

2. The New Temple

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[0 : 00] Well, let's open our Bibles at John's Gospel, Chapter 2. John's Gospel, Chapter 2. If you have one of our big church hardback Bibles, you'll find this on page 887.

887. Last week, we were reading the passage, the first 11 verses, where Jesus goes to the wedding at Cana in Galilee and turns water into wine.

And today, we're reading the rest of the chapter. I'll start at verse 12 and read down to the end. So, John, Chapter 2, beginning at verse 12. After this, Jesus went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

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 sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and oxen, 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.

[1 : 20] Do not make my father's house a house of trade. His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for your house will consume me.

So, the Jews said to him, What sign do you show us for doing these things? Jesus answered them, Destroy this temple, and in three days, I will raise it up.

The Jews then said, It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days? But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

When, therefore, he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.

But Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people, and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

[2 : 39] Amen. This is the word of the Lord, and may it be a blessing to us this evening. Amen. Let us pray for a moment again together.

Dear God, our Father, it is your words and your words alone that bring life to our hearts. Please, we pray, revive us, and enable us to know you, and to know and understand the Lord Jesus better, that we should gladly submit to him, and be able to follow him.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, let's turn again to John's Gospel, chapter 2, page 887.

And my title for this evening is The New Temple. And you'll see I'm picking up the idea there from verses 19, 20, and 21.

The New Testament speaks of the coming of Jesus as the coming of something new. I just think history for a moment.

[3 : 55] The Jewish faith had been in existence for nearly 2,000 years before Christ came. And the Jewish faith had been in existence for a moment. And the Jewish faith had been in existence for a moment. And the Jewish faith had had some good periods, a few good periods, and it had had plenty of bad periods.

But it had never finally and decisively sorted out the biggest question raised by human life on planet Earth, which is the question, can God and man be friends?

Is it possible for human beings to relate to God, knowing that we're forgiven and at peace with him?

Now, that was the painful question raised all the way back in Genesis chapter 3 at the Garden of Eden.

Our rebellion, when I say our rebellion, it was Adam and Eve who rebelled, but we were somehow deeply involved with them. Our rebellion against God in the Garden of Eden was followed by his

expulsion of us.

Expelled, banished. That's what happens at the end of Genesis chapter 3. Paradise is lost. Is it possible for it ever to be regained? And that is the question that haunts the whole of the Old Testament.

[5 : 07] Fellowship with God has been broken and ruptured. Is it beyond restoration? Now, the Jewish faith on the surface seemed to provide the answer.

After all, it had instruction and law. It had a tabernacle and a temple and a sacrificial system which spoke of the forgiveness of sins. It had prophets and priests and a royal family, the kingly line of David.

And yet, despite a few better periods, the writers of the Old Testament lament the fact that the Jews again and again turn away from God and worship idols. Provision is made for their restoration, but they don't take advantage of it.

They don't, by and large, listen to their prophets. Their interest in God becomes hopelessly compromised and corrupted. And the Old Testament writers, seeing this hardness of heart, begin to speak of a coming king of David's line who will establish a new covenant, whose arrival will bring something decisively new.

Now, this theme of Jesus bringing something new, Jesus achieving what Judaism could not achieve, this is one of the big themes of John's Gospel.

[6 : 24] We read of the new wine last week in the opening section of chapter 2, and today in the second half of chapter 2, we'll learn, I trust, about the new temple. And then next week in the early verses of chapter 3, we'll learn about the new birth, which is really about the new creation and how a person enters it.

And as John's Gospel unfolds, John shows us how Jesus brings to the beleaguered human race other new things, culminating in the resurrection, new life, victory snatched, you might say, from the jaws of defeat and death.

Now, the prophets and priests and institutions of Judaism could never bring to the world and even to the Jews the forgiveness and restoration that we need.

Judaism was always intended by God to be preparatory. But Jesus brings something new, and what he brings is the thing that we really need.

He is the fulfillment of Judaism. He is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Now, let's turn here to John chapter 2 and verse 12, and we'll trace the story through to his teaching about the new temple towards the end of the chapter.

[7 : 34] Now, you'll see in verse 12, Jesus leaves Cana in Galilee, where he'd been to the wedding and had turned the water into wine, and he journeys with his family and his disciples down to Capernaum.

Down to Capernaum. And then you'll see in the next verse, verse 13, that a few days later, he goes up to Jerusalem. Now, those words, down and up, are rather interesting geographical details.

And if you look at a map of Israel, at least a map of Israel which shows the physical geography of the country, you'll see how right John is to speak of down and up at these two points. Because Cana lies something like 900 feet above sea level, and Capernaum is right down low on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

And the Sea of Galilee, as I'm sure you know, lies something like 700 feet below sea level. How can a sea be below sea level? Well, it is 700 feet below sea level. Then the whole of the Jordan Valley, which runs from the Sea of Galilee in the north right down to the Dead Sea in the south, all of it is hundreds of feet below sea level.

And the Dead Sea at the bottom is nearly 1,300 feet below sea level. It's the lowest place on earth. So the journey from Cana to Capernaum, in verse 12, takes the traveler down about 1,600 feet.

[8 : 52] And then in verse 13, the journey from Capernaum to Jerusalem takes the traveler up about 2,500 feet, right up to the capital city, which is built about 2,000 feet above sea level.

Now, friends, I'm really encouraging you to take an interest in Bible geography. And if you haven't yet bought a Bible atlas, do buy one. Or if you can get on the internet and you can turn up Bible geography.

It's very illuminating, and it adds salt and pepper to our Bible study. It makes the whole thing more interesting, and we can begin to picture what's going on. All right, let's join battle here. So far in John's Gospel, in the later parts of chapter 1, we've had a few private meetings between Jesus and

various disciples.

Then we have a semi-private incident at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. But now, here at chapter 2, verse 13, Jesus launches himself into his public ministry.

This is where he begins to become a high-profile figure. And it is a joining of battle. The new in the person of Jesus is beginning to confront the old in the person of the Jewish leaders and Judaism.

[10:01] Now, we've had a taste of that a few verses before at the wedding, because the wine created by Jesus superseded the old rituals of purification, the old Jewish laws and customs.

But now, here in the second half of chapter 2, the heat is turned up in a big way. So, verse 13, it's Passover, late March, early April.

And because Passover was one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar, every Jew tried to get to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, if they possibly could. We read in Luke chapter 2, remember that little story where Jesus was about 12 years old?

We read that Mary and Joseph, his parents, used to go up to Jerusalem from Nazareth every year to celebrate the Passover. It was part of their regular family custom, and it was with many Jewish families.

So, this was something that Jesus had always done. But now here, in John 2, he's a grown man, aged about 30, and his public life is beginning. So, let's notice two things about Jesus from the story.

[11:09] I've got two main headings tonight. Let's notice two things. And these two things will help us to see how Jesus is bringing something new and decisive to the human race, something which Old Testament Judaism was powerless to give.

So, first, let's notice his revulsion at the misuse of the temple. It's really a revulsion at the corruptions of the human heart. You'll see he comes into the temple in verse 14.

But instead of finding dignified behavior and people praying, there are cattle bellowing and sheep bleating and pigeons stacked up in wicker baskets. And there are tables there with stacks of coins on them and people exchanging currencies and no doubt making a fair bit of noise in the process. Now, let's try to understand why these animal traders and money changers were there. The law of Moses in the Old Testament required Jewish householders to bring animals and birds to the tabernacle or the temple to be sacrificed.

The sin offerings and burnt offerings were centrally important to the Jewish faith. But if you lived a long way from Jerusalem, out in the sticks, you might say, 60 miles or 80 miles from Jerusalem, or even just 20 or 30 miles from Jerusalem, it would be very difficult to bring your own animals all the way from your own smallholding to the capital city.

[12:38] To put it in modern terms, would you want to drive a bullock all the way from Stenhouse Muir to Glasgow? That's the sort of distance we're thinking of. So to help these Jewish travelers various people developed a trade in selling cattle and sheep to those who had come a distance.

It was a service to the community. At one period, these animal traders set up their trading posts on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, about half a mile outside the city. But by this stage, by 30 AD, they were in the temple courts, almost certainly the outermost court, which was called the Court of the Gentiles, the court where the Gentiles were permitted to come.

Then the other people providing a service were the money changers. Now for a big festival like Passover, which was perhaps the biggest of the year, Jews would come not just from Israel, they would travel from all over the Roman Empire to Jerusalem, bringing their money with them, which of course came in all kinds of currencies.

There was no equivalent of the Eurozone in those days. So if you came from the far reaches of the empire, you'd bring marks or franks or sovereigns or ducats or doubloons or pieces of eight, whatever the currency was, with you.

But the temple tax at Jerusalem had to be paid in Jewish coins, what the Old Testament would call the half shekel tax. You certainly could not pay in Roman coins, because every Roman coin had stamped on it the image of the heathen Roman emperor.

[14:08] So you would go to a money changers desk, you'd change your foreign coins, and you'd exchange them for Jewish currency at a price, of course, and then you could pay your temple tax.

So from one point of view, the money changers and the animal traders were serving the agenda of the law of Moses. They were helping Jews who traveled a long way to fulfill their obligations to support the temple financially and to offer the sacrifices that they had to offer.

But, and this is the point, to Jesus, it was hateful. So hateful that as soon as he saw what was going on, he picked up some pieces of cord and he knotted them together to make a lash and he began to lay about himself.

A bullock is a pretty big animal, but it will shift if it feels its ribs being tickled by a whip. And you'll see from verse 15, the suggestion is that Jesus tickled the ribs of the people as well as the animals.

He drove out the men and the animals and he picked up the tables covered with coins and he turned them over scattering the money everywhere. He was furious. Incandescent is not too strong a word.

[15:26] One of my commentaries on John's gospel puts it like this. It is a tremendous scene. The Lord dominates the multitude by the righteousness of his energy and the energy of his righteousness.

Well, why is Jesus so angry? I think for two reasons. First, as he puts it here in verse 16, do not make my father's house a house of trade.

Now, there's nothing wrong with trade in the right place. In fact, if we don't trade, if we don't exchange goods and services for money, it's hard to know how society can possibly carry on.

Trade has always been a basic ingredient of human society. But the problem is this was trade in the wrong place. Trade is for the marketplace, not for the temple.

The temple, in Old Testament teaching, is a place for prayer and sacrifice. And therefore, it's the place where God and man meet on the proper terms.

[16:26] It's the place where the Jewish worshiper not only prays, but offers up his sheep or goat or bullock, which reminds him how precious he is to God and how costly is the forgiveness of his sin.

It reminds him that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. So the temple is all about God and man. It is not about making money. But the second reason for Jesus being angry is that all this financial activity in the outer temple court, the court of the Gentiles, is going to be keeping the Gentiles out.

This is the part of the temple area where they were welcome, where they should have been, where they too, in theory, were encouraged to pray to the only true God of the whole earth.

But all this Jewish activity, providing the right kind of currency and the right animals for the Jews to sacrifice, it was excluding the Gentiles. Do you remember how in Mark's account of Jesus cleansing the temple, Jesus says, is it not written, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?

So these cattle traders and money changers had turned the court of the Gentiles into a kind of nationalist stronghold, Jewish stronghold. If you'd been a visiting Gentile, you would hardly have dared go in.

[17:46] So the activities of this corrupted Judaism were keeping the Gentiles away from God. Now what implications might this have for the Christian today?

If we're Christians, the New Testament teaches us that we now are the temple of God, the place where God is pleased to dwell. Our bodies and hearts and minds and personalities are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, let's not allow ourselves, our hearts and our thinking and our bodies to be corrupted by the things that made Jesus angry. He was angry first that the place of prayer and relationship to God was cluttered up with concerns about money and possessions.

The temple courts were full of money noise and the temple of our hearts is not intended to be full of money noise, anxiety about wealth and concern to be better off than our neighbors and colleagues. And then secondly, Jesus was angry that all this activity in the temple was excluding those whom God wanted to draw to himself, outsiders, Gentiles.

[18:59] And our lives, too, if we're Christians, are intended by God to be a window for other people so that they can look inside and be given a view of the transforming power of Christ.

When people look at us, do they say, if that's what Christ does for a person, that's what I want? Or do they say, if that's Christianity, I'd rather be a humanist or I'd rather follow the Dalai Lama?

So there's the first thing. We see Jesus' revulsion against those who corrupt God's temple and there's a caution to us about our own hearts. Well now, secondly, Jesus teaches us about the new temple in verses 19 to 22.

And this is an important aspect of this decisively new thing that Jesus has done. Now you'll see in verse 18, a group of Jews comes to Jesus obviously outraged at what he's just done in driving the people out and turning over the money changers' tables.

These Jews would have been authority figures, perhaps members of the temple staff. Now their question to him in verse 18, what sign do you show us for doing these things?

[20 : 13] their question shows that they were actually taking him quite seriously. If he had obviously been a nutcase or an irresponsible hooligan, they wouldn't have started a serious discussion with him about his credentials.

They would simply have taken him by the shoulders and marched him out of the building. I remember years ago when I was a young assistant minister in Manchester. It was about 6.29 one Sunday evening and the senior minister, my friend the rector, and I were just about to walk into the church building to take the evening service when a broad-shouldered man appeared in the corridor and barred our way and he said to us, you're not going in there?

I forbid it. You're imposters. Now the poor man was clearly living life on a different planet from the rest of us and it didn't take us very long.

Actually, it did take us a good five minutes because we couldn't resort to real heavy stuff. It took us about five minutes to get him out. But clearly this man had lost his grip on reality.

His claim that we were imposters, well, obviously that had no substance. Now these Jewish leaders don't treat Jesus like that. They obviously have a suspicion that he might just be a heaven-sent prophet.

[21 : 32] That's why they ask him to provide them with a sign, a sign from God, to authenticate his actions. Now this wasn't the only time when Jesus was challenged to produce a sign in order to prove his credentials.

But let's just imagine that at that moment he had done as they asked. Let's imagine that he made a vision appear up in the sky or even produced a rabbit out of his sleeve.

What would that say about God? It would say that God was the kind of God who does amazing stunts so as to maintain people's allegiance. Well, how much would that kind of allegiance be worth?

If your faith as a Christian has to be maintained by at least three miraculous stunts per week, it's a pretty rotten kind of faith, isn't it? Real Christian faith is not sustained by regular miracles, but by something much better, by the fact that our hearts have been opened to believe the Bible, to believe the integrity and truthfulness of Jesus' words.

We trust him. We trust that he's telling us the truth when he claims to be the good shepherd and the bread of life and the son of God. It's the wonderful integrity of his character and his words that sustains our faith.

[22 : 52] We feed on his words daily. That's where our souls get their nourishment from. So let's not look for hatfuls of cheap miracles to sustain us as Christians.

We have more solid nourishment than that. How does man live? How does man maintain vitality? Not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

It's God's words that sustain our life and our faith. Well, how does Jesus answer their demand for a miraculous sign? Not with a cheap stunt, but with a short sentence that requires a lot of thinking about.

He says, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. Now that seems to the Jews, these men talking to him, like an impenetrable riddle, almost like nonsense, which is why they dismissively say to him, it has taken 46 years to build this temple and can you raise it up in three days?

Are you from the planet Zog? How can you say such ridiculous things? But, says John, in verse 21, he was speaking about the temple of his body.

[24 : 06] Now these hostile Jews, of course, cannot make head or tail of what he's saying. And at the time, his disciples who heard him say it couldn't understand it either.

But John tells us in verse 22 that three years later, after Jesus' resurrection, they did understand. They remembered what he had said and they believed the scripture, in other words, Old Testament verses about the resurrection of God's Messiah, and they believed the word that Jesus had spoken, which means the words that he spoke here in verse 19.

So what is this teaching about the temple? The teaching itself comes in short form from Jesus' lips in verse 19, but you'll see John adds a little clarifying interpretation in verse 21.

So let's think a bit about the temple and let's allow our thoughts to range back into the Old Testament for a moment. That terrible problem that I mentioned earlier, created by Adam and Eve's disobedience, is that they're banished from the presence of God.

In the Garden of Eden, they had been with him and he was with them. But when he expelled them from the garden, he locked the gates to make sure that they could not return.

[25 : 24] But thankfully, God had not finished with the human race and he began to put his great rescue plan into operation. He chose Abraham and from Abraham he made a great nation and he gave them a special place to live in, the land of Canaan, which later became the land of Israel.

And as the Jewish nation became established as God's special people, God made a covenant with them. And at the heart of the covenant were these words.

I will be with them, they will be my people, and I will be their God, and I will dwell amongst them. They will be mine, and I will be theirs.

That's the heart of the covenant. It's a mutual possession. I will be with them, they will be my people, and I will be their God. And those words, or at least variations on those words, appear again and again throughout the Old Testament.

The covenant is a promise from God that their banishment from his presence will be finally ended. And as God developed the range and the clarity of his covenant with the Jews, he told Moses to construct a tabernacle, a kind of portable tent made of beautiful fabric.

[26 : 41] And this portable tabernacle would accompany the Israelites on their travels to the promised land. And it would symbolize the fact that God dwelt with them, that he was in their midst.

And then centuries later, when the Jews were established in the promised land, God commanded King Solomon to build a temple in the middle of Jerusalem. And the temple was designed to serve exactly the same purpose as the tabernacle had done before.

It was to symbolize the presence of God in the royal city. So the temple was a physical reminder of the covenant. I will dwell with them. But although the temple symbolized God's presence with his people, it was also ambiguous because it was full of barriers which prevented people from coming fully and freely into his presence.

Gentiles could only come into the outer court. Jews were allowed further in but at the very center of the temple in an inner room known as the most holy place which really symbolized the presence of God.

That most holy place was absolutely forbidden to be entered because the people were unholy sinners and God was holy. Only the high priest could go into that inner place once a year and only then if he took blood with him, the blood of atonement to expiate his sins.

[28 : 04] Otherwise, he was a dead man. And there was a great heavy curtain, a thick curtain that separated the most holy place from the rest of the temple. And that curtain meant stay out on pain of death.

So the temple in Jerusalem conveyed an ambiguous message to the Jews. Yes, I am with you but full and free access to my heart and love is still closed because your sins have not been ultimately dealt with or atoned for.

And it's the coming of Jesus that finally answers this dreadful predicament. At the very moment that his blood was shed and his body was killed on the cross, that great temple was torn in two from top to bottom, indicating that access to God so long denied was now open.

The blood of goats and bulls had never been able to take away the power and guilt of sin. But the blood of Christ, the true sacrificial Lamb of God, has gloriously opened up access for Jews and Gentiles to God so that we can come to him and be with him and dwell with him, forgiven and accepted forever.

And this means that the old temple in Jerusalem is now redundant. The curtain that separated God and man has now been torn in two by the death of Jesus.

[29 : 32] Our sins have been truly and fully forgiven by his death. No longer is there any need to sacrifice animals in the temple because the Lamb of God has been sacrificed once and for all time and that sacrifice never has to be repeated.

And if we ask, where does God dwell? The answer is, no longer in the temple at Jerusalem. But with the coming of Jesus, God dwells in the body and person of his son Jesus.

The point of the temple is that it is the dwelling place of God and that place where God dwells is the very body of Jesus. So when John tells us here in verse 21 that the body of Jesus is the temple, he is saying in a slightly different way that Jesus is God.

God dwells in the blood. So what then has Jesus done that is new and decisive? He has brought forgiveness for us through his blood shed in death and he has brought real permanent access to God.

The old temple in Jerusalem in the end could only bar us from God's presence and tell us that there was no way to him. The blood of the animal sacrifices pointed forward historically to the coming of the real lamb of God but those animal sacrifices could not bring forgiveness of our sin.

[30 : 59] Jesus has done what all the Judaism of the Old Testament before him could never do. Now I said a few minutes ago that Christian people are also described in the New Testament in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians as the temple of the Holy Spirit and this means that God in the person of the Holy Spirit truly takes up his residence in our hearts and minds and bodies.

But it's only possible for Christians to be the temple of the Holy Spirit because of what Jesus has done. His work had to be done first. We could be no fit dwelling place for the Holy Spirit unless Jesus had first borne the penalty of our sins and opened up for us access to God.

And I think it's helpful to get little diagrams in your mind to grasp the truth of the Bible sometimes. I think it's helpful to think of this as a simple three-stage historical process.

First of all we have the stone temple in Jerusalem symbolizing God's presence among his people but not giving them real access to him. Then secondly Jesus comes as the new temple because God the Father truly and fully dwells in him.

And thirdly there's the human temple that is Christian people in whom God dwells by his Holy Spirit. But it's only possible for God to dwell in Christians because of what Jesus has achieved on the cross.

[32 : 26] If our sins had not been dealt with by Jesus on the cross we could never have been forgiven and made acceptable to God. So think of it in this order. Stone temple new temple human temple and it's the work of Jesus that makes the stone temple redundant and the human temple possible.

So this is the new and decisive thing that Jesus has done. He has made it possible for God to dwell with human beings and for human beings to dwell with God forever.

This is why the Jew needs to become a Christian and this is why the Gentile needs to become a Christian. It's only through Jesus that any of us can enjoy eternal life.

There is no way to God the Father except through him. Now friends this is very good news isn't it for the benighted human race. It's terrific.

But this question is so important. Who amongst us believes this good news? Is everybody in this building this evening a believer? That's an uncomfortable question but it's a necessary one and it's necessary to ask because of what we read in the final three verses of this chapter.

[33 : 47] Just look with me again at verse 23. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast many believed in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man for he himself knew what was in man.

Although Jesus was not prepared to do a stunt miracle in front of the hostile Jews in verse 18 he did perform other miracles or signs in Jerusalem and this led according to verse 23 to many people believing in his name.

But for some of them at least it was clearly a spurious or shallow belief not the real trust of their hearts. And this is why Jesus in verse 24 was not willing to entrust himself to them.

He didn't entrust himself to them because he knew that they were not willing to entrust themselves to him. Yes they were impressed by a miracle and they said amazing.

But that's as far as it went. It was belief on the surface but not belief in the heart. And why did he not entrust himself to them because as verse 24 puts it he knew all people.

[35 : 13] And as verse 25 puts it he knew what was in man. Well of course he knows what is in the depths of every human heart because he is God.

As the Lord God says back in the book of Jeremiah I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind. We can't look deep into each other's hearts. We don't have x-ray eyes.

It's a good thing we don't. We can only search each other's hearts and minds at a very superficial level. But the Lord knows every heart. These final three verses here in chapter 2 are surely intended to make the reader ask what kind of belief is my belief?

Have I entrusted myself to the Lord Jesus? Am I leaning the full weight of my confidence upon him? Or am I really still trusting something else to give my life meaning and purpose?

Am I still trusting money for example or my ambitions or my own ability to make my way through life? So let me ask what is Jesus to you?

[36 : 19] Is he just a casual acquaintance? Someone that has brushed past you once or twice in life but you hardly think about him? Or has he become the dominant molding and shaping force in your life?

Your master and your friend? The one that you're learning to rely upon deeply? Let's heed this warning. Let's not be the sort of people that Jesus is not prepared to entrust himself to.

Well you might ask, does he entrust himself to anybody? The answer is yes he certainly does. Just listen to his words from later in John's gospel, chapter 10. I am the good shepherd, I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep.

He's committed himself and trusted himself to the nth degree to those who truly put their trust in him because he has laid down his life for the sheep. So let's be that kind of person and then we shall know what it is to be known by him and to be loved by him.

John has written all this down for us to help us become real believers. He's saying to us, don't be foolish, don't try to sit on the fence, put your full confidence in Jesus, believe that he is the Christ, the Son of God, because that is the way to have eternal life.

[37 : 48] Let's bow our heads for a moment of prayer. Lord Jesus, we thank you so much that you came to be the new temple, the new dwelling place of God, and that by your wonderful death on the cross for us, you have opened up access to God the Father.

We think of the curtain in the temple being torn in two from top to bottom, declaring that the way to the Father and to forgiveness is now open. We do pray that you will bless us and give us understanding of these things and joy as we learn to trust you.

And we ask it for your dear name's sake. Amen.