***Jesus as Whippersnapper: John 2:15 and Prophetic Violence***

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In a 2009 article in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, N. Clayton Croy, argued that Jesus should not be portrayed as committing any act of violence in John 2:15.[1] Croy concludes that "Jesus did not apply the whip to persons in the temple precincts. If that interpretation is correct, it is thoroughly consonant with the broadly attested tradition of a non-violent Jesus."[2] More recently, Andy Alexis-Baker concludes that Jesus did not even strike any animals with a whip, which was made of materials too soft to injure anyone or any animal.[3] Similarly, Ronald Sider claims that "Jesus certainly did not kill the money changers. Indeed, I doubt that He even used His whip on them."[4]

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*This article is adapted from part of chapter on "The Violent Jesus" in Hector Avalos, *The Bad Jesus: The Ethics of New Testament Ethics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 110-126.

[1] N. Clayton Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper: Did Jesus Use a Whip on People in the Temple (John 2:15)?" *JBL* 128 (2009):555-568.

[2] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper," 567-68.

[3] Andy Alexis-Baker, "Violence, Nonviolence and the Temple Incident in John 2:13-15," *BibInt* 20 (2012):73-96.

[4]Ronald Sider, *Christ and Violence* (Eugene,Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 200), 47. Brooke Foss Westcott (*The Gospel According to St. John*

All of these scholars follow a broader pacifistic view of Jesus that offers tacit approval for the actions of Jesus in the temple precincts (e.g., overturning tables, disrupting commerce). Some writers in this stream of scholarship emphatically deny that Jesus even committed any acts of violence as suggested by a plain reading of most translations of this text.[5] Indeed, N. Clayton Croy sums up the challenge posed by this passage to the image of a peaceful Jesus as follows:

> If medieval and Renaissance artists are any indication, the so-called temple cleansing must be one of the most important episodes in the life of Jesus. But some readers of John's account have felt unease with the image of a violent, whipcracking Jesus.[6]

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(repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971 [1881], 41) sees the whip "as a symbol of authority and not as a weapon of offence."

[5] Others just factually mention Jesus' violent actions without comment. Jarl Henning Ulrichsen, ("Jesus—Der neue Tempel? Ein kritischer Blick auf Die Auslegung von Joh 2, 313-22," in *Neotestamentica et Philonica: Studies in Honor of Peder Borgen* [ed. David E. Aune, Torrey Seland and Jarl Henning Ulrichsen; Leiden: Brill, 2002] 202-214, quote on 206): "macht Jesus eine Geissel aus Stricken...und treibt damit alle aus dem Tempel hinaus, nicht nur die Verkäufer und Geldwechsler, sondern auch die Tiere."

[6] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper." 556. For a general survey of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, see Lee I. Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City*

Wayne Walden, in fact, blames Jerome's Vulgate for popularizing a translation that "gave Jesus a bad rap for something he did not do."[7]

Another stream of New Testament scholarship does view Jesus' actions as violent, even if it believes the violence is justified or not worthy of any ethical objection. Raymond Brown, a major modern interpreter of the Gospel of John, remarks: "Seemingly Jesus used the whip on the merchants" but offers no further ethical objections.[8] Timothy Wardle, who characterizes Jesus' actions as a "demonstration," admits that Jesus drove out both the money changers and their animals, but issues no negative ethical evaluation of Jesus' actions.[9] Richard Burridge admits that "[w]ith regard to violence, Jesus does

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*in the Second Temple Period (538 B.C.E.-70 C.E.)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002).

[7] Wayne Walden, "John 2:15: Jesus with a Whip: Translation Notes," *ResQ* 57 (2015): 115-16, quote on 116. Walden assumes that the translation in Jerome's Vulgate (*omnes eiecit de templo, oves quoque et boves*) is faulty, when one could just as well posit that Jerome furnishes evidence for an accurate non-pacifistic understanding of the Greek grammar of John 2:15 among early translators.

[8] Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John 1-XII* (AB, 29; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983),115.

[9] Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity* (WUNT, 2.291; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 172-180, quote on 172. For another study, see Jacob Chanikuzhy (ed.), *Jesus, the Eschatological Temple. An*

make 'a whip of cords' to drive the money changers out of the temple (2.15)."[10] However, Burridge believes the actions were justified.

Similarly, Candida Moss admits to the violence and actual use of the whip, but claims Jesus was combating social injustice. As she phrases it:

> In the Gospel of John he actually uses a whip to drive people out of the Temple. He preferred peace, but he also engaged in at least one violent act of civil protest in order to highlight the social injustice and corruption of his day.[11]

Moss seems to assume that the activities in the temple were unjust or corrupt without any corroborating evidence. She uncritically cedes to the Johannine Jesus the authority to decide what constitutes social injustice and corruption, and does not consider how the Jews or Jewish priests might have viewed this act. Imagine if a zealous Protestant stormed violently into

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*Exegetical Study of Jn 2, 13-22 in the Light of pre-70 CE. Eschatological Temple Hopes and the Synoptic Temple Action* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 58; Leuven: Peeters, 2012).

[10] Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 331.

[11] Candida Moss, "The Biggest Myths about Jesus Christ," *The Daily Beast* (September 24, 2016) at http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/09/25/the-biggest-myths-about-jesus-christ.html (accessed April 27, 2017).

a Catholic venue where bingo was being played on the grounds that this was corrupting God's religion and church. Would Catholics agree that this Protestant was engaging in a "violent act of civil protest in order to highlight the social injustice and corruption of his day"?

One notable exception to this effort to justify or excuse Jesus is J. Harold Ellens who remarks that:

> [Jesus] picked up a riding crop or bullwhip and started to abuse those most available, expending his long anguished anger, his weariness with the spiritual mediocrity of human life, and his obsessive need to feel the power of his delusional vision of the triumphal Son of Man realized in the here and now.[12]

Indeed, Adele Reinhartz notes the reluctance of many scholars to see Jesus in a negative ethical light. For example, on the issue of whether one can attribute any anti-Judaism to the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel of John, Reinhartz remarks: "Many scholars do, however, attempt to reconcile or, one might even say, to explain away the apparent anti-Jewish rhetoric of both the text and its portrayal of Jesus."[13]

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[12] J. Harold Ellens, "The Violent Jesus," in *The Destructive Power of Religion: Violence in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (ed. J. Harold Ellens; 4 vols.; Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004], 3:15-37, quote on 16.

[13]Adele Reinhartz, "The Gospel of John: How 'The Jews' Became Part of

In this essay, I explain, why the arguments offered by Croy for a nonviolent interpretation are not compelling on linguistic, literary or historical grounds. In so doing, I argue that some Gospel traditions had no objections to violent portraits of Jesus, especially when he was located within scriptural prophetic traditions that combined messages of divine mercy and violent wrath. John 2:13-19 itself reads:

> The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign have you to show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise

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the Plot," in *Jesus, Judaism, and Christian Anti-Judaism* (ed. Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz; Louisville, KY: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 2002), 99-116, quote from 111. See also Hector Avalos, *The Bad Jesus: The Ethics of New Testament Ethics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015).

it up" (John 2:13-19).[14]

For my purposes, the most crucial verses are 14-15, which the Greek text presents as follows:

> καὶ εὗρεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοὺς πωλοῦντας βόας καὶ πρόβατα καὶ περιστερὰς καὶ τοὺς κερματιστὰς καθημένους, καὶ ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, καὶ τῶν κολλυβιστῶν ἐξέχεεν τὸ κέρμα καὶ τὰς τραπέζας ἀνέτρεψεν.[15]

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[14] Unless noted otherwise, all biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, as presented in Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). For a more extensive study of this passage and comparison to parallel accounts in other Gospels, see Brown, *The Gospel According to John 1-XII*, 114-25. An important study of the temple episode within the "Sign/Semeia Source" theory may be found in Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and its Predecesor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (3rd edition; London: T&T Clark International, 2004). For the position that Jesus viewed himself and his movement as the embodiment of the eschatological temple, see Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

[15] Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of the Greek text follow Barbara Aland, et al., *The Greek New Testament* (5th edition; Münster/

According to the plain reading of most translations of this passage, Jesus uses violence against people who are otherwise going about their business in a peaceful manner. They are not attacking Jesus, nor are they threatening to attack Jesus physically. Rather, Jesus does not like them engaging in the particular business of selling animals and money changing, and so he decides to expel them from the temple.

Croy believes he has found definitive evidence that the violent interpretation is wrong. The following are the main pieces of evidence presented by Croy, who is largely followed by Alexis-Baker, for a nonviolent reading.

A. The temple would not have allowed weapons in its precinct.
B. Textual criticism casts doubt on whether Jesus' instrument was a whip.
C. Any whip was made out of materials too soft to injure anyone.
D. The Greek grammar indicates that only the animals were struck, if they were struck at all.
E. The internal logic of the story suggests a non-violent action was sufficient to drive out the offenders.

I will examine each of these pieces of evidence to show that they do not warrant Croy's conclusions.

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Westphalia: Institute for New Testament Textual Research, 2014).

### *I. Weapons in the Temple Precinct*

Croy rightly observes that the noun, φραγέλλιον, occurs only in John 2:15 in the NT.[16] He also notes that the related verb, φραγελλόω, "occurs only in the passion narratives (Mark 15:15; Matt 27:26), describing Pilate's scourging of Jesus prior to crucifixion." However, Croy affirms: "Surely Jesus himself had not inflicted a similar punishment on people and animals in the temple precincts! For both historical and narrative reasons, it is highly unlikely that Jesus did so."[17] Croy gives the following as one of his reasons:

> Historically, as commentators have often noted, weapons were forbidden in the temple area. The Mishnah forbids one to bring a staff (מקל, *maqqēl*) into the temple (*m. Ber.* 9:5). While the Roman soldiers under Pilate's command certainly had *flagella,* Jews would not likely possess them and certainly not in the temple precincts. If Jesus had wielded such an instrument in a crowd at the Passover festival, his behavior would have been tolerated by neither Jews nor Romans. His arrest would likely have been immediate.[18]

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[16] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper," 556.

[17] Ibid., 556.

[18] Ibid., 556.

Croy's claim that the temple would not have allowed weapons is based principally on a passage in the Mishnah (m. Ber. 9:5). Croy overlooks decades of scholarship cautioning against the use of Mishnaic literature to corroborate the historicity of events at the time of Jesus. As Philip Alexander observes: "Many New Testament scholars are still guilty of massive and sustained anachronism in their use of Rabbinic sources. Time and again we find them quoting *texts from the 3rd, 4th, or 5th centuries AD, or even later, to illustrate Jewish teachings in the 1st century*."[19] Indeed, some of the Mishnah's regulations and descriptions of the temple are contradicted by those we find in other sources (e.g., Josephus) that are closer to the time when the temple was still standing before 70 CE.[20]

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[19] Philip S. Alexander, "Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament," *ZNW*, 74 (1983):237-246, quote on 244; italics are those of Alexander. For a more cautious approach to the use of Rabbinic materials for interpreting the Gospel of John, see John Christopher Thomas, **"**The Fourth Gospel and Rabbinic Judaism," *ZNW* 82 (1991):159-182. For a defense of the use of Rabbinic texts in New Testament exegesis, see Miguel Pérez Fernandez, "Rabbinic Texts in the Exegesis of the New Testament," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 7 (2004):95-120; Bruce D. Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Classical Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: Comparing Theologies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

[20] The prominent archaeologist of Herodian architecture, Ehud Netzer (*The Architecture of Herod the Great Builder* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 136) remarked: "The descriptions in the Mishnah and the works of Josephus sometimes correspond with, and in many cases supplement, one another,

In fact, the very Mishnaic passage that Croy cites includes other items that would not necessarily be consonant with the episode in John 2. The Mishnaic passage states: "A man should not enter the temple with his staff or with his shoes on or with his money bag [ובפונדתו] or with his dust on his feet."[21] The Aramaic פונדה/פונדא is defined as a "money bag, hollow belt" by Marcus Jastrow.[22] Accordingly, it is difficult to understand how money changers were carrying their money into the temple precinct. Of course, there could be many ways to interpret what constituted a פונדה/פונדא, but the passage cited by Croy demonstrates how one cannot simply assume that Mishnaic rules were always applicable in Herod's temple.

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but occasionally they are contradictory or there are discrepancies within the abundant information provided, giving rise to further difficulties." For recent biographies of Herod the Great, see Jerry Knoblet, *Herod the Great* (Lanham, MD: The University Press of America, 2005); Manuel Vogel, *Herodes: König der Juden, Freund der Römer* (Biblische Gestalten 5; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlangstalt, 2002). For a study of the temple among early Christians, see Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*.

[21] *B. Ber*. 54a (= *m. Ber.* 9:5), following Harry Freedman and Isidore Epstein, et al., eds., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud* (20 vols.; London: The Soncino Press, 1988-1994).

[22] Marcus Jastrow*, A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; 1903; repr., Brooklyn, NY; Shalom, 1967), 2.1143a.

More importantly, Josephus' account of the destruction of the offensive eagle statue set up by Herod demonstrates that Croy's reliance on the Mishnah is misguided. Josephus' account shows that zealous Jews had no problem bringing weapons to the temple when they thought their temple was being desecrated. According to Josephus (*Ant*. 17.151), Herod had erected a great golden eagle over the great gate of the Temple. When the Herod died, a few Jewish authorities counseled some youth to destroy the eagle. Josephus relates what happened next:

> At mid-day, therefore, the youths went up to the roof of the temple and pulled down the eagle and cut it up with axes [πελέκεσιν] before many people who gathered in the temple. And the officer of the king—for the attempt had been reported to him—, suspecting that something more serious was involved than what was being done, came up with a force large enough to meet the crowd of men who were intent upon pulling down the image that had been set up.[23]

Note that the youths were able to carry axes (πελέκεσιν) into the temple precincts, and so the Mishnaic prohibition mattered little here. There did not seem to be any sort of security checks for weapons, nor did the authorities act as quickly as Croy claims.

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[23] Josephus, *Ant*. 17.155-56 (Thackeray and Marcus, LCL).

Another episode in Josephus concerning the Sicarii shows that it was not difficult to smuggle weapons into the temple. The Sicarii, whose diverse origins and nature has been thoroughly investigated recently, were Jewish rebels who used daggers or swords in their efforts against the Romans.[24] Josephus saw them as terrorists who killed even fellow Jews who sympathized with the Romans. In fact, Josephus specifically blames them for the fall of Jerusalem. For my purposes, the episode in question concerns their activities surrounding the assassination of Jonathan, the high priest:

> With daggers concealed under their clothes they mingled with the people about Jonathan and assassinated him. As the murder remained unpunished, from that time forth the brigands with perfect impunity used to go to the city during the festivals and, with their weapons similarly concealed, mingle with the crowds. In this way, they slew some...They committed these murders only in other parts of the city but even some cases in the temple; for there too they made bold to slaughter their victims for they did not regard even this as a desecration.[25]

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[24] For a recent treatment of the Sicarii, see Mark Andrew Brighton, *The Sicarii in Josephus's Judean War: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations* (Early Judaism and Its Literature 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

[25] Josephus, *Ant*. 20.164-66 (Thackeray and Marcus, LCL).

This episode clearly contradicts the idea that temple guards would have intervened immediately before any real trouble occurred, and it shows that weapons were not so easily detected. In addition, Jews who thought the temple was already desecrated would have had no trouble disregarding any supposed regulations about the permissibility of weapons in the temple precincts.

The fact that Jesus may have regarded any temple regulations as not in force, is indicated by John 2:16, where Jesus exclaims: “you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade” (cf. Luke 19:46: “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer’; but you have made it a den of robbers”). John portrays the disciples as connecting Jesus’ actions to a biblical text (Ps 69:9). Thus, Jesus’ actions could very well parallel those of the youths who attacked the golden eagle and those of Sicarii who smuggled their edged weapons into the temple. Just as they deemed it permissible to bring weapons into the temple when the temple had been desecrated, Jesus may have thought it permissible to use a weapon when he thought the temple had been desecrated. Normal laws and conduct in the temple may not apply while the temple is desecrated.

As Josephus relates it, the reaction from the authorities first involved a report to the officer of the king, who then raised a force to counter what Josephus describes as a “crowd of men,” which numbered at least forty. So, it does not appear as if the guards were ready to act on the spot, but rather they had to be gathered after a report to the main officer was received. Such delayed reactions are also attested during large festivals, such as Passover. This is important to note

because Alexis-Baker cites Josephus (*Ant*. 20.106) to argue that "unrest during Jewish festivals was so commonplace that the Roman authorities prepared for it by sending in extra soldiers to 'quell any uprising that might occur.'"[26] Josephus is here referring to the actions of Ventidius Cumanus, the Roman procurator (48-52 CE) at the time.

Yet, in the very passage that Alexis-Baker cites, Josephus also clarifies that great restraint was urged even when crowds threatened to riot. Josephus says that on the fourth day of Passover, a Roman soldier uncovered his genitals, and that enraged Jewish onlookers, who saw it as blasphemy against God. Some Jews began to insult Cumanus because they saw him as having instigated the soldier's actions. But, Cumanus did not attack or seize any potential rioters right away. Instead, he "merely admonished them to put an end to this lust for revolution, and not to set disorders ablaze during the festival."[27] It is only after the Jews did not desist, that he ordered the army to act, causing thousands of deaths among the fleeing throngs who were caught in the narrow passages of the precincts.

Surprisingly, neither Croy nor Alexis-Baker discuss a later episode in John, where the biblical author explains that the temple guards did not always act as expeditiously against Jesus as the religious authorities might have wished: "The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, 'Why did you not bring him?' The officers answered, 'No man ever spoke like

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[26] Josephus, *Ant*. 20.106 (Feldman, LCL); Alexis-Baker, "The Temple Incident," 88, n. 34.

[27] Josephus, *Ant*. 20.109-10 (Feldman, LCL).

this man!'" (John 7:45-46). In this case, Jesus had been preaching during a festival at the temple to the chagrin of the authorities. Given that the author of John portrays temple officials as offering deference to Jesus, then the lack of action by the temple guards in John 2 may be for the similar reasons. Certainly, John 7:45-46 is much more contextually relevant than citing a Mishnaic tract written hundreds of years later. Even if this whole temple episode is a theological construction of the Gospel writer, this same writer did not deem it inconceivable for the temple guards not to act as aggressively as Croy or Alexis-Baker portray them.

The entire idea that Jewish temple guards or Roman guards would have acted immediately is also belied by the fact that the passage in John says no such reaction occurred. Even without the use of weapons, the actions by Jesus should have led to an immediate arrest or action by any temple guards. He had, at the very least, significantly disrupted the temple economy, and had committed acts of vandalism. Yet, for all that trouble, Jesus elicits a very pacifistic reaction from the Jews: "The Jews then said to him, 'What sign have you to show us for doing this?'" (John 2:18). If anything, it is Jesus who should be viewed as violent, or at the least committing an act of vandalism. It is the Jews or officials of the temple who end up being the pacifists in this episode, whether the author intended that or not.

### *II. Textual Criticism and John 2:15*

Croy rightly notes that some early papyri, such as $p^{66}$ and $p^{75}$, have ὡς φραγέλλιον ("as a whip"). For Croy, "as a whip" could be interpreted as something less than a whip, or perhaps not a whip at all. However, it is difficult to account for the wide range of witnesses, including the major uncials, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, that don't have that conjunction. Accordingly, Croy opts for the hypothesis that ὡς was accidentally omitted. As he phrases his reasoning:

> It would be hard to account for the *deliberate* omission of ὡς since that would make the image harsher. On the other hand, the word might have been *accidentally* omitted through parablepsis, the scribe's eye inadvertently skipping just two letters from the final sigma in ποιήσας to the sigma in ὡς, resulting in a reading that, although secondary, was perfectly intelligible.[28]

Therefore, Jesus should be described as making something that was "as a whip" (καὶ ποιήσας ὡς φραγέλλιον), and not necessarily a whip per se. For Croy, something less than a whip is added to explain that a real whip is not made out of weak cords.

It is certainly possible that homeoteleuton was responsible for removing the conjunction, ὡς. However, there is no reason why a scribe could not intend the opposite of what Croy attributes to that scribe ("since that would make the image

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[28] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper," 557.

harsher"). That is to say, it is equally possible that a scribe intended a more benign image of Jesus, and so added ὡς. If a more benign Jesus is what the scribes had in mind by adding ὡς, then it is just as reasonable to posit that the earlier and more "original" reading was the harsher and more violent one. Bruce Metzger suggest such a possibility when he remarks, "On the other hand, it is probable that copyists introduced the word in order to soften somewhat the bald statement that Jesus made a whip of cords; 'he made a kind of whip of cords.'"[29] Such mitigation of Jesus' harsher portrayal resembles the manner in which Matt 10.37 might have lessened the impact of Luke 14:26, which demands that Jesus' followers "hate" (μισέω) their family.[30]

However, even if the earlier reading has ὡς, that would not necessarily render φραγέλλιον less of a whip. The conjunction, ὡς, does not automatically lessen the full and literal identity of what follows it. For example, in 1 Thess 2:6, the clause, "we might have made demands as apostles of Christ," does not mean "we might have made demands as though we were almost apostles of Christ."[31]

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[29] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), 202-3.

[30] For the argument that Matthew softened the saying in Luke 14:26, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV* (AB, 28A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1063; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary* (trans. James E. Crouch; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 112.

[31] See also Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Letter to Philemon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 34C; New York:

Likewise, in Matt 14:5, ὡς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον is translated rightly as "they held him to be a prophet" by the Revised Standard Version, not "they held him as though he were almost a prophet." Therefore, the original presence or absence of the conjunction, ὡς, is not definitive in refuting the claim that Jesus made a potentially injurious whip.

***III. Was Jesus' whip was too soft to injure anyone?***

If Jesus did make a whip, then Croy contends that it would not have been capable of injuring or inflicting pain. He reasons:

> The instrument was fashioned (ποιήσας) on the spot from materials that were available. The latter did not likely include leather thongs, bone fragments, or bits of metal. Moreover, John describes the whip as constructed ἐκ σχοινίων, "from cords." Originally these were rushes or reeds, akin to rattan or wicker material. This material might have been available as the animals' bedding or perhaps was already fashioned into ropes or traces. Otherwise, σχοινία may refer to ropes of other material, as in the case of the lines used to attach a skiff to a larger, seagoing ship in Acts 27:32, the only other NT usage... In either case, the whip wielded by Jesus was clearly a makeshift tool, scarcely equal to the Roman instrument of torture."[32]

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Doubleday, 2000), 114.

[32] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper," 557.

Croy's list of materials is too poorly documented to say that such a whip could not be strong enough to injure anyone or could not be equal to a Roman instrument of torture. Croy's reference to these items being "originally...rushes or reeds" obscures the fact that they also "originally" could be made of materials that were very strong. As it is, Croy seems to be confusing the Greek word, σχοῖνος, which refers to "a rush" or "reed," with σχοινίον (the actual lexeme used in John 2:15), which usually refers to a rope or cord in classical Greek.[33]

The Septuagintal use of σχοινία had a wide range, but it could refer to something strong enough to bring down a city: "If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes [σχοινία] to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there" (2 Sam 17:13). Similarly, Herodotus says that Ephesus was attacked "by attaching a rope [σχοινίον] to the city wall from the temple of the goddess, standing seven furlongs away from the ancient city."[34] As Croy mentions, Acts 27:32 ("Then the soldiers cut away the ropes [τὰ σχοινία] of the boat, and let it go") indicates that these ropes were heavy and strong enough to hold a boat in place. There is no other indication in

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[33] See Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1889; repr. London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 787. See also, Christopher A. Faraone, "The Wheel, the Whip and other Implements of Torture: Erotic Magic in Pindar Pythian 4.213-29," *CJ* 89 (1993):1-19.

[34] Herodotus 1.26 (Godley, LCL).

the NT that σχοινίον is anything less than a very strong item.

Grammatically, Croy is assuming erroneously that the material that follows the preposition ἐκ in the clause, ποιήσας φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων, is meant to describe *the only material* that constituted the device made. Other expressions with the form, ποιέω + ἐκ + X material, are not meant to restrict the material only to what is mentioned after the preposition. For example, in John 9:6, Jesus makes mud out of both dirt and spit, and yet John mentions only the spittle after the preposition in the clause: καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος. Similarly, Herodotus describes Egyptian boats as "made out of acacia" (ἐστὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀκάνθης ποιεύμενα).[35] However, Herodotus clearly does not restrict the materials of those boats only to acacia because he also speaks of the sails and the caulk as made out of byblus.[36] Therefore, what follows the preposition may describe the primary material, but it *does not necessarily restrict it only to that material*.

Given the fact that hundreds, if not thousands, of animals probably had to be managed in the temple area, one should not automatically dismiss the availability of whips or raw materials needed to manage such animals in the precincts. As Bruce D. Chilton observes, "Jesus is here portrayed as using the

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[35] Herodotus 2.96 (Godley; LCL).

[36] Herodotus 2.96 (Godley; LCL). A common boat could be made out of a dozen different species of trees as illustrated archaeologically by Lea Lofenfeld Winkler and Ramit Frankel, *The Boat and the Sea of Galilee* (trans. Ora Cummings; New York: Gefen Publishing House, 2007), 65-70.

very objects which would need to be there to control the animals, so as to expel them and their vendors."[37] If you need whips, then these might include those made out of leather, bone bits, or metal that should have been readily available in a marketplace. Jesus is portrayed as a craftsman (τέκτων) in Mark 6:3 and Matt 13:55, and so one can just as well speculate that the author of John intends to attribute some ingenuity to Jesus' craftsmanship.

### *IV. Greek Grammar: Who and/or What Did Jesus Whip?*

Croy uses Greek grammar to tackle the question of what Jesus whipped, even if he whipped anything at all. Croy argues that the clause, πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας, expresses a partitive appositive, wherein "all" is defined solely by the correlative expression, τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας. In other words, "all" actually refers only to the sheep and the goats. As Croy phrases it:

> The whole would be πάντας, to which τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας would stand in apposition, giving the constituent parts, that is, "he drove *all* out of the temple, namely, the "all" consisting of *both the sheep and the cattle."*

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[37] Bruce D. Chilton, "[ὡς] φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων (John 2.15)," in *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel* (ed. William Horbury; JSOTSup 48; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 330-344, quote from 340-41.

Part of Croy's evidence consists of appealing to Edwin Abbott's exhaustive grammatical study of John. Croy quotes Abbott as follows:

> Edwin Abbott's thorough study of Johannine grammar devotes ten pages to appositional constructions in John. Numerous types and examples are discussed. With reference to John 2.15, Abbott opines that "in a writer so fond of parenthesis as Jn the meaning might be, 'He cast them all out of the temple—both the sheep and the oxen [did he cast out]—and he poured forth the money."[38]

Croy, however, has misrepresented Abbott's position. In his main text, Abbott actually said:

> John is referring to a previous statement that Jesus "found in the Temple those that were selling oxen and sheep and doves." What follows may mean that Jesus (ii.15) "drove all [of them] out of the Temple, *both sheep and oxen* (πάντας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας)', i.e., the men and what they sold, indicating that 'all [of them]' included their belongings, 'sheep

[38] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper," 561.

sellers and ox sellers, sheep, and oxen.'"[39]

What Croy is quoting is a footnote, where Abbott is discussing the merits of the Authorized and Revised Versions. In that discussion, Abbott uses the word "parenthesis," not "apposition," to describe another possible interpretation found in the Revised Version: "cast *all* out of the temple, *both* the sheep and the oxen."[40]

Abbott differentiates an appositional phrase from a parenthetic phrase when he speaks of "a parenthesis, or a statement out of its chronological place, of the nature of an afterthought."[41] This may not be exactly the same as a partitive appositive expression for Abbott. Similarly, A. T. Robertson says of a parenthetical clause: "Such a clause, inserted in the midst of the sentence without proper syntactical connection, is quite common in the N.T."[42] If so, then Abbott is declaring that τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας reflects a parenthetical insertion that emphasizes that oxen and sheep are also *included*, and not that "all" is *limited to* oxen and sheep. Admittedly, parentheses are difficult to identify, but Abbott's opinion is corroborated by my quoted statement in the main text of his

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[39] Edwin Abbott, *Johannine Grammar* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906), 37. See also, Chanikuzhy, *Jesus, The Eschatological Temple*, 249.

[40] Abbott, *Johannine Grammar*, 37-38, n. 2.

[41] Abbott, *Johannine Grammar*, 348-49.

[42] A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 433.

discussion.[43] In short, Croy is confusing a partitive appositive expression with a parenthetical expression meant to be inclusive of both humans and animals for Abbott.

If Abbott's statement does not provide definitive support, then what about the parallels of τε...καὶ that Croy cites? According to Croy:

> Given the abundance of close grammatical parallels (the above list is selective), it is likely that the construction in John 2:15 is a partitive appositive. The whole would be πάντας, to which τά τε πρόβατα καὶ τοὺς βόας would stand in apposition, giving the constituent parts, that is, "he drove *all* out of the temple, namely, the 'all' consisting of *both the sheep and the cattle."*

So, let me now examine the parallels collected by Croy:[44]

> Luke 22:66: "the elders of the people, both chief priests and [τε...καὶ] scribes"
>
> Acts 8:38: "both of them, Philip and [τε...καὶ] the eunuch, went down into the water"

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[43] See further, J. W. Johnston, *The Use of* Πᾶς *in the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Greek 11; New York: Peter Lang, 2004).

[44] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper,"561. Following the English biblical translations of Croy, and his italics.

1 Esd 6:26 “the holy vessels . . . , both the gold ones and [τε...καὶ] the silver ones”

4 Macc 15:26 “two ballots, one bearing death and [τε...καὶ] one deliverance”

Matt 22:10 “*all* whom they found, both good and [τε...καὶ] bad”

Acts 19:10 “*all* the residents of Asia, both Jews and [τε...καὶ] Greeks”

Rom 3:9 “*all,* both Jews and [τε...καὶ] Greeks, are under the power of sin”

Rev 19:18 “the flesh of *all* people, free and [τε...καὶ] slave, both small and [τε...καὶ] great”

3 Macc 1.1 “he gave orders to *all* his forces, both infantry and [τε...καὶ] cavalry.”

The fact is that these are not the “close grammatical parallels” that Croy portrays.[45] None of them have πάντας + verb + τε...καὶ.[46] Even Chilton, who is

[45] The same problem applies to the grammatical manuals that Croy cites. For example, Croy (“The Messianic Whippersnapper,” 560 n. 26) cites J. D. Denniston (*The Greek Particles* [2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1959) “for the Greek particles in general.” But the relevant discussion by Denniston (*The Greek Particles*, 515) does not pertain to appositional or epexegetical uses of τε...καί, and so does not help to resolve our issue in John 2:15.

[46] The examples chosen by Walden (“John 2:15: Jesus with a Whip: Translation Notes,” 115-16) suffer the same problem. Walden includes Acts 13:9, Luke 23:12, Acts 17:4, Rom 1:20, 26, and Eph 1:10 to support Croy’s argument.

cited for support elsewhere by Croy, remarks: "That construction, ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, in the Fourth Gospel, is what makes the phrase seem odd as an apposition, with the result that the sense of the passage has appeared problematic."[47]

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But none of Walden's examples, which center mostly on the use of the article with antecedents, are analogous to the appositional partitive meaning of πάντας + verb + τε...καί that Croy is claiming in John 2:15. Consider Eph 1:10: "as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." Here, "things in heaven and things on earth" (τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς❩is appositional, but meant to exhaust or reaffirm the meaning of "all things in him" (τὰ πάντα...ἐν αὐτῷ). The apposition is not partitive—i.e., meant to separate "things in heaven and things on earth" from some other sector of the cosmos expressed by "all things in him." On the other hand, in John 2:15, Croy is arguing that the animals are being separated appositionally from other groups of things (namely, people) that might otherwise be included in πάντας in the temple precinct.

[47] Chilton, "[ὡς] φραγέλλιον ἐκ σχοινίων (John 2.15)," 333. Yoder Neufeld (*Killing Enmity*, 61) seems to misunderstand the unique nature of this Greek construction in John 2:15 when he states: "Normal Greek grammar suggests that John, the only evangelist to mention the whip, understands Jesus as physically shooing the animals out of the temple precincts." Yoder Neufeld (*Killing Enmity*, 61) also makes much of the fact that that John is the only one of the Gospels to mention both the animals and the whip, and so the whip must have

In none of the cases listed by Croy does τε...καί separate one group (e.g., animals) from another group (e.g., merchants) that could otherwise be included by πάντας. For example, in Rev. 19:18, great and small and free and slave exhausts the meaning of "all" people because the society is composed of great and small, slave and free. Therefore, τε...καί does not separate the groups labeled great/small or free/slave from some other group that one might be included in "all people."

For my purposes, I will treat Matt 22:10 (πάντας + pronoun + verb + τε...καί) as the most acceptable parallel, but even in that passage "both good and [τε...καί] bad" exhaust the constituents of "all whom they found" because only people, not animals, had been previously mentioned in the broader pericope. People can be categorized completely by the adjectival phrase "good and bad." So, Matt 22:10 τε...καί does not separate the good and the bad from some other group of people (or type of entity) that could also be included based on the preceding discussion in the pericope. At the very least, it is ambiguous whether τε...καί refers only to the sheep and goats, or also includes their owners, in John 2:15.

In his collection of grammatical parallels listed above, Croy cites passages from Luke and Matthew for support in understanding John 2:15. Yet, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all make very clear that Jesus expelled the people engaged in commerce.

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been meant only for the animals. But he fails to explain the parallel use of πάντας in Matt 21:12 and John 2:15.

**Matt 21.12**

And Jesus entered the temple of God and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple [καὶ ἐξέβαλεν πάντας τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ ἀγοράζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ] and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

**Mark 11.15**

And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out [ἤρξατο ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ τοὺς ἀγοράζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ]those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

**Luke 19:45**

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold [ἤρξατο ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς πωλοῦντας].

Indeed, Croy leaves unexplained why only the animals were driven out in John when all the Synoptics definitely agree that human beings were expelled.[48] If

[48] For studies of the relationship of John to the Synoptics in this temple episode, see Tobias Nicklas, "Die johanneische "Tempelreinigung" (Joh 2, 12-22) für Leser der Synoptiker," *Theologie und Philosophie* (2005):1-16; Ernst Bammel, "Die Tempelreinigung bei den Synoptikern und im Johanessevangelium," in *John and the Synoptics* (ed. Adelbert Deanux; Biblioteca

Jesus wanted to purify the temple, why would he drive out the animals, but leave untouched the persons who were desecrating the temple? Although John might certainly reflect an independent tradition, John 2:16 still agrees with the Synoptics by portraying his rebuke or anger as being directed at the merchants.

A similar problem occurs when Croy addresses the agreement between πάντας, a masculine accusative pronoun, and the animals, which are grammatically of different genders. Croy is correct to note that agreement between pronouns and their referents can be varied, especially if the referents are of mixed genders. Croy cites various sources to support the argument that πάντας need not refer to the human beings in terms of grammatical agreement.[49] But Croy

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ephemeridium theologicarum lovaniensium 101; Leuven: University Press, 1992), 507-13; M. A. Matson, "The Contribution to the Temple Cleansing by the Fourth Gospel," *SBL 1992 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). For a skeptical view of any interdependence of John on the Synoptics, see Gonzalo Rojas Flores, "From John 2.19 to Mark 15.29: The History of a Misunderstanding," *NTS* 56 (2010):22-43. For a study of the episode in Mark, see Solomon Hong-fai Wong, *The Temple Incident in Mark 11, 15-10: The Disclosure of Jesus and the Marcan Faction* (New Testament Studies in Contextual Exegesis 5 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009).

[49] One example cited for the problems of choosing a gender for a single adjective that refers to nouns of different genders is William W. Goodwin, *A Greek Grammar* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1900), 202.

omits Matt 21:12 from the discussion of verbal parallels here. Only John 2:15 and Matt 21:12 have πάντας in their parallel stories, and it is clear that Matthew means the human offenders, not the animals. Therefore, Croy still leaves unexplained why John would remove the human beings from being targets of any violence under πάντας, and direct any violence only to the animals.

It is just as plausible to suppose that John has τε...καί because the author wanted readers to understand that πάντας, which is a masculine accusative plural, was not just referring to τοὺς πωλοῦντας. The latter would be the most natural antecedent of πάντας because they are both masculine accusative plurals. Adding τε...καί ensures that readers understood that "all" meant that animals *also* were included as targets of Jesus' wrath. If so, John actually expands the targets of violence (humans *and* animals) whereas the Synoptics restricts it to the merchants. This principle of collective violence against both humans and animals are targets of violence even if only human beings sin (cf. Deut 28:18, 31).

### *IV. The Internal Logic of Jesus's Actions*

In contrast to what Croy concludes, the internal logic of the context provided by John is conducive to a violent interpretation. In John 2:17, the disciples explain Jesus' actions as follows: "Zeal for thy house will consume me." In Septuagintal instances where "zeal" (ζῆλός) is used to describe a believer's actions, violence is often explicitly referenced.[50] For example, Yahweh's zeal is

[50] For the view that the zeal belonged to the Jews, and not to Jesus, see S. M. Bryan, "Consumed by Zeal: John's Use of Psalm 69:9 and the Action in the

said to be violent: "How long, O LORD? Wilt thou be angry for ever? Will thy jealous wrath [ὁ ζῆλός σου] burn like fire? Pour out thy anger on the nations that do not know thee, and on the kingdoms that do not call on thy name!" (Ps 79:5-6/LXX 78:5-6).[51] In Ps 69, the very one cited by John, we also see violent intentions by the suppliant in vv. 23-24: "Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see; and make their loins tremble continually. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy burning anger overtake them."

The fact that at least some Jews are portrayed as accusing Jesus of using violence against the temple is clear from Acts 6:13-14: "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." Although the biblical author portrays this as a false accusation, one could just as easily argue that the author was preserving an

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Temple," *BBR* 21 (2011): 479-494. Bryan, however, overlooks many signals that the zeal belongs to Jesus, especially as it was Jesus, not the Jews, who acted with any "zeal" or anger in this episode.

[51] See also Susanna Braund and Glenn W. Most (eds.), *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen* (Yale Classical Studies 32; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). On Jesus' anger in extrabiblical traditions, see Kristi Upson-Saia, "Holy Child or Holy Terror? Understanding Jesus' Anger in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas," *CH* 82 (2013): 1-39. Upson-Saia claims that stories of Jesus' bad behavior were invented by opponents, and subsequently absorbed by his followers.

"authentic" Jesus tradition about threatening violence against the temple (cf. Matt 26:61; Mark 14:58).

Nevertheless, Thomas Yoder Neufeld argues that Jesus' "prophetic words of condemnation are far graver and more fearsome than any use of a whip made of the straw lying around."[52] As mentioned, the claim that the whip was made of straw is unsupported. Moreover, Jesus does not see prophetic condemnations as sufficient to intimidate many of his opponents. After all, Jesus complained that prophets were routinely killed (Matt 5:12), which implies that those who heard them were not intimidated by their words, however strong or authoritative they may have been. In John 4:44, Jesus complains that a prophet receives no honor in his own land, which does not seem to indicate that his supposedly fearsome words intimidated many people.

Croy provides an additional argument for the lack of necessity in using a whip on the people who owned the livestock: "As for the sellers of the sheep and oxen, even if the whip had not been applied to them directly, they would likely have followed their livestock. In this way, Jesus' driving out of the animals would have simultaneously effected the removal of the sellers."[53] Croy's supposition is much too speculative, and he apparently thinks that the sellers will passively accept the disruption of their livelihoods. But, as Origen had already surmised, anyone who seeks to disrupt the marketplace can expect business owners to

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[52] Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 61.

[53] Croy, "The Messianic Whippersnapper," 562-3.

respond violently.[54] Therefore, a whip would have been a handy weapon to have. After all, why would Jesus expect anyone to give up the very business that sustained them just because he demanded it?

A similar story of disrupting temple trade is found in Acts 19, where Paul is said to be endangering the livelihood of a silversmith named Demetrius. The reaction to Paul's dismissal of the reality and powers of Artemis, the goddess worshipped by Demetrius, was as follows:

> When they heard this they were enraged, and cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" So the city was filled with the confusion; and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. Paul wished to go in among the crowd, but the disciples would not let him; some of the Asiarchs also, who

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[54] Origen, *Commentary on John* 10.146, following Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1-10* (trans. Ronald E. Heine; The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation; Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 289: "And who, if he is struck with a whip of cords and is being driven out by one they supposed to be worthless, would not seize him and cry out and work vengeance with his own hand, especially since he has so large a multitude of those who seemed to be insulted as well to cooperate in such acts against Jesus?" Origen, however, allegorizes this episode and preserves a peaceful view of Jesus.

> were friends of his, sent to him and begged him not to venture into the theater (Acts 19:28-31).

Given such recorded reactions, it is just as plausible to suppose that the merchants in the Jewish temple precinct would not surrender their livelihood so easily to the demands of Jesus.

## *V. Conclusion*

The evidence adduced by Croy for a nonviolent interpretation of Jesus' actions in John 2:15 does not warrant his conclusion. On purely linguistic grounds, Croy's understanding of the syntax of John 2:15 is possible, but not the most plausible. Croy clearly has misrepresented Abbott, who forms a pillar of his support. The parallels Croy adduces with τε...καί are not as close as he portrays them, and he omits serious discussion of the closer verbal parallel with Matt 21:12. One could just as plausibly argue that τε...καί was added precisely to ensure that readers understood that both humans and animals were included in the "all" because πάντας otherwise might be taken to refer only to the sellers. Again, both πάντας and τοὺς πωλοῦντας are masculine accusative plural forms, and that may need further clarification with τε...καί if the author wanted to include other entities as recipients of Jesus' actions.

On historical grounds, Croy's argument is built on unsubstantiated claims about what the temple would or would not be like at the time of Jesus. Croy appeals to later Mishnaic traditions, and disregards any relevant evidence from

Josephus about the ease with which weapons could be introduced into the temple. Mishnaic tracts are not good historical evidence for the rules governing the temple at the time of Jesus, especially when there are conflicting views in Josephus. We do not know what temple guards would or would not have done, and John 7:45 invokes a motivation for the actions of temple officials that Croy never considers.

On literary grounds, Croy does not adequately address the fact that all Synoptics explicitly say that Jesus expelled the merchants. Croy does not explain why John would have limited any violence to the animals, given that it is the human beings who are explicitly rebuked in John 2:17. Croy does not give due attention to the nature of "zeal" and how it is linked repeatedly with anger and violence in the Septuagint, and in the Hebrew Bible. In addition, Croy seems to be confusing the Greek word, σχοῖνος, which refers to "a rush" or "reed," with σχοινίον, which can refer to a very strong rope or cord. Instead of proposing that John emphasizes Jesus' inability to construct a fearsome whip so quickly, one could just as well postulate that John is attributing some ingenuity to Jesus when he manufactures a whip from materials at the marketplace.

On ethical grounds, Croy and other interpreters focus on avoiding any negative ethical implications of Jesus' use of the whip. Jesus' actions are otherwise either justified or left without objection. That is to say, Jesus' vandalism and disruption of the temple are accepted without objection or regarded as justified. However, any individual who today entered a Jewish synagogue and disrupted it because of a disagreement with how its members worshipped or conducted their affairs would not likely be deemed as justified by many

Christians. It would not matter that such an individual sincerely believed that such worship was corrupt or inappropriate. Ultimately, any justification of Jesus' actions must rest on theological grounds—the theological assumption that his mission and actions were divinely sanctioned.

Given this discussion, we can propose an alternative explanation for why John introduced the whip into this story. None of the Synoptics explained how Jesus was able to drive out anyone who made their livelihood without encountering opposition or violence. So, John could have mentioned a whip to explain how Jesus accomplished that feat. One cannot expect those whose entire livelihood could depend on the income from such trade to be cowered by a mild-looking whip. Readers would have been familiar enough with Roman whips to know that they could inflict damage, and so John did not need to add more details about its construction. The merchants could be persuaded to flee precisely because Jesus had a visible and nasty instrument in his hand. Given that John tries to link Jesus' actions to Ps 69, why would Jesus' zeal be any less violent than that of Yahweh? Could it not be the case that Jesus' violent zeal in this temple episode was viewed as a fulfillment of his Messianic expectations, just as the disciples acknowledged?

At the same time, John is expanding the scope of the violence wrought by Jesus. Whereas the Synoptics only have the merchants as the objects of the expulsion, John adds the animals as well. John could be enhancing or reaffirming pre-Christian biblical traditions that included animals alongside human beings as the objects of wrath, even if only human beings displeased God. This tradition is

certainly present the Egyptian plague stories (e.g., Exod 9:1-7, 9), and it is present in Deuteronomy 28:18, 31. Given that some scholars posit that the Johannine Jesus as a prophet modeled after Moses, then Jesus could be portrayed as continuing a "Mosaic" tradition where wrath is poured out on human beings and animals, as in the case of the Egyptian plagues (Exod 9:1-7, 19).[55]

Indeed, there is no reason why Jesus could not have been overcome by zeal, and committed a violent act against the Jewish temple.[56] The god of the

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[55] See further, Micahel Labahn, "Deuteronomy in John's Gospel," in Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, eds., *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel* (Londong: T& T Clark International, 2007), 82-98. T. F. Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (SBT 40; London: SCM Press, 1963); Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967); J. Gnilka, *Moses or Jesus: An Essay in Johannine Christology* (trans. B. T. Viviano; BETL 84; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Paul Anderson (*The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011], 131-33) also accepts the Mosaic typology for Jesus, and traces different stages of development. For other studies of Jesus as a prophet in John, see Sukmin Cho, *Jesus as Prophet in the Fourth Gospel* (New Testament Monographs 15; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006); Adele Reinhartz, "Jesus as Prophet: Predictive Prolepses in the Fourth Gospel," JSNT 36 (1989), 3-16.

[56] Stephen Voorwinde, *Jesus' Emotions in the Gospels* ([London: T. & T. Clark, 2011], 163) connects a consuming zeal with Jesus' own death which

Hebrew Bible is repeatedly shown mixing love and violence, and so why should Jesus be any different if he is supposed to be the reflection of that god in the Gospel of John (John 1:1)? Viewed in this manner, Jesus continues a long tradition of combining mercy and violent wrath in both biblical prophets and divine beings.

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consumed him: "Zeal is more than anger. It is the ardour of red-hot passion... It eats him up...He has zeal that will consume him literally and totally." See also, John J. Collins, "The Zeal of Phineas: The Bible and the Legitimization of Violence," JBL 122 (2003), 3-21; idem, *Does the Bible Condemn Violence?* (Minneapolis: Ausburg Fortress, 2004). A comprehensive study of the role of religion in violence is found in Hector Avalos, *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005).