

The Tent of David Restored (John 2:13–22)

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Introduction

John's Gospel was designed to reveal the *glory* of Jesus: "*The Word became flesh and took up residence among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth*" (1:14). Chapters 2–11 are known as the "*book of signs*" because they reveal His *glory*. Chapter 11 transitions to the "*book of glory*," in which Jesus *receives* glory from the Father because of His obedience.

Chapters 2–4 reveal five *new* and glorious things that Jesus is bringing in: (1) the new *wine* of the kingdom of God replacing the old rites of purification, (2) the new *temple* of the Lord's risen body replacing the old covenant temple, (3) the new *birth* by the Spirit as necessary for entry into the kingdom, (4) the new and fully satisfying *Water of Life* contrasted with the temporal water of Jacob's well, and (5) the new and true *worship of God* "*in Spirit and truth*" replacing the old places of worship (Gerizim or Jerusalem) with their empty rituals.

Chapter 2 begins with the story of the wedding at Cana of Galilee (considered in the last message), in which John reveals that Jesus is true bridegroom who will abundantly provide everything for a full and satisfying spiritual life, as pictured in Amos 9:13, 14. Wine speaks of a life of blessing and joy. Wine also speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit given after Jesus' resurrection, which makes such a life possible.

Today, we wish to note another expansion of 1:14: "*The Word became flesh and took up residence* [Gk: *skenoo*, 'tabernacled'] *among us.*" This truth is developed in 2:12–22—the first cleansing of the temple.

I. The Lord and the Temple of God (2:12–17)

1. When the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt and in the wilderness, He commanded Moses to make Him a tabernacle (Exodus 25:8, 9), patterned on the true tabernacle in heaven (Exodus 29:46).

The Lord referred to this tabernacle as a *sanctuary* [Hb: *miqdash*, "a holy place"], specifically referring to the cubical behind the veil called the Holy of Holies. The outer room and the court were to serve as means to worship of God.

The Temple that David desired to build; Solomon built. That first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B. C. It was restored under the authority of the Persians, completed under the Jewish governor Zerubbabel in 516 B. C.

The temple that Jesus came to was an expansion of the Second Temple under Herod the Great (20 B. C.). The Jews told Jesus that this expansion had taken 46 years to build, which brings the date to A. D. 27. It was not actually finished until A. D. 63, a mere 7 years before the Romans destroyed it in A. D. 70.

2. The issue that Jesus had with the temple authorities is exemplified by his two cleansings of the temple.

The problem can be summarized in the reason given: they had made His Father's house into something His Father had not authorized, a house of trade (v. 16). In the second cleansing, Jesus declared, "*It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'*" (Matthew 21:13, citing Isaiah 56:7). Jesus called their temple "*a den of robbers*" (Matthew 21:13).

They had not only turned the Father's House into a market, but in doing so, they denied the Gentiles access to the temple, which Isaiah had declared to be "*a house of prayer for all nations*" (Isaiah 56:7). They snubbed God's desire to include all nations in His kingdom.

II. The Lord and the Jews (2:18–22)

1. John reveals the beginnings of the Jews' hatred for Jesus here.

When Jesus cleansed the Temple, they were conflicted. Was He the Messiah or a lunatic on a rampage? They suspected that He was acting with divine authority. To solve their dilemma, they *demand-ed* that He do a miraculous sign to prove His authority. The problem is that such a demand to satisfy them was also an attempt to control God.

The Jews were more confused by His response: "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*" (v. 19). They rightly understood that Jesus spoke of Herod's Temple, a temporal building, but did not understand that the reference to rebuilding referred to the resurrection of His own body. Indeed, they presumed that He threatened to destroy the temple—*Himself* (Mark 14:58; 15:29). Jesus actually said, "*You Jews destroy the temple and*"

2. What the Jews did not understand was that Jesus was announcing that a new temple was coming when He was raised from the dead.

Jesus' temple would be spiritual. John makes it clear that Jesus' response was more for His disciples than the Jews. The Holy Spirit would bring this announcement to their remembrance when He rose from the dead. When this happened, John tells us that "*they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken*" (v. 22).

III. The Tabernacle of David

1. The term John uses to identify the temple Jesus would raise up is the Greek term, *noas*, which refers only to the *sanctuary*, not the whole temple and its complex. In verse 14, John used the term, *hieron*, temple complex, because the Jews were selling their animals and exchanging the money in the court of the Gentiles, not the sanctuary.

Jesus would raise up a *noas*, a sanctuary, Jesus Himself dwelling in the midst of His people when they are officially assembled in His name (Matthew 18:20).

2. The current manifestation of this holy place is the church (*ecclesia*; 2 Corinthians 6:16–18; citing Leviticus 26:12 and Isaiah 52:11).

Consider this text in Acts 15: "*After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old*" (Acts 15:13–18).

Jesus would, after He was risen, become the true temple or sanctuary of God to His people—a people redeemed by His death out of every nation on earth. Revelation reveals the final realization of this great truth (Revelation 7:15–17; 21:3).

Come, Lord Jesus, that this may be our reality.