

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“THE TRUE TEMPLE”

For individual study or group discussion

Today's passage introduces Jesus as **the true temple** who fulfills and supersedes the Jerusalem sanctuary. Temple Christology comes into sharp focus in John 2:13–25, when Jesus cleanses the temple and declares, ‘*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*’ (v. 19). Following his assertion that he is heaven opened (1:51), the evangelist presents Jesus as the true temple, the ultimate embodied meeting place between God and humanity.

Jesus purifies his Father's house. (vv. 13–17)

Jesus purifies his Father's house by cleansing the Jerusalem temple, exercising priestly authority and revealing his zeal for the holiness of God's dwelling. The temple mediated the presence of God to his people, but the religiously powerful had commercialized the sacred space, transforming what should have been a house of prayer into “*a den of robbers*” (cf. Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46). Jesus' cleansing both demonstrates his authority over the temple and previews the greater reality: his own body as God's true dwelling place among his people (1:14).

- Read John 1:14, 1 Corinthians 3:16–17, Ephesians 2:19–22, and 1 Peter 2:4–5. Where is the temple of God for Christians today?
- The disciples connect the cleansing of the temple with a messianic psalm. Read Psalm 69:7–11 and 30–31. How does King David's conduct and attitude prefigure Jesus' zeal for the house of God?

Jesus identifies himself as the true temple. (vv. 18–22)

When challenged to validate his authority with a sign, Jesus identifies himself as the true temple, declaring, ‘*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*’ (v. 19). As G.K. Beales explains, Jesus reorients the locus of God's presence away from a physical sanctuary toward a renewed dwelling of God with his people through his resurrection: “*One need not go to the Jerusalem temple to be near God's revelatory presence but only need trust in Jesus to experience that presence. This is why Jesus says that the time was dawning when true worship would not occur at the Jerusalem temple, nor any other holy site, but would be directed toward the Father (and by implication, through the Messiah) in the sphere of the coming eschatological Spirit of Jesus (John 4:21–26). A link with heaven would be created by the Spirit wherever there was trust in Christ, and those so trusting would come within the sphere of the true temple consisting of Christ and his Spirit.*”¹

- When the Jews demand a sign to validate Jesus' authority (v. 18), how does Jesus' cryptic response actually authenticate his action? Why does he point to his resurrection rather than perform an immediate miracle?
- Read Exodus 25:8–9, 1 Kings 8:10–13, and John 1:14. Trace the biblical theology of God's dwelling place from the tabernacle through the Jerusalem temple to the Incarnation. How does Jesus fulfill what these earlier structures symbolized?

Jesus exposes superficial faith. (vv. 23–25)

Jesus exposes the inadequacy of superficial faith by refusing to entrust himself to those who believe merely on the basis of signs. As D.A. Carson explains: “*Jesus' miracles are never naked displays of power, still less neat conjuring tricks to impress the masses, but signs, significant displays of power that point beyond themselves to the deeper realities that could be perceived with the eyes of faith.*”² Verses 23–25 underscore that authentic worship and access to God are grounded not in outward religious structures or sign-based belief, but in faithful participation in Christ, the true temple presence of God among his people.

- What distinguishes the sign-based “belief” in verse 23 from genuine faith? Compare this passage with John 20:29–31. What kind of belief does John's Gospel ultimately commend?
- Read James 2:14–26. How does James' discussion of faith and works illuminate the inadequacy of the superficial faith John describes? What does saving faith require beyond intellectual acknowledgment?

DATE: February 1, 2026

SPEAKER: Frank/Brian

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 2:13–25

Family Dinner Table

Not A Tame Lion

Do you remember in “*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*” when the children finally meet Aslan? They've heard about him, but when they see him, Mr. Beaver says something important: “*He's not a tame lion.*” When the White Witch takes over Narnia and turns it into a place of endless winter, Aslan doesn't just ignore it. He comes with power and authority to set things right. He roars, he fights, and he sacrifices himself to save Edmund, because he loves Narnia and its people so deeply.

In our passage today, Jesus enters the temple like Aslan entering Narnia. The religious leaders turn God's house, a place meant for prayer and worship, into a marketplace. Jesus isn't a tame, polite teacher. He makes a whip and drives out the money-changers because he loves his Father's house!

But here's the amazing part: Jesus doesn't just clean up a building. He says, “*Destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days.*” He is talking about himself! Jesus IS the true temple—the real meeting place between God and people. When we trust in Jesus, we don't need a special building to meet God. We meet him in Jesus!

- How does Jesus' zeal for his Father's house (v. 17; Psalm 69:9) connect with his claim to be the temple itself (vv. 19–21)? Compare this with Haggai 2:6–9 and Malachi 3:1–4. What do these prophetic texts reveal about the Messiah's relationship to God's dwelling place?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

RUF at UTK, *denominational partner ministry*

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Moshen & Sarah, *supported missionary partners*

¹ Beale, G.K. *The Temple and the Church's Mission*. 2004, Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity Press. 195

² Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John*. 1991, Grand Rapids, MI. Eerdmans. 175