

Temple Christology in the Gospel According to John: A Survey of Scholarship in the Last Twenty Years (1996-2016)

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Abstract

There have been several different proposals advocated in the last couple of decades about the role of temple Christology in John's gospel. These proposals have moved Johannine scholarship significantly forward, based on the renewed appreciation of the Jewishness of the Gospel of John which has focused attention on the temple. The sheer volume of the contributions, however, demands that from time to time a concerted effort at surveying and summarising the new insights is in order. This article aims to summarise and analyse the different proposals suggested in the last twenty years (1996-2016). The contributions are categorised into four, namely, historical, Christological, soteriological and eschatological perspectives. It is evident from this survey that Jesus in the Gospel of John is a promised true temple replacing the Jerusalem temple including its cultic activities. Therefore,

¹ The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

Jesus-believers no longer need a physical temple as new temple worship is in Spirit and truth.

1. Introduction

There is a frequent reference to the Jerusalem temple in the Gospel of John. These references appear to be strategically positioned in John's narrative. There are explicit references which occur 16 times (*hieron*, appears 11 times, *naos* appears 3 times and *hypēretēs* appears once). There are also implicit and alluded references to the temple in the Gospel of John. The implicit and alluded references to the temple are based on the use of *hieron* and *naos*. This article is interested in the use of *hieron* and *naos* in the Gospel of John. *Hieron* refers to the temple building, specifically, the Jerusalem temple which was destroyed in 70 CE. *Naos* refers to the temple as dwelling place of God where worship and cultic activities are performed.

The explicit references to the temple start very early in the gospel account. First, John 2:13–22 records Jesus' first public appearance in the Jerusalem temple during the Passover festival. While in the temple courts, Jesus clears it using the 'whip of cords' and calls it 'my Father's house'. Jesus in his dialogue with the Jews pointed to his death at their hands and His resurrection (vv.19–22). Importantly, it is only in John 2:13–22, where both *hieron* (vv. 14, 15) and *naos* (vv. 19, 20, 21) appear concurrently. It is also the only place where *naos* is explicitly used in the Gospel. In John, the temple clearing is placed very early in the narrative, is more vehement and involves Jesus professing his personal link with the temple. This is unlike the synoptics, where the temple clearing accounts are towards the end of the gospels (Matt. 21:12–16; Mark 11:15–18; Luke 19:45–47). While it is possible that there were two clearings, and thus the two accounts are separate, the

account in John nevertheless indicates that the fourth evangelist attached a significant importance to the temple.

Second, in John 4:19–21, Jesus during his private discourse with the Samaritan woman, deliberated about the right place of worship, either at mount Gerizim or Jerusalem (implying the Jerusalem temple). However, Jesus pronounced that the new worship is not location bound, it is in spirit and truth (vv.23–24). Third, in John 5–10, Jesus attended four Jewish festivals in which the temple played a central role: unnamed festival (John 5), Passover festival (John 6), feast of the Tabernacles (John 7–9) and festival of Dedication (John 10:22–42). Fourth, in John 11:55–56, while people were in Jerusalem in preparation for the Jewish Passover, they were looking for Jesus in the temple. However, Jesus was not in the temple as Jewish leaders were plotting to kill him (John 11:50–54). Fifth, in John 18:20, Jesus during his trial, testified that he always spoke openly to the people in synagogues and temple. All the explicit references to the temple indicate that the temple played an important role in the Gospel of John.

The implicit accounts of the temple are also evident in the Gospel of John. In the first instance, John 1:14–18 records the advent of Jesus, the incarnate *Logos* in the world amongst humanity, and alludes to the tabernacle which is associated with the temple. Specifically, the Evangelist draws from Exodus/Sinai tradition, stemmed from the use of *Logos*, *skēnoō*, *doxa* and the presence of Moses. Second, in John 1:51, Jesus alludes to Jacobs' dream (cf. Gen 28:10–22), particularly, Bethel, which means the house of God (cf. Gen 28:17). While Bethel was an extremely important cultic site, it was not precisely the same as the Jerusalem/Zion site which later became the place of the temple. However, there is some evidence that the Bethel tradition was later fused with the Zion tradition (cf. Davies 2005; Blenkinsopp 2003;

Gelander 2011:95–97; Habel 1972; Harrison 1988). Therefore, it may be fittingly suggested that there are allusive undertones of the Zion temple in John 1:51.

Third, in John 11:48, there is expression of anxiety by the Sanhedrin that the Romans might take away ‘our place’, which several commentators believe referred to the temple. Fourth, in John 14:2–3, ‘Father’s house’ with many rooms is an allusion to the temple, specifically, eschatological temple. The implicit accounts may be debatable as to whether John intended to highlight the temple in the first place. But given the fourth evangelist’s penchant for symbolism, it would be wise not to rule out implicit references to the temple in those passages. In any case the overall sense, when both the explicit and implicit passages are put together is that John gives pride of place to the temple of Jerusalem in his gospel account. The question is for what reasons and for what theological, socio-historical and pastoral purposes does the evangelist do that? This is the key focus of the current review article.

The purpose of this article is to summarise and dialogue with scholarly opinions on the role of the temple in the Gospel of John. While, the temple is closely associated with the references to Jewish festivals in John’s gospel, and scholars have often examined the two together, the article’s focus is the temple alone. It is also limited to major English publications that have appeared in the last twenty years (1996–2016). This delimitation has been necessitated not only by the sheer number of publications in the two decades, but also the significantly new insights which the recent revival of interest in the Jewishness of the Gospel of John has yielded. The paper first sheds light on different perspectives that scholars espoused to delineate the role of the temple in John’s

gospel. This is followed by a summary and reflections on their implications.

2. Perspectives on the Temple in John's Scholarship

There are four perspectives that have been adopted, namely, historical, Christological, soteriological and eschatological perspectives. Scholars use either one or a combination of these approaches. This survey focuses on the predominant perspective adopted by different scholars.

2.1. Historical perspective

Historical perspective is an approach whereby the use of the temple in the Gospel of John is examined based on the historical reliability of the temple incident in John 2. And that its positioning is an interpretative key to ascertain temple symbolism throughout John's gospel in relation to Jesus. Specifically, this incident is linked with the destruction of Jerusalem temple in 70 CE, as well as the resurrected Jesus as the new and true temple, replacing the Jerusalem temple. In other words, scholars maintain that this incident was a prophetic prolepsis of the old temple's destruction and of its replacement with the true temple, Jesus. Some further postulate that this Johannine emphasis has socio-historical significance, as the gospel was written in response to the temple's destruction in 70 CE. The nuances of the works of three scholars who adopt this perspective are summarised below.

2.1.1. *Jonathan Draper (1997)*

Draper (1997) in his article examines the role of Jesus' temple clearing actions in the Gospel of John in order to address John's pastoral concerns post-70 CE. The Evangelist in response to the void the absence of the temple created, pointed Jesus-believers to Jesus who opened

entry to the heavenly temple to worship in God's presence. He (Draper1997:263–264) grounds his study on the centrality and historical reliability of Jesus' actions in the temple. He (1997:264) associates Jesus' actions in the temple with 'the peasant resistance movement', which is a 'breach of the public discourse'.

Draper (1997:265) argues that, 'the nature of John's use of the temple' is critical, in order 'to integrate this theme with the rest of the Gospel'. He (1997:265–66) centres his argument on 'John's rejection of the building in Jerusalem ... and his elevation of the theme of the *skēnē* of the desert wanderings'. To him, the divine glory is experienced through the enfleshed *Logos* tenting amidst people. 'This theme is supplemented by a re-interpretation of the symbol of the temple in terms of *Merkabah* mysticism, that is in terms of ecstatic experience of the divine presence interpreted in terms of temple symbolism' (1997:266). Furthermore, the person of Jesus during his earthly ministry is the *skēnē* presence of God, and after his ascension establishes the heavenly temple. Jesus-believers are provided entry to this heavenly shrine.

Draper (1997:266–270) roots his study in the sociological categorisation of the Johannine community as 'an introversionist sect'. An Introver-sionist sect is a group of people who separated themselves from the world with specific focus on its sacredness and social relationships are kept within the sect. Draper (1997:270) posits that John's gospel is 'an introversionist response' based on the community's dire situation post-70 CE. John, in response to the national catastrophe integrates the effects of temple's destruction with shared contemporary ideas from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Then, Draper (1997:271–275), based on detailed study of the second Temple Judaism Literature associated with God's promise, professes that John in John 1:14 was influenced by contemporary tradition to

portray Jesus as God's tented presence. Also, Draper (1997:275–279) posits that John was influenced by the *Merkabah* mysticism, associated with worship in the heavenly temple. Specifically, 'In John's Gospel, the concept of Jesus as the tented wilderness presence of God with his people on earth, is supplemented it seems with the idea of Jesus constituting or building the heavenly temple on his return to the Father' (1997:278). Consequently, 'He [Jesus] opens up the way for his disciples to gain mystic experience of the heavenly throne room by means of ascent and descent obtained through the worship of the community' (1997:278–279). Draper supports this claim by examining several texts from John (1:47–51; 2:12–22, 2:23–3:21; 4:1–42; 7:37–39; 10:3–5, 10:34–36; 12:28–30, 12:37–41; 14:1–6; 15:1–10). Importantly, to him, Jesus-believers are able to ascend and enter the new heavenly temple to worship in the Spirit and truth in God's presence.

Draper's association of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension with the establishment of heavenly temple is significant. Specifically, in John 2:19–21 Jesus predicted this and he further emphasised this during the passion narrative (John 12–17). However, Draper's claim that, John's Gospel through mystical experience is an 'introversionist response' to the crisis emanated from the loss of the physical temple is unwarranted (cf. DeConick 2001:124; Köstenberger 2005:222). Particularly, Draper's argument associating the mysticism of Jesus-believers with *Merkabah* mysticism smacks of 'parralomania', the phenomenon of claiming spurious organic relationship between ancient ideas based on spurious and superficial parallels. DeConick (2001:124, his emphasis) claims that, 'The Johannine author is *not* stating that the ascent and visionary experience in God's new temple is available to believers *now*—but that this will be a future event which the community members long and hope for now'. In other words, to DeConick, Draper got it wrong in interpreting John 14 as speaking of

mystical ascent to heaven's temple instead of an expression of eschatological hope in Christ's return.

2.1.2. Andreas Köstenberger (2005)

Köstenberger (2005) in his article investigates the socio-historical and pastoral role of the temple in John's Gospel. He (2005:215, his emphasis) hypothesises that, '*the Fourth Gospel's emphasis on Jesus as the fulfillment of the symbolism surrounding various Jewish festivals and institutions—including the temple—can very plausibly be read against the backdrop of the then-recent destruction of the second temple as one possible element occasioning its composition*'. To him, John's Christological framework is developed within the milieu of the temple's destruction and its subsequent impact on the believers.

Köstenberger (2005:216–218) postulates that, the destruction of the temple provided an opportunity for Christian mission to Jews. Particularly, in the absence of the temple, Jews had to devise coping strategies due to the centrality of the temple within Jewish religious life (2005:220). To him (2005:220), 'It may be surmised that, likewise, after the initial shock had waned, Christian apologetic efforts toward Jews (such as John's) were being formulated that sought to address the Jews' need to fill the void left by the second temple's destruction'. To Köstenberger (2005:220–221), Jesus is the new and true temple replacing the Jerusalem temple including its cultic activities. Therefore, believing in Jesus was the only solution in order to fill the void created by temple's destruction.

On the one hand, the composition of John's gospel was strategic in that the evangelist framed his Christology in apologetic fashion (2005:221–223). On the other hand, the evangelist pointed to Jesus the Messiah as the solution in the absence of the temple (2005:223–227). Köstenberger

(2005:228–240) supports his claim that the destruction of the temple elicited the composition of John by examining several passages in John (i.e. John 1:14, 51; 2:12–22; 4:19–24; 5-12; 13–21). Importantly, throughout the gospel, Jesus, the enfleshed *Logos* as the new tabernacle/temple is portrayed as the fulfilment and replacement of the temple including Jewish institutions. Therefore, worship in the new messianic community is no longer bound to a physical temple, instead, it is in spirit and truth.

Köstenberger's claim that Jesus is portrayed as the new and true temple is well supported. Köstenberger and Draper agree that temple's destruction is historically important: however, Köstenberger does not support Draper's claim that John is 'an introversionist response' to this event. Instead, he claims that the temple Christology in John's gospel was triggered by this event. His other important contribution is the suggestion that the temple emphasis in the gospel had missionary and apologetic intention. While, there are other scholars (e.g. Coloe 2001; Kerr 2002; Walker 1996:161–199) who agree with Köstenberger's claim that John was occasioned by the temple incident, this claim is not persuasive. The main reason offered by Köstenberger to support John's preoccupation with the temple's destruction is that the Jerusalem temple was an important symbol for Jewish religious and national identity. This raises a question that needs answering: why a similar phenomenon does not occur in Matthew, especially given the likely high proportion of Jews in Matthew's community?

Given the central role that the temple must have played in Jesus' own life as an observant Jew living in Palestine, John's preoccupation with temple Christology cannot only be due to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Instead, Judaism traditions contemporary to the gospel are the background to its composition (cf. Davies 1996:59). In

other words, the evangelist's interest in the temple more plausibly points to the essential Jewishness of John's gospel, rather than an attempt to address Jews of John's day *per se*. Hence, a plausible case can be made that John believed that the temple foreshadowed Jesus, as the true and ultimate eschatological temple (cf. Brown 2010; Wheaton 2009). Stated otherwise, Jesus is the final fulfilment of God's purpose, salvation of humanity and ultimately, the extension of his temple in all the earth (cf. Beale 2004; Liroy 2010).

2.1.3. Jennifer Glancy (2009)

Glancy (2009:102) in her article argues that the temple incident, specifically Jesus' use of a whip is a revelatory sign, pointing to his body as the replacement of the Jerusalem temple. Importantly, Glancy's main focus was the violent nature of Jesus' clearing of the temple in John's gospel. She posits that, the violent nature of Jesus' action in the temple is central in this temple account. This action points to Jesus' whipping and eventual death and resurrection.

To her (2009:116), 'the violence directed against Jesus' body that unfolds in the passion narrative is catalysed (on a narrative level) by Jesus' own physically enacted violence at the temple site'. In other words, she believes that Jesus' temple clearing action is an interpretive key to understanding his ministry, which involves conflicts with Jewish leaders and his eventual death through violence. Particularly, Jesus' actions were symbolic in that they pointed to the temple's destruction and his death through violence. Moreover, 'Jesus' appearance in the temple, whip in hand, functions as a violent epiphany, a moment of self-revelation akin to his self-revelation at Cana'. Therefore, the positioning of the temple incident is central to understanding John, specifically, the history of violence.

Glancy is correct that the description of the temple clearance in John is more violent, as it describes the making of the cords for clearing the animals. But the theological explanation she and others give for this is the problem. Since John is the only evangelist who mentions oxen among the animals in the temple, how else could Jesus have driven such large animals out without a cord? Therefore, it is justified to believe that the violence in John's account was necessitated by the narrative itself, and not that Jesus was violent. Glancy's scholarly programme has inordinately been focused on violence against human bodies in the NT; often in relation to slaves or women. So, in a way her focus in John is an extension of that programme, which tends to skew the primary data.

Some scholars (e.g. Alexis-Baker 2012; Bredin 2003; Croy 2009) argue that Jesus' actions in the temple were nonviolent. Bredin (2003) postulates that Jesus' actions in the temple were nonviolent, as the temple was a place of violence and exploitation. Specifically, Bredin (2003:44) argues that, 'it is possible to establish Jesus' demonstration as motivated by his perception that the temple is the center of violence'. The Jerusalem temple has failed to be God's dwelling place; it was the place of influential and prosperous people, exploiting the weak (2003:50). He argues that, Jesus' death at the hands of the powerful was in order 'to re-establish peace in society and with God'. Therefore, Jesus, the new Isaac, dies as a nonviolent Lamb, and in his resurrection as the new temple reveals the deceit of the Jerusalem temple (2003:45–46, 49–50). Glancy is familiar with Bredin's work, but, she rightly questions his conclusion (2009:107). Bredin has conflated what is meant by 'violent clearing of the temple' in order to make his argument. The problematic element in Glancy's work is failing to see the pragmatic nature of Jesus' need to whip in order to drive out large animals (cf. Croy 2009). Therefore, both scholars are over-theologising.

Another argument to support a nonviolence reading of the incident is that Jesus' actions did not disrupt the temple practices, which should have triggered reaction from the temple's authorities (cf. Goodwin 2014:54–55). This nonviolence reading of Jesus' actions in the temple is also not persuasive. The idea of 'violence' in the Johannine clearing of the temple is based purely on a comparison of the Johannine narrative with the synoptics. It is not claiming anything beyond Jesus' use of the cords. It seems that there is an exaggeration of the issue on both sides, that is, violence reading and nonviolence reading of John's clearing account. Scholars like Glancy make too much of this account without considering the Johannine narrative. Others at the other extreme react by denying that the use of the whip is an important issue needing explanation in the Johannine narrative.

2.2. Christological perspective

Christological perspective is an approach which focuses on the person of Jesus in relation to the Jerusalem temple. Scholars examine how the fourth evangelist wove the temple theme in his Christological framework in order to portray Jesus' identity, origin and authority. Jesus is the dwelling of God's glory amongst believers, which he achieves this through his death and resurrection. Therefore, he is the new and true temple replacing the old Jerusalem temple including its cultic activities and festivals. The works of two scholars are summarised below.

2.2.1. *Mary Coloe (2001)*

Coloe (2001) in her monograph aims 'to show that the temple functions in the narrative as the major Christological symbol that gradually shifts its symbolic meaning from the person of Jesus to the Johannine community in the post-resurrection era' (2001:3). She grounds her

argument on the fact that John's gospel was written post-70 CE in response to the crisis of the temple's destruction. In other words, the community's response after the incident was to look to Jesus as God's dwelling place (2001:20). To her (2001:21–23), the prologue is similar to the first six days of creation while John 1:19–19:30 like Genesis 2:1–3 is the seventh day, the climax of the Father's work fulfilled in Jesus' life and death. John 1:14 describes Jesus' advent into the world and tabernacling with humanity to fulfil the Father's work (2001:23–29, 63). She (2001:28) argues that, 'in the person of Jesus, the divine presence which Israel sought to see, to hear and to experience, came and dwelt in the midst of humanity'.

Then, Coloe examines how Jesus is depicted as the dwelling place of God in John's narrative. John 2:13–25 portrays Jesus' body as the dwelling place of God, the new temple (2001:84). To her, the disciples' remembrance (vv. 21–22) is an indication that Jesus continues to live amidst his community through the indwelling Spirit. Nonetheless, this passage does not provide sufficient details itself, and the subsequent passages provide further details. Therefore, John 4:1–45 portrays Jesus as the supplanter (far exceeds Jacob in greatness); he is the true source of eternal life and the founder of true worship (2001:85–113). In other words, Jesus is like the new temple, he gives eternal life to those who believe (i.e. true worshippers) the Father through faith in him.

Furthermore, Coloe (2001:115–145) argues, based on John 7:1–8:59, that Jesus is portrayed as the new temple amongst humanity, based on the images of water and light. In John 7:37–38, Jesus 'in his flesh (1:14) and body (2:21) He is the divine presence dwelling with us and the source of living water' (2001:133). In John 8:12, 'Jesus offers a light surpassing the wilderness cloud, for Jesus is the *Logos* who has already been described as a light and life for all people and a light that the

darkness could not extinguish (cf. 1:4–5)’ (Coloe 2001:136). Therefore, Jesus is ‘the very presence of Israel’s God *egō eimi* (8:58)’ (2001:143). Specifically, Jesus, the enfleshed *Logos* amidst humanity, is the source of water and light, which are associated with the temple. Hence, Jesus as the new temple fulfils and replaces the images of water and light.

Coloe (2001:145–155) in her examination of John 10:22–42 argues that, Jesus is the new temple. She grounds her argument in the tradition of the consecration of the temple; therefore, Jesus in reference to his consecration points to himself as the new temple. In other words, Jesus as the consecrated One who is sent by God is the very presence of God amongst the people. Thus, he is the fulfilment and the replacement of the temple. Coloe (2001:178), based on John 14:1–31, claims that, ‘in the departure and Spirit-gift of Jesus, those of his own who receive him and keep his word (14:23) will become children of God (1:12) and as members of God’s *oikia*, they will be the household of the Father, and where the Father, Jesus and Paraclete will make their *monēn* (14:23)’. John 18:1–19:42 is the fulfilment of Jesus’ promise to his disciples (2001:179–211). Specifically, in Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension which signify the destruction of one temple and the raising of a new and true temple the new Passover Lamb, Jesus; those who believe in him become the new household of God, the new community.

Coloe’s work and that of Kerr (2002) have become important works in Johannine scholarship. Particularly, Coloe’s work is the first work that systematically and in detail examines the temple Christology of the Gospel of John. However, Coloe’s work was not the first work to show the pervasiveness of temple Christology throughout John (cf. Kinzer 1998). Like in the case of Köstenberger (2005) described above, Coole’s claim that John’s gospel was occasioned by the temple’s destruction is not persuasive. Coloe’s claim that after Jesus’ departure,

his believers, the new household of God became God's temple has been questioned. While, there is some truth in this claim, one problem not satisfactorily addressed is whether Jesus continues or ceases to be the temple after his departure?

In the first place, Jesus did promise his disciples that he would be with them through the indwelling of the Spirit of truth, who will be with them forever (John 14:15–21) and he fulfilled this when he breathed on them (John 20:22; cf. 7:39). Specifically, in John 14:23, Jesus promises those who love and obey him that God the Father will love them and the triune God will make his residence in them. In other words, Jesus-believers will be the triune God's dwelling place. Jesus-believers, like Jesus, are sanctified (John 16:17, 19; cf. 15:3) and have received God's glory (John 16:22; cf. 1:14). Also, they are commissioned to continue with Jesus' works in the world (John 16:18; 20:21, 23).

On the other hand, John does not refer to the new community of believers as the temple of God, nor does he explain whether Jesus continues as the temple after his departure. Yet, in John 2:19–22, it is evident that after Jesus' death and resurrection, he becomes the new temple. Hence, scholars like Schneiders (2013) claim that Jesus continues to be the new temple in the midst of the new community after his departure. Schneiders as summarised next, does not support Coloe's conclusion that the new community becomes God's temple after Jesus' departure.

2.2.2. Sandra Schneiders (2013)

Schneiders (2013:§4) focuses on John 20:19–20 in order to illuminate how Jesus is portrayed as the new temple in the Gospel of John. She professes that, 'He [Jesus] is the presence of God in their midst and the source of the life-giving water of the Spirit'. She reaches this claim

based on John 2:19 where Jesus pointed to his risen body that would be the new temple (Schneiders 2013:§3). Furthermore, she draws from John 7:37–39 with its allusion to Ezekiel 47:1–12 to posit that Jesus is depicted as a new temple, the source of life-giving water.

Lastly, to Schneiders (2013:§3), the flow of water and blood recorded in John 19:34–37 is central to her conclusion in John 20:19–20. Importantly, she associates this Christophany (John 20:19–20) based on the disciples' responses with 'new creation'. Schneiders achieves this by drawing from Isaiah 66:7–14 and also Jesus' promise in John 16:20–22. To her, through the works of Jesus and Spirit gift, new Israel is birthed and Jesus, the new temple, continues to be amongst the new community through the Holy Spirit. This community is commissioned to continue with Jesus' mission in the world. Specifically, she draws from John 20:21–23 to argue that believers are the new Israel continuing with Jesus' mission of forgiving sins, and holding fast those who had joined the community.

There is consensus that Jesus through his death and resurrection became the new temple. And that, Jesus' salvific work and the gift of the Spirit establishes the new community, which continues with Jesus' mission. However, unlike Coloe, Schneiders claims that Jesus continues as the new temple in the midst of the new community. Hence, these findings raise further questions that need answering: if it is true that John's interest in the temple was related to the fall of Jerusalem, what does that tell us about the Johannine community? How does that correlate with John's ecclesiology?

2.3. Soteriological perspective

Soteriological perspective is an approach whereby the temple in John is interpreted in relation to how Jesus fulfils the work of salvation. This is

based on Jesus' person and his works, ultimately, his death and resurrection ensuring that those who believe in him have eternal life. The work of one scholar is summarised.

2.3.1. Dan Lioy (2010)

Lioy (2010) argues that, 'the temple motif is a conceptual and linguistic framework for the fourth gospel's presentation of Jesus as the divine Messiah' (2010:67). Lioy's bedrock of his monograph is his specific perspective on humanity's 'brokenness' having emanated from the Garden of Eden account due to the sin of Adam and Eve. This Edenic account and Jesus' redemptive acts unfold throughout the biblical texts. To Lioy, John depicts Jesus as God Man, who tabernacled amidst humanity in the world with the mission to restore humanity in their relationship with God.

Lioy (2010:67) claims that, 'John's intent was to emphasise how the triune God, though above and beyond his creation, made himself known to the world through life, death, and resurrection of the Son'. Therefore, Jesus, the Son of God, in his dwelling with humanity came to fulfil God's redemptive plan while making him fully known (2010:67–69). Specifically, Jesus as the 'new and final sacrament' made it possible for humanity to be restored to their original status as 'a sacramental place' in order to worship and serve God (2010:68).

Regarding the temple's cleansing account (John 2:13–22), Lioy (2010:70–71) argues that Jesus, the Messiah, was not 'attacking the institution' or 'rejecting Israel', but instead, the corrupt activities and injustices of the authorities in the temple of God. Jesus' actions in the temple are interpretive keys to understanding the unfolding events in Jesus' ministry and ultimately his death and resurrection as the new temple. Specifically, Jesus through his death as the Paschal sacrifice,

replaced the old temple including cultic activities and festivals, and now God dwells in him as the house of the Father (2010:71–72). Lioy (2010:72–74) maintains that, Jesus’ death and resurrection validated him as the divine Messiah, and having a legal right to cleanse the temple.

Furthermore, the cleansing of the temple was an indication of the advent of the day of the Lord resulting in judgement of his house (i.e. temple) and establishment of new and true temple of God (2010:73–74). Lioy (2010:73) claims that, ‘With the advent of the Messiah as the final expression of God’s Word (cf. 1:1, 14, 18), all the divine blessings anticipated under the old covenant were brought to fruition, including being cleansed from sin, experiencing the delight of salvation, and enjoying unbroken fellowship with the Lord (cf. Isa 25:6–9; 56:7; Jer 31:31–34; Rev 21:22)’. This new order is achieved through Jesus’ death, resurrection and exaltation (2010:74). Based on John 4:20–24, Lioy (2010:75–76) argues that worship in this new eschatological epoch is not bound by the physical location of the temple, as Messiah is the locus of new worship, which is in spirit and truth.

Research on the temple from a soteriological perspective in the Gospel of John has been neglected. Lioy’s work is an important contribution, as it lays a foundation for further research in this area. To Lioy, Jesus, the new and true temple, through his death, resurrection and exaltation, restored the original status of humankind as the sacrament of God. Therefore, in this eschatological era, believers have unrestricted fellowship with their God and Father. Importantly, Lioy follows the nonviolence reading of John 2:13–22. Also, he argues that this incident points to Jesus, who through his death and resurrection becomes the new temple replacing the old temple (cf. Bryan 2011). After Jesus’ departure, the new order of worship is in spirit and truth. Nonetheless,

another question needs answering: granted that the Gospel of John portrays Jesus as the true eschatological temple and restores humanity's original status, what role does the ingestion language play in John's soteriology?

2.4. Eschatological (Fulfilment) perspective

Eschatological perspective is an approach whereby the temple in John is examined in order to ascertain how Jesus fulfils Jewish eschatological expectations. Particularly, the advent of Jesus, the new and true temple, ushers in the beginning of new order, the eschatological era. This new order is achieved through Jesus' death, resurrection and exaltation. Therefore, believers who are the new community live in this eschatological age. The works of three scholars are summarised.

2.4.1. *Alan Kerr (2002)*

Kerr (2002:2, 34) in his monograph argues that John was written in the aftermath of the temple's destruction in 70 CE, responding to the crisis that this event created. In other words, John was responding to questions about Jewish festivals and place of worship (2002:30–31). To him (2002:65–66), John adopted a quietist (i.e. not active) eschatology by painstakingly and nimbly pointing to Jesus as the new temple for the new family of faith. It is quietist eschatology in that God intervenes through the works of Jesus to address this crisis without the Johannine community resorting to holy war (2002:60). John points Jesus-believers to Jesus, the Messiah who is the eschatological temple fulfilling and replacing the Jerusalem temple. Hence, the advent of Jesus, the Messiah, meant the advent of the eschatological era.

Kerr (2002:70–101) drawing from both the immediate context (i.e. John 1:19–2:11 and 3:1–21) and wider context (John 5:19–30) argues that,

John 2:13–22 must be understood within the eschatological context, where the demise of the old temple foreshadows the raising of the new temple. In other words, the raising of the new temple means the arrival of new creation, the new order. On the one hand, John the Baptist's ministry as a herald (John 1:23; cf. Isa 40:3) to Jesus' ministry, his confession that Jesus is the 'Lamb of God' (John 1:29), Nathanael's testimony (John 1:49) and Jesus' words (John 1:51) support the advent of this new beginning (2002:72). On the other hand, John 5:19–30 depicts this new order, with the presence of both elements of realised eschatology (5:19–25) and future eschatology (5:26–30) (2002:73). To him (2002:101), John 2:21 is one of the interpretive keys to Jesus as the new temple throughout John.

Based on John 1:14–16, Kerr (2002:133) argues that Jesus in tabernacling with humanity became the new tent of meeting with God. To him, in the prologue 'Judaism is a signpost pointing to Jesus and finds fulfilment when it leads to Jesus'. What is central about this eschatological tenor is that many people may have life by believing that Jesus is the Messiah, Son of God (2002:134). Also, based on John 4:16–24, Kerr (2002:161–204) argues that, Jesus ushers in a new way of worship, which is in spirit and in truth, and Jesus is the focus as the Messiah and Son of God. To him (2002:203–204), Jesus as the new Torah, the revelatory word of God, replaces the temple and the Spirit testifies on his behalf.

Furthermore, Kerr (2002:207–255) argues that Jesus fulfils and replaces three festivals, namely, Passover, Tabernacles and Dedication in the Gospel of John. Lastly, Jesus through his works of salvation and judgement which he ultimately completed on the greater Sabbath (i.e. Sunday; cf. John 20:1) when he resurrected from death, transformed the Jewish Sabbath (John 19:31) into eschatological Sabbath (2002:255–

266). Importantly, Jesus through washing his disciples' feet (John 13) prepared them to enter this new eschatological era, and were incorporated as new members of the Father's house (John 14:2–3), the new family of God (2002:292–312). Consequently, all who believe in Jesus (cf. John 17:20) have a place in the Father's house (2002:312).

Kerr like Köstenberger and Coole posits that the Gospel of John was occasioned by the destruction of the temple; however, as already argued under Köstenberger's work above, this claim is not convincing. Also, Kerr like other scholars (e.g. Coloe 2001; Hoskins 2007; Lioy 2010; Schneiders 2013; Um 2006) states that believers through Jesus' death and resurrection live in the new eschatological epoch; to Kerr, this is an eschatological Sabbath. Specifically, Kerr claims that Jesus through his resurrection transformed the Jewish Sabbath into eschatological Sabbath. However, this claim needs further work. It is not clear from John's narrative how Jesus transforms the Jewish Sabbath. Furthermore, Kerr claims that there is no allusion to the temple in John 1:51, contrary to other scholars (e.g. Coloe 2001; Hoskins 2007; Köstenberger 2005). It seems that Kerr was too quick to reject the allusion to the temple in this passage. It has already been discussed under Section One above that the Bethel tradition was later in Jewish history fused with Zion tradition. Therefore, this strengthens the assertion that there is an allusion to the temple in John 1:51.

2.4.2. Stephen Um (2006)

Um's (2006:1) aim in his monograph is to examine the theme of temple Christology in John 4:4–26 'in the light of the early Jewish understanding of water and Spirit'. First, in his examination of the symbol of water, and based on the influence of early Jewish literature, Um argues that the symbol of water in John is best understood as life-giving. He (2006:133, 136) claims that, this was the common under-

standing of the symbol of water within early Jewish tradition. To him (2006:143), ‘interestingly, the act of “giving” life-giving water (or life itself), a divine activity by a sovereign creator who had the authority to dispense life (cf. Isa 44.3a), is attributed to Jesus (“I [will] give him”, John 4:13–14; cf. 4:10)’. To this, John in his Christology (cf. John 4:10, 14) includes Jesus in the unique identity of God as the creator of new creational eschatological life aligned with the Jewish understanding of God (2006:143–146).

Furthermore, to Um (2006:146), the symbol of water in early Jewish literature represented ‘a garden/temple element supplying abundant life’. Importantly, the Jewish tradition associated the garden with the eschatological temple. Therefore, the eschatological temple was believed to be the source of the life-giving water. Then, Um (2006:146–151), based on his exegesis of several OT prophetic passages (Ezek 37:15–28; 47; Joel 4:18; Zech 14:8), concludes that, God in the end-time will pour out his abundant life-giving blessings through the messianic figure, the true temple. In other words, the presence of the true temple in the eschatological future will result in new creational eschatological life for the people and the land.

Um (2006:151) posits that, ‘in the latter days, His [God] presence will escalate into a fuller expression of life in the messianic kingdom when the true temple will come to exercise His divine prerogative in dispensing eschatological “living water” for the spiritually thirsty’. Therefore, John in his development of the temple Christology was influenced by early Jewish tradition’s understanding of the symbol of water and its association with a garden/temple theme (2006:151–166). Particularly, Jesus in John (John 4:10–14, 20–24; cf. 1:14; 2:19–21; 7:38–39) is the promised true temple, who is the source and provider of the eschatological life-giving water to the world.

Um's association of the symbol of water and the Spirit in the Gospel of John is remarkable. He has convincingly demonstrated that John was heavily influenced by early Jewish tradition (biblical and postbiblical) in his development of temple Christology. This reliance on Jewish tradition further points to the Jewishness of the Gospel of John. However, there is a question waiting to be answered: how did the Baptist's testimony in John 1:32–34 contribute to John's depiction of Jesus, the promised eschatological temple as the source and provider of the Spirit?

2.4.3. Paul Hoskins (2007)

Hoskins (2007:2) in this monograph examines how Jesus is depicted as fulfilment and replacement of the temple in John. He (2007:103-106) grounds his study on the fact that both the tabernacle and the temple as dwelling places of God were limited. First, God abandoned these shrines due to people's sins. Second, God was able to be Israel's sanctuary while in exile with no temple. Third, the locus for God's presence and favour is his righteous people and not the temple. It is therefore unsurprising that an expectation of a new and eternal temple is expressed by some OT texts and extra-biblical Jewish literature (2007:107).

John drawing from this background portrays Jesus as the fulfilment and replacement of the temple (2007:108–146). In John 2:18–22, Jesus is depicted as the replacement (i.e. vv. 19, 21) of the Jerusalem temple (2007:116). In John 1:14, Jesus as 'the incarnate word fulfills an expectation whose fulfilment was expected to occur in the new temple' (2007:119; cf. 125). While, in John 1:51 (cf. Gen 28:12), 'the Son of Man [Jesus] is the true locus for the revelation of God to His people. As such, He is the fulfillment and replacement of those places where God revealed Himself to His people, including Bethel, the tabernacle, and

the temple.’ (2007:126). Also, in John 4:20–24, Jesus is portrayed as the fulfilment and replacement of the obsolete temple as he is ‘the locus of God’s abundant provision for His people’ (2007:145).

Hoskins (2007:147) also posits that Jesus’ portrayal as the fulfilment and replacement of the temple is ‘closely related to his death/resurrection/exaltation, namely, his fulfilment of Jewish feasts’. On the one hand, he argues that, the ‘hour’, ‘lifting up’ and ‘glorification’ in John independently and together are closely entwined with Jesus’ climatic and intertwined themes of his death, resurrection and exaltation (2007:148–152). On the other hand, he examines the Isaianic background (particularly Isaiah 2 and 33, LXX) on the themes of lifting up and glorification and their associations with God’s revelation of himself in judgement and salvation (2007:152–159). To him (2007:155) ‘the pattern seems to be that God manifests his glory and his exalted nature first in acts of judgment; then, he manifests them in acts of salvation. As part of the acts of salvation, God displays his glory and exalted nature by glorifying and exalting his servant, the remnant, and the temple.’

Furthermore, Hoskins (2007:160–181) postulates that Jesus fulfils the Jewish feasts: Passover, Tabernacles and Dedication. This emanates from the fact that the temple theme is closely intertwined with the festival theme, because Jesus marks the festivals by going to the temple. Therefore, Jesus during these festivals as the true and eternal temple is portrayed as the locus of God’s abundant provision for his people in the world (2007:180). To Hoskins, Jesus greatly surpasses the temple including the new temple based on OT prophecies (i.e. Isaiah and Ezekiel) and the Jerusalem temple (2007:185, 193).

Hoskins like Um has shown that John was heavily influenced by Jewish tradition in presenting Jesus as the new and eternal temple. This further

affirms the Jewishness of the Gospel of John. However, Hoskins' work is distinctive in that Jesus is portrayed as temple antitype exceeding the Jewish expectations of a new temple. This raises a question that requires answering: if as Jesus confirmed that scriptures testify about him (John 5:39–40), what implications has Hoskins's conclusion that Jesus, the new temple exceeds the expectations of the Old Testament scriptures considering that Jesus is the fulfilment Old Testament scriptures? It does not seem that Hoskins has done justice to his conclusion, and hence there is a need for further enquiry. There is an agreement amongst scholars (e.g. Beutler 1996; Köstenberger 2007; Menken 2005; Loader 2005) that John extensively relied on the Old Testament scriptures in his Christological programme. Therefore, one implication of this heavy reliance on the Old Testament is that the fourth evangelist wanted to show how Jesus fulfils the Old Testament prophecies, in this case, the promised eschatological temple.

3. Summary and Reflections

The overall impression based on the summary of the scholarly works above is that the temple is central in John's Christological narrative programme. Specifically, John adopts temple symbolism in relation to Jesus, that is, temple Christology. Jesus, the enfleshed *Logos* is the new and true temple, and pioneered new temple worship which is in spirit and in truth with no need for a physical temple. Differently put, while scholars utilised different lenses in examining temple symbolism, there is harmony regarding the centrality of the temple in John's gospel, and that Jesus is the eschatological temple.

Furthermore, scholars agree that Jesus as the fulfilment of the Jerusalem temple, replaces it, including its cultic activities and festivals. The arguments provided for temple replacement include: obsolete due to its

temporality (e.g. Hoskins 2007; Kerr 2002), corruption and injustices of temple authorities (e.g. Lioy 2010), illegitimate (e.g. Draper 1997). However, some Johannine students (e.g. Brown 2010; Troost-Cramer 2016; Wheaton 2009) hold that Jesus does not replace the temple as it foreshadowed him. Instead, there is continuation between the old temple and Jesus, the new temple.

However, this writer agrees with Loader (2005:151) that ‘replacement does not imply abandonment or disparagement. The Law remains. It was God’s gift, but now that the true source of eternal life has come, to which the Law through its prescriptions as well as its predictions pointed, fulfilling its prescriptions may be left behind.’ Jesus, the Messianic bridegroom must take the centre stage, as all OT types and OT texts remain in the background persistently pointing to Jesus, the promised true eschatological temple.

There is also agreement that Jesus through his death and resurrection ensures the creation of new order and new community of God. This new community no longer needs the physical temple, as Jesus the eschatological temple established new temple worship, which is in spirit and truth. Jesus is the locus of this new temple worship. Furthermore, there is an agreement that after Jesus’ departure the new community continues with his mission. However, there is no agreement on what happened after Jesus’ departure, specifically, in relation to the new temple. On the one hand, after Jesus’ departure, the new community become the temple of God (e.g. Coloe 2001; Kerr 2002; cf. Hann 2008; Kasula 2016). On the other hand, after Jesus’ departure, Jesus continues as the temple through Spirit-gift amidst the new community (e.g. Bryan 2005; Köstenberger 2005; Schneiders 2013; cf. Salier 2004; Troost-Cramer 2016).

Lastly and significantly, the pervasiveness of the temple theme underlines the Jewishness of John's gospel. Specifically, the temple in John's gospel has played a focal role in revolutionising Johannine scholarship. On the one hand, the temple theme has helped to underline more the historical reliability of John's gospel, for one would expect the type of focus on the temple that John gives is a historically reliable account, as Jesus being a devout Jew would have been associated with the temple as much as John's Gospel indicates. Therefore, this further necessitates research on the contribution of this gospel in the historical Jesus' research. There is no longer a need to compare John's gospel against the synoptics, instead, scholarship should focus on the reliable and independent and complementary contribution of John's account.

On the other hand, there is theological meaning and implications from the association of Jesus with the temple. Particularly, the pointed emphasis in John on Jesus as eschatological temple is significant considering the role of the temple in Jewish history. Hence, considering the role and function of the temple, this depicts God's eternal salvific plan for humanity through Jesus, the enfleshed *Logos* as the dwelling presence of God's glory. Therefore, Jesus, the eschatological temple ensures that those who believe in him have eternal relationship with God. In other words, humanity cannot have fellowship with God except through the eschatological temple, Jesus. Accordingly, in order to enter and experience God's glory in the eschatological temple, belief in Jesus, the eschatological temple of God is the prerequisite.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to summarise and analyse the different proposals in the last twenty years about the role of temple Christology in John's gospel. It is evident based on this survey that there has been

heightened interest in John's temple. There are both agreements and disagreements on some aspects of John's temple Christology. Importantly, John's pre-occupation with temple Christology points to the centrality of the Jewish tradition within early Christianity, specifically, the Gospel of John. It can therefore be inferred that John's gospel was not written in response to the crisis caused by temple's destruction. This demands that John is approached from its Jewish milieu. Furthermore, it is evident that John has theological interest in presenting Jesus as eschatological temple. Particularly, the relationship between the Jerusalem temple and Jesus shows that the Jerusalem temple including its cultic activities foreshadowed Jesus as the dwelling presence of God's glory and the locus of worship.

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