

Greater Than the Temple

John 2:14-22

“Zeal for Your house will consume me.” (John 2:17, NASB)

Follow Jesus’ relationship with the temple, and you’ll glimpse the relationship of Father and Son with each other and with the people of God.

The temple was a building, designed as a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7). It was a place of joy where people could talk with God, learn of Him, worship Him, and be assured of His care (Isaiah 2:2-5). In a sense, the temple made God’s presence tangible.

Jesus began coming to the temple when He had to be carried (Luke 2:21-39). There His parents presented the infant Jesus to His true Father and dedicated Him to His service.

Virtually all that we know about Jesus’ childhood is His devotion to His Father and to the temple (Luke 2:41-52). Even at age twelve, He thought of the temple as His Father’s house. His desire to be about His Father’s work drew Him there to a degree that confounded even His parents.

As an adult, Jesus continued to think of the temple as His Father’s house. Thus He came to it in a unique capacity, as the Son of God (Matthew 17:24-27). He seemed to come at every opportunity. There He spoke the Father’s words and did the Father’s works. People who came to Jesus in the temple met their God face-to-face. He spent time with them, rubbed shoulders with them, taught them, and healed them.

They also experienced the Son’s all-consuming zeal for His Father’s house. They sensed His passion as, with sovereign authority, He cleansed it of all that distracted from God Himself (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-16; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:14-22).

Yet Jesus also lifted people’s sights beyond the temple buildings. He taught the Samaritan woman that true worship transcended the temple. Life could be engulfed in worship that flowed directly from our spirits to His, unencumbered by time and place (John 4:20-24). Referring to Himself, He told the Pharisees that *“something greater than the temple is here”* (Matthew 12:6, NASB). He proclaimed His own body as the true temple of God. The magnificent temple structures, which had taken forty-six years to build, would soon be completely leveled (Matthew 24:2). But when His bodily temple was destroyed, it would rise again in only three days (John 2:19).

The Spirit of Christ drew the early Church to the temple almost continually (Luke 24:52-53; Acts 2:46). Through Paul, the Spirit taught the Church that they themselves were God’s living temple, His holy presence on earth (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Ephesians 2:19-22). The New Testament closes with the promise that

soon, life will be so completely engulfed in God that a temple will be unnecessary (Revelation 21:22).

In Jesus' zeal for the temple, we glimpse the Son's deep love for His Father, and the Father's burning desire to be forever one with His children.

Listen & Sing: "We Have Come, God's Living Temple"
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