains some of the best-known and best-loved incidents and parables in the life of Jesus:
- The Good Samaritan, 10:25-37
 - Mary and Martha, 10:38-42
 - The Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son, chapter 15
 - The Unjust Steward, 16:1-9
 - Dives and Lazarus, 16:19-31
 - The Thankful Samaritan, 17:11-19
 - The Pharisee and the Publican, 18:9-14
 - Zacchaeus, 19:1-10
13. *The blame for Jesus' crucifixion* is laid fairly and squarely at the feet of the Jews, 20:20, 26; 23:2, 5, 18f, 23, 25. Though the Roman authorities were involved in the events of the Passion history, they are not blamed for what transpired.
14. Though Luke very seldom quotes the Old Testament prophecies, he refers to *Jesus as a prophet* more often than Mark; see Luke 4:24; 7:16, 39; 9:19. Jesus' role reflects that of Elijah – one sent to the Gentiles. Though Jesus never preaches to the Gentiles in Luke, His prophetic ministry is fulfilled in the ministry of the church. Note the following parallels:
- | | <i>Luke</i> | <i>Acts</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Baptism of the Spirit | 3:21f | 2:1ff |
| Preaching about the Spirit | 4:16-19 | 2:17 |
| Rejection | 4:29 | 7:58, 13:50 |
| Cure of the Crowds | 4:40f | 2:43, 5:16 |
| Glorification | 9:28-36 | 1:9-11 |
15. Luke avoids the repetition of similar events. Note the following:
- One anointing of Jesus 7:36-50
 - One multiplication of loaves and fishes 9:12-17
 - One barren fig tree 13:6-9
 - One return of the disciples in the garden 22:39-46
 - One trial before the Jewish authorities 22:66-71

He also omits scenes of violence or disrespect: the murder of John to Baptist, Mark 6:14-29, the impatient remarks of the disciples, Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25; the outrages committed during the Passion, Mark 14:65; 15: 15-19. He also omits the reference to Jesus being "beside Himself," Mark 3:21. On the cross, Jesus utters no cry of declaration, but simply commits His spirit into the hand of the Father, 23:46.

JOHN HELPS FOR READING WITH UNDERSTANDING

1. The language of John's Gospel is very simple. However, it contains a deep message. Simple phrases such as "*it was night*" (13:30) often have double meaning.
2. The Gospel contains no stories of Jesus' childhood and birth. Instead, the Gospel begins with comments about the Son of God in eternity, and in so doing uses language that reflects Genesis 1.
3. The first three Gospels contain short sayings of Jesus. However, in John, Jesus gives long speeches which circle around a central theme or word like "Life," "Light," etc. There is no command to keep his identity a secret. His identity is stated openly in grand terms from the very beginning. The series of titles ascribed to Jesus in chapter 1 has its "grand finale" in 20:28, where Thomas falls down before him and declares, "*My Lord and My God!*"
4. Though Jesus speaks to the crowds also in John, He is usually found in dialogue with individuals, such as Nathanael, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, Mary, Martha, Thomas, Peter, and so on. On the other hand His opponents are not so much the scribes and Pharisees, but simply "the Jews" – especially the Jewish leaders who reject Him.
5. The miracles Jesus performs in John are called "signs." There are seven in all:

2:1-12	Jesus changes water into wine at Cana in Galilee
4:43-54	Jesus heals the official's son
5:1-16	The healing of the paralytic
6:1-15	The feeding of 5,000 in the wilderness
6:16-24	Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee
9:1-41	A blind man is given sight
11:1-44	Lazarus is raised from the dead

These "signs" reveal a deep truth about Jesus' Person and mission.

6. There are many similes or images in John's Gospel (see 3:8, 3:29; 4:35-38; 5:19; 8:35; 10:1-4; 11:9; 16:21) but no parables. Jesus calls Himself the *I AM*, the name of God Himself (Exod. 3:14) in 4:26, 8:24, 28, 58; and 13:19. More important, seven times He says *I am . . .* with something to follow to identify Himself.
7. John's Gospel has a dramatic overarching theme. It pictures Jesus coming into the world to face something like a court trial. The accusation against Him is that He is an imposter and a blasphemer. Witnesses for the prosecution and defense are called, and the world seems to gain the victory *until the Resurrection puts the record straight*. The language of a trial can often be detected. Words like *witness* and *judge* are common. John mentions the following witnesses for Jesus:
 - a. John the Baptist, 1:7-19, 32-34; 3:28; 5:32-34
 - b. Jesus Himself, 3:11, 32, 33; 5:31; 8:13-18; 18:37
 - c. Jesus' works or signs, 5:36; 10:25
 - d. God the Father, 5:37; 8:18
 - e. The Scriptures, 5:39
 - f. The Holy Spirit, 15:26
 - g. The disciples, 15:27
 - h. The evangelist, 19:35, 21:24
 - i. The Samaritan woman, 4:39
 - j. A crowd of people, 12:17

Others, even if not called witnesses, also testify to Jesus, e.g. Pilate, who actually proclaimed the truth about Jesus' Person, even if his superscription on the cross was meant to be a bad joke, 19:19-22.

8. John does not include information about that incident at Caesarea Philippi in which Jesus asked the disciples who the people thought He was, and what they thought He was, Mark 8:27-30. However, note what might be classified as *A Confession of Peter* at John 6:68.

9. In John's Gospel, as in Mark, the crowds come and the crowds go; note 6:2, 14, 15, 66, 67. Though they were keen to make Him their king, they did not understand the kind of King He had come to be, 6:15.
10. John does not make reference to the following events:
 - a. Jesus' baptism (although he alludes to it, 1:29-34)
 - b. Jesus' temptation
 - c. Jesus curing lepers
 - d. Jesus' association with outcasts and sinners
 - e. The transfiguration event (Matt. 17:1-9)
 - f. The institution of the Lord's Supper
 - g. The agony of Gethsemane
 - h. The cry of dereliction on the cross

However, no real conclusion can be drawn from these omissions. Some of them did not fit into John's overall purpose. Though there is no transfiguration *event*, Jesus is "transfigured" throughout the Gospel. His glory is an on-going manifestation. Furthermore, though John does not make specific reference to the Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper, he alludes to them in 6:51b-71; his counterpart to Matthew, Mark and Luke's account is the footwashing event, 13:1-17. He speaks of the *desired outcome* of participation in the Lord's Supper rather than about the elements distributed and received in that observance.

11. Among Jewish expectations about the coming Messiah were the following:
 - a. His origins would be obscure: see 7:27
 - b. He would perform signs; see 7:31
 - c. He would come from Bethlehem, see 7:42
 - d. He would abide for ever, see 12:34
12. The terms *the living water*, *the bread of life*, and *the light of the world* were in common use among the rabbis of Jesus' day. They used them to refer to the Law, the *Torah*, God's revelation of Himself and His truth in the Old Testament. The fact that Jesus applied them to Himself said a lot to His hearers, 4:7-15; 6:25-51a; 8:12-30.
13. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke the event that is the "last straw" for the Jews is the cleansing of the Temple. However, the "last straw" in John is the raising of Lazarus from the dead, 11:45-53, 57. That act so enraged the authorities that they planned to do away not only with Jesus but with Lazarus as well, 12:10, 11.