

John 2: 13-22 The Cleansing of the Temple

One Temple Cleansing or Two?

- ▲ Three possibilities. None of them call into question biblical inerrancy.
- ▲ One Cleansing
 - ☑ Only 1 in each Gospel, Major similarities, Serious offense: no second try
 - ☑ Early Date: Synoptics report only 1 trip to Jerusalem, Reference to The Baptist at the end, Trial witnesses have inconsistent testimony
 - ☑ Late Date: Serious offense would have caused direct action; would not have been repeated.
- ▲ Two Cleansings (early and late)
 - ☑ Material in Jn 1:19-3 not in Synoptics. Would make sense they left out the early cleansing
 - ☑ Although general contours are similar, there are significant differences in wording
 - ☑ Jesus an unknown at this time. So nothing was done to him.

The Request for a Sign

- He veils the announcement. Why?

The meaning of the Temple in the history of God's people

- A theme that binds together Israel's long, diverse history is the presence of God in their midst
 - Jacob at Bethel → Tabernacle in the wilderness → Tabernacle/Temple in the Promised Land
 - However, Stephen points out (Act 7) that the presence of God and not the Temple is primary
- Israel's sin led to the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians
- However, God became to them "a sanctuary for a little while in the countries where they have gone" (Ez 11:16) Clowney: "The indestructible temple is the presence of God in glory with his people."

Jesus' relationship to the Temple is understood against this background

- The Word became flesh and "tabernacled" (Gk. σκηνη) among us, and we "beheld his glory"

- John is echoing the language of Ex 33-34. Israel is established as God's people by his presence. Ex refers to the glory of God, his goodness and truth, his grace, and his presence in their midst.
- Other passages reveal a longing for a greater fulfillment.
 - "I will gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory" Is 66:18
 - "Sing and rejoice o daughter of Zion, for I will come, and I will dwell (σκηνη) in the midst of you" (Zech 2:10)
 - New Jerusalem (Rev 21:10ff) is a city which has the "glory of God" but no temple, because "the Lord God Almighty and the lamb are the temple of it". Corresponds to Jn 1:29, 36, 1:14
- The implication is that the Lamb of God has replaced temple sacrifice. Note the imagery of the Lamb in Jn 1: 29,36
- In just a few words, John has called up a whole host of OT themes, and argued that Jesus is the fulfillment of them. That is, Jesus replaces the Temple.
- This is one of many unmistakable assertions of his divinity.

A Messianic cleansing

- Not just the reforming cry of a prophet, but the end of animal sacrifice.
- A fulfillment of Mal 3:1-3
- 2:16,17 is a fulfillment of Zech 14:21 "No longer a trader in the house of the Lord"

John's continuing replacement/fulfillment theme

- Jesus is the fulfillment of the Temple
- Jesus as Jacob's ladder.
- Jesus is God in our midst in the most profound way.
- The intersection of "person" and "God" is of the utmost significance.
- Due to the Holy Spirit, a dynamical divine presence in history, etc