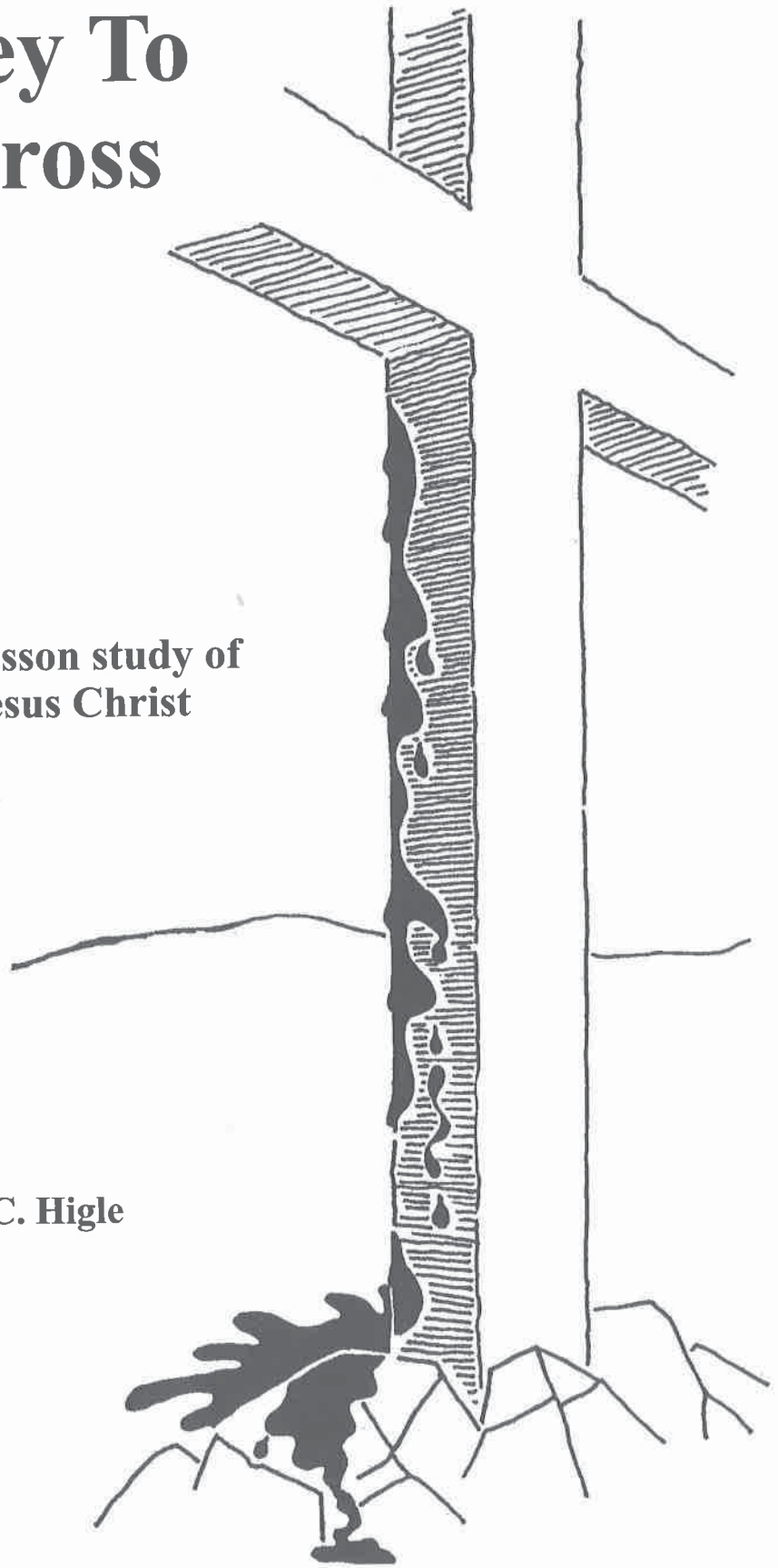


Journey To The Cross

A twenty-six lesson study of
the life of Jesus Christ

Tommy C. Higle



Journey To The Cross

LESSON 5 . . .

III. HIS JOURNEY: The Beginning of the Earthly Ministry (Continued)

D. Christ Calls His First Disciples *John 1:35-51*

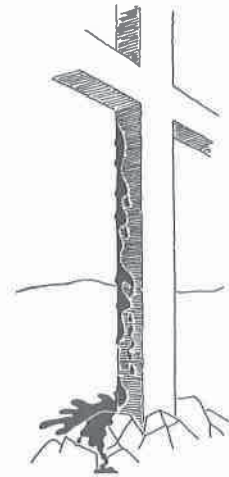
During the last days of the ministry of John the Baptist, his witness to the messiahship of Jesus in the presence of two of his disciples led them to follow Jesus (John 1:29-40). These two disciples were Andrew and John, although John is not called by name. Many commentators think John withheld his own name out of modesty. What was the first thing that Andrew did after finding Jesus (John 1:41-42)?

Jesus called Simon *Cephas*, which means “a stone.” This new name—Cephas or “Peter,” from the Greek *PETROS*—was a constant reminder of what the Lord Jesus expected Simon Peter to be. Peter was destined to become one of the great pillars of the church.

The next day Jesus went into Galilee and found Philip (John 1:43). Jesus’ appeal of *follow me* met with immediate response from Philip. What was the first thing Philip did after finding Jesus (John 1:44-49)?

E. The First Miracle *John 2:1-12*

Three days after Nathanael’s conversion, Jesus, His mother Mary, and His disciples attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee. During the wedding Mary informed Jesus that the hosts had run out of wine. This meant social disaster for the families of the bride and groom, and the fact that wedding celebrations lasted for several days only complicated the already embarrassing situation. At this point Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine.



Notes

In the NT, *wine* (from the Greek OINOS) could refer to new wine, sweet wine, or grape juice. New wine fermenting would burst old wineskins (Matthew 9:17). In OT times wine was not diluted, but by NT times the Hellenistic practice of mixing wine with 3 parts water was common in Palestine. It should be noted that at the Last Supper Jesus spoke of *the fruit of the vine*, indicating the drink was unfermented, as the bread was unleavened. However, whatever use Jesus made of wine in His day under different circumstances is no proof that its use in our day is wise. The Bible gives much more space to the danger than to the benefit of wine.

The most important point of this entire story is often missed. This is just one of many instances suggesting Jesus was welcome among those who were having a good time. If the average Christian today were a pattern, there would be very little joy and happiness in the Christian life. The average Christian goes around all day with a long, solemn face. If Christians do by chance find themselves in the company of someone who is having a good time, they immediately suspect the cause for the excitement and fun is illegal, immoral, or fattening. Jesus was not like that. He did not condemn those who were having clean fun.

F. Jesus Drives Out the Money Changers

John 2:13-22

After the wedding in Cana, Jesus went to Capernaum for a few days. He probably wanted to join the caravan that was destined for the Passover in Jerusalem, just a few days' journey away (John 2:12).

The Passover, which is the holiest feast day in the Jewish religion, took place at the temple in Jerusalem. It was the first of all the annual feasts the Jews observed, and was called both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This Passover feast commemorated the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the day after the Passover and lasted seven days (see Leviticus 23:5-8).

Upon His arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus went at once to the temple. What did He find (John 2:14)?

Every Jewish man who was physically able was expected to attend the Passover (Exodus 23:17 & Deuteronomy 16:16). They came from all over the known world at that time because the Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire and even further. As they arrived in Jerusalem they would make their way to the temple to celebrate the Passover.

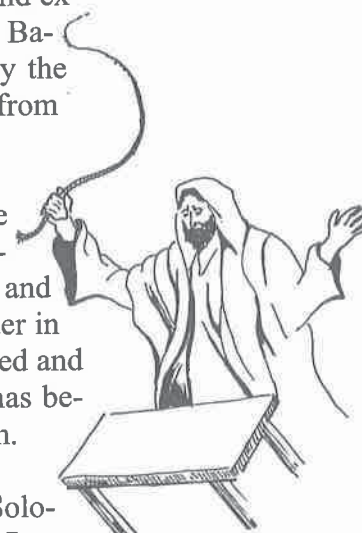
The people brought money with them from their native lands. At the temple this foreign money could not be used to buy animals for sacrifices, for

it was considered unclean. Therefore, money changers had tables set up in the court of the Gentiles to exchange the people's foreign money for Jewish coins. There was no standard rate of exchange, so it became a time of bargaining. The money changers usually cheated these visitors as much as they could.

During the time of Jesus the high priesthood no longer continued until the death of the high priest but was manipulated by the Romans according to their own politics. Therefore, we find reference to more than one high priest at the same time in the NT (see Luke 3:2).

The former high priest Annas was especially prominent during the time of Christ. The Jews believed that once a man was appointed high priest he could not be disposed of, so they went on calling him "high priest." Annas owned the famous Bazaars of Annas, which had a monopoly on the money changers and on the sale of animals for the sacrifices in the temple. The animals for sacrifices had to be examined by appointed inspectors, and exorbitant prices were charged for such inspections. These so-called Bazaars of Annas were noted for greed and were hated and feared by the common people. Without question, Annas made a huge fortune from this enterprise.

It was this monopoly Jesus threatened when He cleansed the temple and drove out Annas' merchants and money changers. Jesus apparently cleansed the temple twice during His ministry (see John 2:15 and Matthew 21:12). It is evident this was why Annas was the real leader in the whole action to have Jesus crucified. Although Annas was baffled and defeated in the first hearing against Jesus, after Jesus' betrayal Annas became the prime mover in the subsequent trials that led to Jesus' death.



The temple in Jesus' day was Herod's temple. The first temple, Solomon's, was destroyed by the Babylonians when Judah fell in 587 B.C. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., they rebuilt the temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel; however, it did not compare to the splendor of Solomon's temple. Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.) was a compulsive builder. Though his motives were purely political, he desired to make the modest temple of Zerubbabel larger and more beautiful. The historian Josephus speaks of the grandeur of Herod's temple—its white marble pillars and earthen front covered with plates of gold that reflected the bright rays of the sun and dazzled visitors from around the world.

This magnificent structure was the center of all Jewish religion during the time of Jesus. Knowledge of its floor plan will help in understanding the setting in which Jesus started His earthly ministry.

Refer to the floor plan of Herod's temple on page 34, and write the corresponding numbers beside each of the areas listed below. Using a Bible dictionary, describe each temple area in the blanks provided:

Court of the Priests (Number ____) _____

Court of Israel (Number ____) _____

Holy of Holies (Number ____) _____

Court of the Gentiles (Number ____) _____

Holy Place (Number ____) _____

Court of the Women (Number ____) _____

The Beautiful Gate (Number ____) _____

Altar of Burnt Offering (Number ____) _____

The cleansing of the temple took place in the Court of the Gentiles, the large outer courtyard. Anyone could enter this courtyard, but no Gentile dared go farther, lest he suffer the penalty of death.

With this information we can better understand Ephesians 2:13-14 & Galatians 3:28. What do these verses mean?

HEROD'S TEMPLE

