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# JESUS' FIRST VISIT TO THE TEMPLE

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**S. Kent Brown**

**Abstract:** *In this rich and detailed description, S. Kent Brown paints an evocative, historically contextualized account of Jesus Christ's first visit to the Jerusalem Temple since his infancy, when at age twelve he traveled with his family to attend Passover.*

**[Editor's Note:** Part of our book chapter reprint series, this article is reprinted here as a service to the Latter-day Saint community. Original pagination and page numbers have necessarily changed, otherwise the reprint has the same content as the original.

See S. Kent Brown, "Jesus' First Visit to the Temple," in *The Temple: Symbols, Sermons, and Settings, Proceedings of the Fourth Interpreter Foundation Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 10 November 2018*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2021), 235–66. Further information at <https://interpreterfoundation.org/books/the-temple-symbols-sermons-and-settings/>.]

## Inside Jerusalem and Its Temple

When they reached the fork in the road, Joseph and Mary trudged ahead up the ever steeper incline towards the top of the Mount of Olives.<sup>1</sup> Their breathing grew more labored as did that of their twelve-year-old son. But he was taking the climb easier than they were. Young, nimble legs. Their destination lay to the west, the city of Jerusalem with its spectacular temple. At the fork, the other road led southward toward the town of Bethany where Jesus would raise from the dead a family friend named

Lazarus more than twenty years later. On this occasion, Jesus was coming to the temple for the first time since being carried there as an infant (see Luke 2:22).<sup>2</sup>

He and his parents went with the companionship of others, of course, in “the company” noted in Luke 2:44. No one traveled singly or in small groups in those days.<sup>3</sup> Too many bandits inhabited the travel route from Nazareth to Jerusalem, especially in the wilds of the Jordan Valley and Judean Desert, as is illustrated in Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan. We cannot discount the possibility that Jesus began to formulate this parable in his mind during the long hours walking between Jericho and Jerusalem either on this occasion or a later one. Further, it appears this story rested on a real occurrence that he had learned about, thus underscoring its authenticity.<sup>4</sup> He surely would have learned from the adults that bandits beat up their victims only if they put up any kind of resistance: the “thieves ... wounded him, ... leaving him half dead,” as Jesus would later say (Luke 10:30).<sup>5</sup>

On a happier note, it is possible that some of Jesus’ siblings or childhood friends were in the traveling company. If not, he surely made friends readily with the boys and girls his same age, making the trip more pleasant and a whole lot shorter. This observation is made sure when Luke wrote that Jesus’ parents supposed “him to be in the company” as they began the return trip to Nazareth. Where would he have been if not with young friends?<sup>6</sup> In my opinion, a person would



*Figure 1. View of the Temple looking from the southeast toward the northwest. The Court of Women sits on the right, the Nicanor Gate rises in the center, and the Sanctuary itself towers on the left.*

have a difficult time making a case that his parents thought he was with the forty- and fifty-year-old travelers. We can imagine these children playing games with each other and telling stories to one another about adventures while riding donkeys bareback and mishaps. What is more, the traveling group was large, most likely a couple hundred or more. Jesus' parents would not have lost track of him if their group consisted of two or three dozen people.

The traveling party probably left Jericho early in the morning, where they had been able to secure a place to eat and sleep the evening before. Preparing such places was an important dimension of the hospitality offered within cities and towns for hosting Passover pilgrims.<sup>7</sup> Just out of Jericho, after passing Herod's winter palace, their journey turned upward and westward almost immediately. They began climbing the Roman road that generally followed the course of the stream running down the Wadi Qilt. About eight miles up, they came to a depression that allowed the company to walk and ride on somewhat level ground for a couple of miles before the road turned upward again. Their trek from Jericho took them about sixteen miles.<sup>8</sup>

At the top of the climb up the east side of the Mount of Olives, stunning scenes came into view, both behind and ahead. Behind, Jesus and his parents could take in the vast sweep of the Jordan Valley, where they had been at the beginning of the day, with a glimpse of the northern part of the Dead Sea overshadowed by a shimmering haze of water vapor visible in the sunlight. In front, Jesus beheld the city of Jerusalem surrounded by a wall. But his eye, like everyone else's, would have been drawn to the bright, glistening temple facade covered with gold leaf<sup>9</sup> that perched high above the surrounding buildings. King Herod, called "the Great," had begun renovating the temple in 20–19 BC. Work on the temple and its grounds would continue for more than fifty years after Jesus' visit until they were completed in AD 62, representing more than eighty years of construction.

Before Jesus' visit, most of the visible parts of the renovation had been completed, including the massive foundations; the roomy southern extension of the temple platform that rested on high arches; the finely honed inner porticoes that ran along the western, southern, and eastern sides of the largest courtyard; the 150-foot high facade of the sanctuary, decorated by a gold overlay; and the great altar that stood in front of it.<sup>10</sup> When the pilgrims arrived at the city, it was a week before Passover.

Jesus, his parents, and the traveling party had arrived early not only to pay the half-shekel temple tax levied each year on all Jews<sup>11</sup> but

especially to participate in the purification activities required of those who came from afar. As they descended the west side of the mount, they headed first for a *mikvah* ritual bath as the first step in their cleansing. Then they looked for one of the priests who, holding a hyssop branch and standing outside the Golden (or Shushan) Gate that led to the temple courtyard, flicked water on the suppliants so that they could enter the temple grounds. Suspended in this water were the ashes from the sacrificial burning of an unblemished red heifer on the Mount of Olives for a sin offering for all worshipers (see Numbers 19:1–10).<sup>12</sup> Although an ancient debate was ongoing whether children needed to undergo this purification rite,<sup>13</sup> we safely assume that Jesus received the sprinkling. This was the first time he had undergone purification in this manner.

It is a matter of conjecture whether the traveling party approached the Golden Gate by crossing a causeway that ran across the Kidron Valley and had been built specifically for bringing the ashes of the red heifer to the temple. Why? Because of the lack of archaeological evidence. But the *Mishnah* affirms its existence, and many accept its claim.<sup>14</sup>

Following each party member's initial purification, he or she entered the city. Then, "on the seventh day after the sprinkling, the individual would then immerse himself [or herself] in the waters of the *mikvah*," completing the purification ceremonies.<sup>15</sup> *Mikvah* baths ringed the city. Jesus and his parents probably went to one close to where they were staying, a bath linked either to the pools that sat north of the city walls or to those outside the Golden Gate on the east side of the holy mount. They may even have gone to the one on the Mount of Olives where the priest who sacrificed the red heifer bathed himself.<sup>16</sup> There they cleansed themselves by walking down steps into the bath until the water reached their chins. At that point, they turned and ascended other steps to exit the purifying waters.<sup>17</sup>

The rule was that any Jew coming to Jerusalem from a distance farther than the town of Modiin—that is, "a like distance in any direction"—was considered unclean.<sup>18</sup> Modiin lay about seventeen miles west and north of the capital city inside the territory of Judea. Why were people from farther than Modiin considered unclean? Because all territories beyond the land of Israel, defined here as the area of Judea at a radius of seventeen miles from Jerusalem, were thought of as unclean, as among the "fathers of impurity" that transmitted uncleanness to those who resided in them.<sup>19</sup>

In the Old Testament, expressions such as "a polluted land" in Amos 7:17 and land considered "unclean" according to Joshua 22:19 refer to

land outside ancient Israel. In contrast, but tied closely to these ideas, we meet the expression “the Lord’s land” in Hosea 9:3 that feeds the notion that purity was attached to a defined region closely identified with the temple, as the next verse in Hosea’s record shows by speaking of “wine offerings [and] ... sacrifices” (Hosea 9:4). By Jesus’ day, people from regions outside Judea were required to come to celebrations in Jerusalem well in advance, as we are reminded in John 11:55 about those who traveled to the city at Passover time: “many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.”<sup>20</sup>

Where did they stay? They likely did not take up temporary residence in a hired room or on a rented rooftop in the city, though such places were available for lease at festival times, like the “loft” in the widow’s home where Elijah resided for a time (1 Kings 17:19, 23) and the “upper room” mentioned in the gospels as the place of the Last Supper (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12). It is possible that the family and others abode in the cave at the bottom of the Mount of Olives close to the Kidron brook and Gethsemane, introducing Jesus to the spot where it is likely that he stayed with his disciples during some nights of the last week of his life. For Luke recorded that Jesus “at night ... abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives” (Luke 21:37). Archaeology has disclosed that the place served as an olive press in the fall of the year.<sup>21</sup> The family may also have camped in the open outside the city walls with a lot of other people as was customary.<sup>22</sup> A third possibility is that, after a night’s rest outside the city walls from the long climb out of Jericho, the family sauntered to Bethlehem, a five-mile trip to the south, where they may have had property and certainly had relatives with whom they could stay.<sup>23</sup> After all, the families of Joseph and Mary originally hailed from Bethlehem.

That said, no hint exists that the family stayed in Bethlehem. And if Jesus was going to take in events in and around the temple, it made more sense that he and his parents camped out in the neighborhood of the city and its walls, passing inside in the mornings to experience events associated with the festival, retreating outside only at the going down of the sun, although the full moon at Passover gave ample light if departure from the city was delayed.

One of the curiosities about this trip was the presence of Mary, Jesus’ mother. For starters, throughout the account, she remains unnamed (see Luke 2:41–51). She, of course, is present in the term “his parents” that we find in Luke 2:41. More than that, she is three times called “his mother” (Luke 2:43, 48, 51). Still, her attendance on this long trip sparks curiosity. As a woman, especially one still in her child-bearing years,

she was under no obligation to go to Jerusalem for the Passover. The Mosaic law exempted women in general (for example, Exodus 34:23 says “all your men” and Deuteronomy 16:16 says “all thy males”), as did contemporary law.<sup>24</sup> Yet Luke wrote that “his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover,” employing the imperfect tense of the verb *poreuomai*, which bears the sense of repeated and customary action (Luke 2:41).<sup>25</sup>

In this context, the notion that Mary remained a perpetual virgin and therefore was able to go to Jerusalem each year will not do. We know of at least six other children born to her, four sons and no fewer than two daughters. It was Matthew who added a brief notice in his account of Jesus’ birth that Joseph “knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son” (Matthew 1:25), opening the door to identifying her children later in his narrative, as Mark did. These two gospels name Jesus’ four brothers: “James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas” plus “his sisters” (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). Importantly, the Greek nouns for “brother” and “sister” (*adelphos* and *adelphē*) occur in these passages, not the usual terms for relatives or cousins.

It seems that, in Luke’s presentation of the story of the Jerusalem trip, we gain a glimpse into Mary’s deep devotion, a devotion that impelled her to attend the temple on as regular a basis as possible, whether she was nurturing children or not. How she managed the care of her children during her absences is unclear. She evidently took them



Figure 2. The Great Altar, the entry into the Sanctuary, and the places of slaughter, skinning, and preparation of the animal parts to be sacrificed and consumed by the worshippers. The Bronze Sea stood between the Altar and the Sanctuary.

with her when they were old enough, as Jesus was on this occasion. Her time away from home for the Passover would have exceeded two weeks if we add her travel time to and from Jerusalem, her early arrival a week before the festival for purification, and her observance of at least the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread before returning home, a typical stay for pilgrims.<sup>26</sup> The feast of Unleavened Bread lasted another seven days beyond the Passover celebration (see Exodus 23:15; 34:18; Leviticus 23:5–8; etc.), though worshipers often did not stay in the city that long.<sup>27</sup> It also appears that she intended to be in the temple with her son when he experienced Passover events there for the first time.

On the morning after the ritual purification by sprinkling, before sunrise when the temple gates were opened,<sup>28</sup> Jesus' family likely joined others in their traveling company and entered the temple grounds that stretched a quarter of a mile from north to south. The throngs that had come long distances presented a cacophony of languages in addition to the familiar Aramaic of natives (compare Acts 2:4–11). What would have caught everyone's attention were the three trumpet blasts at the opening of the gates, particularly the Nicanor Gate that connected the Court of Women to the Court of the Israelites.<sup>29</sup> The two priests who blew the trumpets stood facing eastward between the great altar and the holy sanctuary with a view into the Court of Women through the Nicanor Gate. The trumpeters played three short notes, then a series of



*Figure 3. The Court of Women and Nicanor Gate. All Jews were welcome inside the Court of Women whereas only men and boys were allowed to step through the gate into the narrow Court of the Israelites.*



eight quickly tongued sounds, and lastly the three notes again.<sup>30</sup> These tones Jesus was hearing for the first time.

But those were not the only musical sounds that reached his ear that morning. About sunrise,<sup>31</sup> after the offering of the incense and the blessing of the people by the five priests involved in the incense service,<sup>32</sup> when the morning sacrificial service began with the sacrifice of a year-old ram and the pouring of wine at the base of the great altar for a drink offering (see Exodus 29:38–44; Numbers 28:3–7),<sup>33</sup> the all-male Levitical choir began to sing as they stood on the fifteen steps that led up through the Nicanor Gate. These men faced eastward, looking into the Court of Women and away from the great altar and the tall facade of the sanctuary.<sup>34</sup> By that moment, the early sun had begun to touch the facade's golden face. As the smoke of the whole burnt offering rose into the open sky, at a cue, this mens choir sang the set psalm for the day.<sup>35</sup> Their rich, deep voices made an impression on all who heard them sing these well-known lines. A third of the way through the psalm, the choir stopped singing, the two priests again blew three sounds from their trumpets, and the gathered worshipers prostrated themselves onto the temple flag stones "in adoration." The singing resumed, voicing the next third of the psalm, followed by three trumpet blasts from the priests and another prostrating of the people.<sup>36</sup> After that, the choir finished singing the psalm, ending the service.<sup>37</sup> All these rites Jesus was witnessing for the first time, taking in their spiritual beauty.

Surely, during the days preceding the Passover, Jesus came into the temple and witnessed this grand, sacred pageant of singing and trumpet playing and offering of sacrifice, whether in the morning or the afternoon during a repeat of the morning sacrifice (see Exodus 29:41; Numbers 28:8; 2 Chronicles 31:3).<sup>38</sup> For just beyond the Nicanor Gate, on its west side, was a space enclosed by a low barrier about twenty inches (or a cubit) high. There any Jewish male could stand and listen to and watch what was happening in the sacred area next to the altar and in front of the temple facade.<sup>39</sup> A person could see the place of slaughter of the sacrificial animals; the place of hanging the carcasses before preparing them for skinning and burning; the place of the drain that took the sacrificial blood and the wine of libations into the Kidron Valley far from the temple walls; the place of the huge bronze basin where priests washed their hands and feet; the place where the priests kept bowls for catching the blood of sacrificial animals to sprinkle at the base of the altar below its red line; and the place where three priests began to climb



*Figure 4. The Nicanor Gate with its fifteen steps on which stood the Levitical Choir when it sang as the Temple was opened.*

the stairs into the sanctuary, one of whom, chosen by lot, would light the incense.<sup>40</sup> All these holy actions were new to the youthful Jesus.

Indeed, it was with new friends made during the journey to Jerusalem that Jesus explored both the temple and the city. After all, they had almost ten days on site. The big prize for youthful visitors, of course, was the temple. To be sure, the majestic beauty of the place was impressive during their first visits with their parents. But what captured the most interest were the activities associated with sacred sacrifices. Entering one of the five gates into the extensive temple area,<sup>41</sup> they made for the gate that led into the Court of Women, called the Beautiful Gate (see Acts 3:2, 10).<sup>42</sup> In my mind's eye, I see them passing the stone signs that warned Gentiles from going farther<sup>43</sup> and the phalanx of beggars who were stationed next to the Beautiful Gate (see Acts 3:2–9). Then they almost raced as they strode toward the fifteen steps that took them up to the Nicanor Gate.<sup>44</sup> Here the girls in the group stopped, being allowed to observe what was happening only from the east side or outside of the gate. It was from here, presumably, that Mary had witnessed the sacrifice of the two birds for her cleansing a dozen years before (see Luke 2:22–24). Stepping through this gate, the boys found themselves in the small, rectangular enclosure framed by the low barrier where the curious could stand and watch what was happening at the great altar and beyond. This area was called the Court of the Israelites.<sup>45</sup>

What they experienced was wondrous and fascinating. It was the smell that assaulted their noses first, a combination of blood and urine

and dung. The burning of a sacrificial animal's dung, of course, was a part of certain temple offerings (see Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:10–11; 8:17; etc.). But the number of sacrificial offerings that Passover worshipers from outside Judea had brought to the temple was enormous because it was the one time in the year that they would be able to offer a sacrifice.<sup>46</sup> And animals, when slain, immediately lost control and their bodies allowed the discharge of urine and dung, adding a distinctive tang to the pervasive smell of blood.

When the boys stepped inside the gate, almost directly in front of them (but slightly to the left) rose the great altar, the top of which was fifteen feet above their heads.<sup>47</sup> From where they stood, they could see the officiating priests, chosen that morning by lot, walk about both on the top of the altar and on the twenty-inch wide platform, called “the circuit,” that ran around the top of the square altar and that allowed them to tend to the fires and sacrifices — not only those required of them but also those required of the gathered throng.<sup>48</sup> Farther to their left and south they could see the ramp that led to the top of the altar.<sup>49</sup> Both the ramp and altar itself were undergirded by uncut stones (see Exodus 20:25) which had been cleansed of blood in anticipation of the Passover celebration.<sup>50</sup> Directly to their left was the large door that led into the Chamber of Hewn Stone.<sup>51</sup> This large room was divided into two parts. In the part closest to the sanctuary, priests were physically examined for blemishes that would disqualify them from temple duties and lots were drawn daily to determine who would perform certain acts that day.<sup>52</sup> In the other part sat the Sanhedrin from whose numbers would come “the doctors” who would listen to and interact with Jesus in coming days (see Luke 2:46).<sup>53</sup>

Directly in front of them they could see the twelve-step staircase that led up to the golden doors of the sanctuary where the priests who had to do with the incense service, also chosen by lot that morning, ascended to enter the sacred enclosure that stood before the temple's veil.<sup>54</sup> Two groups of priests were chosen, one for the morning incense lighting and one for the afternoon service. It seems certain that the time of day when Zacharias lit the incense was afternoon because of the gathered crowd (see Luke 1:21). What Jesus and his friends could not see looking that direction was the large bronze basin filled with water. The altar blocked their view.<sup>55</sup> This basin was said to be lifted into place every morning by a giant pulley, the noise from which was said to be heard in Jericho and signaled that the service of the daily sacrifice would commence.<sup>56</sup> In the

basin the priests rinsed their hands and feet in acts of purification (see Exodus 30:17–21).

To their right the group could see the open area dotted with twenty-four metal rings anchored in the flag stones where sacrificial animals were tied up. Here a priest chosen by lot brought two yearling rams that were to be slain, one at the time of the morning sacrifice and one at the time of the evening (see Leviticus 1:11). The blood of the rams was caught in a special gold basin. Next to these rings stood eight upright pillars on top of which were affixed cedar wood blocks that held iron hooks. Onto these hooks the carcasses were hung when being skinned and flayed. While suspended from these hooks, the parts of the animal that would be burned on the altar were cut off by the first priest and handed to other priests to be carried to the top of the altar. The parts of the animal that would go respectively to the priests and to the worshipers, of course, were cut off here. Nearby sat marble tables for washing the inward parts of the carcass (see Leviticus 1:13).<sup>57</sup>

Because these young people were all raised in a society that daily dealt with animals and because they had seen and participated in the slaughter of animals for food and leather products, they were not squeamish about what was occurring in front of them. The priest who was assigned to perform the ritual slaying of the sacrificial ram for one of the twice-daily offerings brought the yearling to the rings where, after tying it up, saw to the butchering of the animal and hanging it on one of the hooks where he expertly cut off parts of the body and gave them to other priests who were to carry them to the altar for burning.<sup>58</sup> The priest who had caught the blood carried the filled basin to the different corners of the altar where he sprinkled the sides with blood below the red line before pouring out the excess at the southwest corner of the altar where it drained down a long pipe into the Kidron Valley.<sup>59</sup> Because Jesus and his friends were standing on the east side of the great altar, they could not see the ritual pouring of the blood that drained away because it was hidden by the ramp where it connected to the south side of the altar. But they surely caught sight of the priest's head moving about as he sprinkled the southwest corner of the altar with the ram's blood.

Other explorations, naturally, would have taken them outside the temple walls to the Antonia Fortress perched outside the temple area at its northwest corner. This imposing building and the surrounding area were decidedly different from the rest of the city, for it was a place frequented by Gentiles, particularly the soldiers stationed in the fortress. Years later, in this area, a disabled Jewish man would come seeking relief from his



*Figure 5. The Antonia Fortress looking from the north. Down the hill to the left (eastward) was the Pool of Bethesda and its accompanying baths where Jesus came upon the Jewish man who had been ill for thirty-eight years, and healed him (John 5).*

decades-long illness at the pool of Bethesda and its accompanying baths. Here Jesus would find him, probably surrounded by a number of sick Gentiles, and grant him unexpected relief (see John 5:1–16).

Another attractive place to visit consisted of the Citadel, renovated into the late King Herod's three towers and palace that stood side by side in the northwest corner of the city.<sup>60</sup> (One of the towers still stands inside Jerusalem's Old City at Jaffa Gate, known as David's Tower.<sup>61</sup>) At that Passover season, none of the youths could get inside the series of buildings because they were used for official purposes. Just over two decades from this moment, Jesus would be dragged into "the hall of judgment," or *Praetorium* (John 18:28), within Herod's palace (where Pilate was in temporary residence) and be subjected to the cruelty of a farcical trial and a scourging before being led away to his crucifixion.<sup>62</sup>

A third spot of high interest was the long stair case that ran from the stone platform at the south end of the temple grounds down to the Hulda Gates. From these gates the youths could explore the lower city as far down as the pool of Siloam. Almost two decades later, Jesus would exit these gates with his disciples and come upon a man born blind. In an act of generosity, Jesus would give this man his sight by asking him to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam and thereby add an important witness to the power of his divine mission (see John 9:1–7).



*Figure 6. The lit interior of the staircase that led down from the temple area to the Hulda Gates, pictured here, where Jesus came upon the man born blind and healed him (John 9).*

Perhaps with his parents, Jesus wandered the main commercial road in the city that ran outside the temple's massive western wall. Sitting in the Tyropean Valley were shops and kiosks and animal pens that offered all sorts of wares for local citizens and visitors alike, including animals for sacrifice.<sup>63</sup> Fewer than twenty years later, Jesus would stand on the southwest corner of the temple wall and be tempted by the devil to jump onto that busy street in an act guaranteed to draw public attention to his divine powers (see Matthew 4:5–7; Luke 4:9–12).<sup>64</sup> As we know, he rejected this showy approach to his messiahship.

### **The Passover Preparations and Celebration**

Finally the long-awaited day arrived, the eve of Passover. Although the holiday rested on an ancient family experience in Egypt, the celebration was not considered complete without a number of others sharing the ceremony.<sup>65</sup> Hence, we envision Jesus and his parents joining a group consisting of about ten persons from their traveling company for the ritual and meal. This was the round number of celebrants per group.<sup>66</sup> According to Jewish law, the meal was to begin after sundown, the only such food law of its kind.<sup>67</sup> Otherwise, people customarily ate their main meal about two o'clock in the afternoon. For eating the Passover, they reclined.<sup>68</sup>

Although the shopping for the meal had taken place earlier in the week, acquiring and preparing the lamb for the Passover meal occurred

during the daylight hours before the evening feast. The date in the Jewish calendar was the fourteenth day of Nissan. Customarily, one or two persons from a celebrating group would go to the temple to purchase a lamb and then remain for the ritual slaughter.<sup>69</sup> We cannot be certain that Joseph and Jesus were the ones from their group who went to the temple that afternoon to purchase and sacrifice a lamb. But it is a reasonable possibility that they did. After all, Jesus may well have been the youngest in the group of pilgrims and the adults would have wanted him to experience the wonders of going to the temple on that occasion. Keeping this in mind, we see Joseph and Jesus walking toward the temple, seeing shop keepers closing their businesses which they were allowed to keep open until early afternoon, an unusual occurrence because in Galilee all shops remained closed on the day before Passover.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, vendors inside the temple grounds were still doing a brisk business during the early afternoon before the celebration,<sup>71</sup> an activity that Jesus would challenge two decades later (see Matthew 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–46; John 2:13–17). Importantly, all Passover lambs consumed within the city and its environs had to be dealt with at the temple because they were considered sacrifices (see Exodus 12:27; 34:25; Numbers 9:7, 13).<sup>72</sup>

In this light, after purchasing a lamb born just days or weeks before the Passover,<sup>73</sup> Joseph and Jesus carried it up through the Nicanor Gate where they joined approximately 6,000 other persons crammed into the narrow Court of the Israelites.<sup>74</sup> These people had also come to sacrifice lambs for the feast.<sup>75</sup> It was now about three o'clock, the usual time of the evening sacrifice which, because of the Passover, had been moved to a time one hour earlier.<sup>76</sup>

When the court was full of men and boys, the Nicanor Gate was closed. In fact, three groups of 6,000 men and boys would be allowed into this space during the afternoon, one group after the other.<sup>77</sup> All brought lambs and they were allowed to slay their own animals.<sup>78</sup> People went briskly to the twenty-four rings where they slew the lambs.<sup>79</sup> When space allowed and it was their turn, Joseph and Jesus quickly took their lamb, cut its throat, and then were assisted by a priest who caught the blood in a gold or silver basin. A double line of priests passed these basins to other priests who, standing next to the altar, splashed the blood against the bottom course of stones where it would run into the drain on the southwest corner.<sup>80</sup> Along with the other worshipers, they hung the lamb's carcass on one of the available hooks nearby and, because they had done this before, deftly cut off the lamb's hide.<sup>81</sup> Later they gave the

hide to the owner of the space where their group was setting up to eat the Passover meal. Those hides, sometimes demanded by the owner, were the payment for the rent, as were the vessels used for the supper itself.<sup>82</sup> The body parts to be burned on the great altar were left behind with the priests (see Leviticus 3:3–4).<sup>83</sup>

During all this frantic activity of slaughtering 6,000 lambs in less than an hour, the Levite choir, with instrumental accompaniment, began to sing the Hallel psalms, numbers 113 through 118 in the Bible. The gathered men and boys joined the singing by repeating the first line of each psalm and by responding to certain lines in the psalms by singing or saying Hallelujah.<sup>84</sup> During the stay of the first group inside the enclosure, the choir and gathered worshipers would try to sing all six psalms. Tradition has it that during the afternoon activities the choir would sing the psalms completely twice and partially a third time.<sup>85</sup>

If Joseph and Jesus were in the first group, they would have left through the Nicanor Gate as soon as they finished so that the next group could enter. The second and third groups were waiting on the *hel* of the temple, a raised platform that surrounded the sanctuary building on the south, west, and north.<sup>86</sup> A similar scene ensued with the second group. 6,000 or so worshipers carrying lambs piled into the narrow Court of the Israelites, awaiting their opportunity to prepare their sacrificial animals. As each of the 6,000 took their turns, the Levitical choir began to sing again the six Hallel psalms, with the gathered men and boys adding their voices. The music was heard all over the city and outside the walls, adding a warm, sacred dimension to the Passover that was about to begin.

Ovens for roasting lambs had been set up all over the city.<sup>87</sup> We can imagine Joseph and Jesus hurrying to an oven close to the rented place where they were to enjoy the Passover service and meal with their group. Carefully threading the carcass onto a pomegranate-wood skewer—not a metal one—they suspended the lamb over the coals and fire of the oven.<sup>88</sup> Nothing was to touch the cooking lamb. It was to remain pure, undefiled by any external contact, even water. This concept of a pure sacrifice was to undergird the surrender of the Savior to his own sacrificial death after he shared the Passover lamb with his beloved disciples more than two decades later.<sup>89</sup> At this moment, we suspect, the women of the party, including Mary, became involved in seeing that the lamb was cooked properly. We can infer a similar scene more than twenty years later, after Jesus assigned Peter and John to make preparations for Jesus' last Passover meal (see Luke 22:8). In that case, the women disciples who



had followed Jesus from Galilee must have taken charge of the meal, certainly before the roasting of the lamb.<sup>90</sup>

### **The Passover Service and Meal**

In accord with Jewish law, the group of ten or so gathered after sundown (see Leviticus 23:5, “at even”). No one had eaten since the evening sacrifice, that is, since about two o’clock that afternoon.<sup>91</sup> With Mary in the mix, the women had prepared the meal with its symbolic foods that would tie the minds and hearts of the participants back to their forebears’ Exodus from Egypt. The idea was that “a man [or woman] must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt.”<sup>92</sup> The members of the party were under obligation to end the service and meal by midnight. Beginning at that late hour, the remaining pieces of the Passover meal were thought to make a person’s hands ritually unclean.<sup>93</sup>

Before the meal was cooked and served, the head of the house or, in this case, the main host for the group, with a lit candle, undertook a search of the place where the meal was to be prepared and eaten. He was looking for anything that might have leaven or yeast in it. The rule was that “whatsoever is made from any kind of grain must be removed at Passover.”<sup>94</sup> In homes, this search took place the evening before the feast. But it could also occur the next morning<sup>95</sup> which must have been the case in Jerusalem because the group was in a rented facility. Because the earliest Israelites baked unleavened bread so that they could leave quickly, all subsequent generations made bread without leaven so that it could not rise (see Exodus 12:8, 14–15).

Around a low table the guests reclined. Why? Because reclining was said to be the dining position of a free person.<sup>96</sup> During the original Passover, when the Hebrew slaves were still in Egypt, they prepared the meal to be eaten “in haste” because their departure into freedom was imminent (see Exodus 12:11; Deuteronomy 16:3). In later times, the meal was eaten at a more leisurely pace.

Onto the table the women placed platters with the food and the cups or mugs for each person for the four cups of wine, specifically red wine, that were to be served during the festivities. Even the poorest person was to receive four cups of wine. In a basket or on a platter sat three loaves of the unleavened bread, prepared and cooked fresh that day by three women, certainly including Mary.<sup>97</sup> The bread was wrapped in a piece of fabric. It was this bread that Jesus would transform into an emblem of his own sacrificial death during his last supper on earth (see 1 Corinthians 11:23–24).

The earliest instructions about the foods to be eaten during the Passover meal came from the Lord in Egypt and were simple: "They shall eat the flesh [of the lamb] in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs" (Exodus 12:8). To blunt the bitterness of the herbs, another dish called *haroseth* was added to the table. The *haroseth* was a concoction of "nuts and fruit pounded together and mixed with vinegar."<sup>98</sup> Celebrants also added uncooked food items like "lettuce, chicory, pepperwort, snakeroot, and dandelion" to the table.<sup>99</sup> We can easily imagine such dishes spread out on the table before the reclining participants. The only foods that had been cooked, that had received heat, were the lamb and the unleavened bread. All else was fresh or dried. In addition, no milk product was introduced into the meal.

Each participant was to receive four cups of wine, mixed with water.<sup>100</sup> The wine was poured throughout the evening at fixed times during the meal. The first cup came quickly, for with it the supper began. The host held his cup in his hand and offered words of thanks that had come to him and the others through tradition. We hear some of his words: "Blessed art thou, Jehovah our God, King of the Universe, who hast created the fruit of the vine. . . . Blessed art thou, Jehovah, King of the Universe, who has preserved us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season!" Then all at the table drank the first cup and rinsed their hands.<sup>101</sup> Of course, Jesus had participated in the Passover service and its meal while growing up in Nazareth. Here, in the Holy City, he reclined with new acquaintances. There the head of the house was Joseph; here it was possibly someone else. Here the fresh, shared feeling of fellowship and comradeship with total strangers surely put a stamp on his perceptions of others as people who, with him, shared a long history of God's involvement in their lives. But that is not the whole story.

It was likely this first cup that, later, Jesus asked his disciples to share with one another during their Last Supper together, an act far in the future that presented to him and the disciples an evening of unity and common purpose. On that occasion, we read, he "took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves" (Luke 22:17). Each disciple, of course, had his own cup sitting on the table in front of him. So it was an unusual request that they all share a single cup, each drinking from it, an act that underscored their shared fellowship as members of the Twelve. It would be the third cup of wine, "the cup after supper," that Jesus would turn into the pointer to his own coming suffering (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25, "when he had supped").<sup>102</sup>

All this lay two decades in the future. At this moment, the youthful Jesus saw Joseph in a new light. In Jerusalem, Joseph was working cooperatively with others to make the Passover celebration a happy occasion. Back home, it was mainly Joseph's responsibility to make foods ready for the Passover and, away from the temple, to take care of the lamb by the time-honored traditions inherited from his own family. By contrast, in Jerusalem sat a temple organization that kept all preparations running in a specific channel, making needed foods available in the markets, placing ovens throughout the city, and providing lambs for sale both inside and outside the temple area.

And his mother? She shown in a new light too. Back home she was the main person to see that the unwanted leaven was no longer in her home, beginning to expel it weeks before, and to bring in the needed condiments for the meal. In the city, she joined her efforts and skills with those of other women. Dignified, bright, nurturing, she added a shine to what was happening and lent a spirit of deepened devotion to the other women in the group. With her, they shopped in the markets of the city, looking for spices and other seasonings that she and they had rarely encountered in rural Galilee, let alone been able to purchase. From her, they took a sweet veneration for God that was both sure on its feet and unwavering in its intent.

Everyone having rinsed and dried their hands, the women now brought all the food and laid it out on the table in their containers. The host of the feast then took a sprig of the bitter herbs and dipped it in a dish of salt water. He took a bite, then offered the herbs and salt water to the other guests. As soon as they partook, all the foods on the table were whisked away, likely by the women and older children.<sup>103</sup> The second cup of wine was poured but remained untouched on the table.

Next came one of the more important events of the evening. Scripture enjoins the father to impress on everyone the importance of God's rescue of their ancestors from Egypt: "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way" (Deuteronomy 6:7). At Passover, this teaching was to be offered to the youngest child as a reminder to all. According to custom, the child was to ask: "Why is this night different from other nights?"<sup>104</sup> If no younger child was a part of the group, then surely Jesus was invited to ask the question of the meal's host, whether that host was Joseph or another man. Jesus had done this before, but not in the presence of strangers.

What the adult said in response to the question was taken directly from the book of Deuteronomy and originally formed the ceremonial words of bringing an offering of first fruits to the sanctuary (see Deuteronomy 26:1–4). The adult recited these lines: “A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous” (Deuteronomy 26:5, RSV). To this point, the host of the meal was speaking about a common ancestor to those in the room. Now the language switched and made everyone present into a person living in Egypt and witnessing the unspeakable experience of the Exodus: “And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to the Lord the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Deuteronomy 26:6–9, RSV). What no one in the room knew was the fact that the youthful Jesus reclining in their midst was the architect of that long-ago Exodus experience of their forebears. In this little group was sitting the God of Abraham, the God of Moses.

This interaction between an adult and a child preceded the return of the dishes to the table. Thereupon, the host took up the explanation of the meaning of three things — the Passover lamb, the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread — ending with the invitation, “let us say before [God] the *Hallelujah*,” therewith inviting all to sing together the first of the two Hallel psalms, numbers 113 and 114.<sup>105</sup> At the close of the singing, all drank the second cup of wine. Rinsing their hands a second time, all in the group watched the host break the first of the unleavened bread loaves and utter a prayer of thanksgiving.<sup>106</sup> Each person in the group now received a sandwich of sorts made up of two pieces of unleavened bread with bitter herbs stuffed between them and dipped in the *haroseth*, the mixture of nuts and fruit. It was this sandwich, or “sop,” that Jesus would give to Judas on that fateful night more than twenty years in the future before Judas “went immediately out” into the “night” (John 13:30). As a result, Judas did not partake of the Passover lamb, the principal emblem of God’s deliverance, with his fellow members of the Twelve that evening.<sup>107</sup>

All in the youthful Jesus’ group had by now received a taste of everything except the lamb itself. The gathered guests turned their attention to consuming the meat of the lamb. It was the only meat of the

meal. By Jesus' day, Jews had come to allow the *Aphikomen*, a dessert-like sweet that included the unleavened bread as one of its parts. When an adult, Jesus took the unleavened bread from this part of the meal and turned it into the substance of his own sacrifice which lay only a few hours from that moment: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; also 1 Corinthians 11:24).<sup>108</sup>

The third cup of wine followed the eating of the *Aphikomen*, the dessert. In this case, too, Jesus would make the third cup into a symbol of remembrance, this time of his blood: "After the same manner also he took the cup, *when he had supped*, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25, emphasis added; also Luke 22:20).<sup>109</sup> As if to underscore the messianic links to the third cup, worshipers then opened the door to allow the great forerunner, the prophet Elijah, into the room.<sup>110</sup>

The fourth cup was poured and the group members joined their voices in singing the remaining Hallel psalms, numbers 115 through 118. After the singing, they all drank the last cup of wine together, bringing the celebration to a close. As noted earlier, at midnight, the elements of the meal would render a person's hands ritually unclean and were to be burned the next day.<sup>111</sup> Everyone in the group made their way out of the city to the place of their respective camp sites.

### The "Father's Business"

It is impossible to say where Jesus stayed when his parents left town with "the company" and he remained three days in and around the city and temple. Whether he accepted an invitation of a family friend or whether he slept not far from his parent's encampment we do not know. A young teenager can be very resourceful in how he or she solves such challenges. But remain behind he did, evidently with a source of food and drink and some sort of sleeping blanket. Nights at this time of year could be "cold," as John's gospel reminds us when recounting the story of Peter's denial, also at Passover time (John 18:18).

We learn from Luke's report that Joseph and Mary traveled "a day's journey" before they missed Jesus (Luke 2:44), probably as far as Jericho. From this notice we can surmise that the encampment area that Jesus' parents shared with others outside the walls of Jerusalem was rather extensive and that Jesus was not sleeping close to them during the last



*Figure 7. The Chamber of Hewn Stone is the large building sitting on the right (east) atop the hel, the platform that ran around the south (shown here), west and north sides of the inner temple complex. Presumably, it was on the hel, just outside the Chamber of Hewn Stone, that Jesus was meeting with the Jewish savants when Mary and Joseph found him (Luke 2:43–51).*

nights of their stay. It was at their first stop that “they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance,” expecting to find him with playmates. Luke recorded that “they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him” (Luke 2:45), doubtless retracing their steps through much of the night.

Where they looked and how they missed him for “three days” we are not told. Evidently, he was not spending his nights in or near the city at their former encampment, for they surely would have looked there. They may have spent part of the time in Bethlehem where they had relatives. But that is unlikely. Because the temporal expression “after three days” is ambiguous, it is possible to understand that Joseph and Mary searched for Jesus all that time. It is also possible, even preferable, that they traveled away from Jerusalem the first day, returned to the city the second day, and found him on the third.<sup>112</sup>

Christian art has regularly portrayed Jesus and his questioners sitting under a roof of sorts, as if he and they were under one of the porticos that ran along the west, south, or east sides of the large temple area. The artists may also have had in mind that the meeting which Joseph and Mary stumbled upon was in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, the regular meeting place of the Sanhedrin.<sup>113</sup> For “the doctors” noted by Luke were likely Pharisaic members of the Sanhedrin noted for their learning. The Sadducee members rarely bore any such reputation.<sup>114</sup> But it is unlikely

that Jesus was meeting with this impressive group of men inside the space dedicated to the official business of the Sanhedrin. Rather, a public space sits just outside the south door of this chamber. It was called the *hel*, and was a long, flat, stone terrace that ran along the outside of the south, west and north walls that surrounded the sanctuary.<sup>115</sup> It was also open to the sky. Here, on the south *hel*, the second and third groups of worshipers gathered on the afternoon before the feast to await their turn to prepare their Passover lambs for roasting.

Because the south door of the Chamber of Hewn Stone opened onto this large surface, the *hel* appears to be the most natural place for Jesus to have met members of the Sanhedrin and to have engaged them in conversation.<sup>116</sup> After all, it was customary for Sanhedrin members to teach Passover visitors from the scriptures on this terrace.<sup>117</sup> Open and accessible, this space is the most likely place where Joseph and Mary spotted Jesus who was among Sanhedrin members “both hearing them, and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). The Joseph Smith Translation of this passage indicates that the conversation was not one way, with Jesus as the only learner. Rather, “the doctors ... were hearing him, and asking him questions” (JST Luke 2:46). This change helps us to understand Luke’s note that “all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47).

Soon after the moment of discovery, after his parents’ astonishment had passed, apparently Jesus approached them so that they did not have to make their way through the gathered crowd. One hears a bit of pique in Mary’s voice when she whispered loudly, “Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing” (Luke 2:48). With a firmness that goes beyond his youth, Jesus responded, “How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). The expression “about my Father’s business” poses problems and has led some interpreters to understand the meaning to be “in my Father’s house” or “among my Father’s people.”<sup>118</sup> The two elements to appreciate in this scene are the frightful worry expressed by Mary at not knowing where her son was and the divinely directed need of Jesus to be in the temple whether engaged in his Father’s affairs or being among his Father’s people. In any event, Mary and Joseph drew blanks. For, as Luke recounted, “they understood not the saying which [Jesus] spake unto them” (Luke 2:50).

After the obviously tense moment wherein both Mary and Jesus expressed themselves, Jesus remained the obedient son, “and went down with them, and came to Nazareth.” The three of them must have joined

another traveling company that was leaving in the middle of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. From this point on, the young Jesus “was subject unto them” (Luke 2:51).

But he had made an impression on his parents, particularly his mother. For, as Luke summarized, “his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.” Yet Jesus’ words or “sayings” were not the only parts of their shared experience to savor. Jesus the youth had gone to the temple for the first time as an excited and impressionable twelve-year-old to witness the grand moments associated with the Passover as they were conducted in the city. By the time he departed, he had taken up residence as a teacher of sorts inside the temple grounds and next to the Chamber of Hewn Stone where significant decisions about religious life were made for all Jews. Moreover, and more importantly, he had taken up residence close to the sanctuary itself. Adding them together, it becomes clear that he had made the heart of the temple his base of operations. He had made it into his “house” — specifically, as he called it in a later scene, a “house of prayer” (Mark 11:17, quoting Isaiah 56:7).

### Acknowledgments

Our deep appreciation to Daniel Smith for providing the images of the temple used in this chapter. Figure 2 is from the model of the late Alec Garrard, as published in William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon’s Temple: Myth and History* (London, England: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 46.

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## Notes

- 1 A person might think that recreating events of Jesus' two-week visit to Jerusalem as a youth would be full of likelihoods and possibilities rather than resting on real experiences and known procedures. And that person could point to grounds for such a view. After all, Luke's account is spare and with little detail. However, much is known about the city in that era as well as about the temple and its sacred rites. Much is known about how pilgrims behaved at the Passover and about how they celebrated that special occasion. Further, enough hints seep out of Luke's report to make sense of activities that drew the young Jesus' attention.

This study is not like Robert Graves' *King Jesus* which was openly a work of historical fiction, though he wrote that he took "more than ordinary pains to verify [Jesus'] historical background" (420). In my mind, the present study is much more and comes tantalizingly closer to the truth insofar as it can be grasped.

- 2 My assumption is that, after Jesus' infancy (see Luke 2:22), his first visit to the Jerusalem Temple took place "when he was twelve years old" (Luke 2:42). Mary and Joseph accompanied him, though Mary remains unnamed in the narrative (see Luke 2:43, 48, 51).
- 3 Chaim Richman, *The Holy Temple of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1997), 71, 74.
- 4 Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 203.
- 5 Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "ληστής," *TDNT*, 4:261; Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 203.
- 6 Robert H. Stein, Luke, *The New American Commentary*, vol. 24 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 121.
- 7 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 71.
- 8 Ehud Netzer, "Jericho," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:737.

- 9 Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.5.4, 5.5.6 (§§208–10, 222–23).
- 10 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 15.9.1–7 (§§380–425); *Jewish War*, 15.5.5 (§221); Carol Meyers, “Temple, Jerusalem,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6:364–65.
- 11 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 71.
- 12 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 30–31, 71; Leen Ritmeyer, *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 106–8.
- 13 *Mishnah Parah*, 1:4.
- 14 *Mishnah Parah*, 1:6; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, the illustrations on 67, 73; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 71; Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, 108, the illustration on 112.
- 15 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 31, emphasis in the original; see *Mishnah Pesahim*, 8:8.
- 16 *Mishnah Parah*, 1:7; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 71; Dan Bahat with Chaim T. Rubinstein, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, transl. by Shlomo Ketko (Jerusalem: Carta, 1996), 55, 57; Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple in the Time of Christ* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2002), 71.
- 17 Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, illustration on 347.
- 18 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 9.1–2.
- 19 Christine Hayes, “Purity and Impurity, Ritual,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2d ed., 22 vols. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA in association with the Keter Pub. House, 2007), 16:752–53.
- 20 Hayes, “Purity and Impurity,” 16:753, 754; Ronny Reich, “Ritual Baths,” in Eric M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4:430–31.
- 21 John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It: Archaeology as Evidence* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 130–31; Joan E. Taylor, “The Garden of Gethsemane: Not the Place of Jesus’ Arrest,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 21 (July–August 1995): 26–35, 62.
- 22 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 17.9.3 (§217).

- 23 S. Kent Brown, *The Testimony of Luke* (Provo: BYU Studies, 2015), 136–37, 139–40.
- 24 *Mishnah Hagigah* 1:1 reads that “All are subject to the command to appear [at such festivals] excepting ... women.”
- 25 Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §§325, 327. The idea the Mary would have been expected to go with her family is held by a few scholars: I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text, The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 126; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 155, footnote 6.
- 26 Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 127.
- 27 *Mishnah Pesahim* 9:5; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 50.
- 28 *Mishnah Yoma*, 3:1; *Mishnah Middoth*, 1:3.
- 29 *Mishnah Middoth*, 1:4.
- 30 *Mishnah Sukkah*, 5:5; Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, reprint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 76–77; Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Matthew Black, rev. ed. 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1973–87), 2:307.
- 31 Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:300.
- 32 *Mishnah Tamid*, 5:1; Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:305–7; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 43, illustrations on 22, 23, 43.
- 33 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 3.10.1 (§237); *Mishnah Tamid*, 3:7; 4:1.
- 34 *Mishnah Middoth*, 2:5; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, the illustrations on 14–15, 44–45; Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, illustrations on 348, 349; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 29, 68, points out that the Levite choir stood on the platform that held the great altar for some services.
- 35 *Mishnah Tamid*, 7:4; Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:303; Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 45.

- 36 *Mishnah Tamid*, 7:3; Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:303, 307.
- 37 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 77; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 45.
- 38 Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:300.
- 39 Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.8 (§104); Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:296; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 19, and the illustration on 18.
- 40 *Mishnah Tamid*, 3:9–4:2; *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:1; Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:299, 305–6; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 44; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 35, 39.
- 41 *Mishnah Middoth*, 1:3.
- 42 Jerry A. Pattengale, “Beautiful Gate,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1:631–32.
- 43 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 15.9.5 (§417); *Jewish War*, 5.5.2 (§194).
- 44 Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.5.3 (§206); *Mishnah Middoth*, 2:5; *Mishnah Sukkah* 5:4.
- 45 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 19, and the illustrations on 18 and 51.
- 46 Males were obliged to come to the sanctuary three times during the year (see Exodus 23:14–17; 34:22–23; Deuteronomy 16:16). But in practice most came to Jerusalem once, to the Passover celebration (Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 74).
- 47 Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.5.6 (§225), reports that the base of the altar was 50 cubits by 50 cubits, with a height of fifteen cubits or approximately twenty-two feet from the temple floor. But the base measurements are too large (see Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 39). *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:1, does not give a height for the altar but records that its base dimensions were 32 cubits by 32 cubits, a better fit for the area available between the Nicanor Gate and the steps leading up into the sanctuary.
- 48 *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:1; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 39.

- 49 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 16–17, offers an illustration of the altar and its ramp as do Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 18, 51.
- 50 Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.5.6 (§225); *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:4; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 39.
- 51 *Mishnah Middoth*, 5:4; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 13, 20.
- 52 *Mishnah Middoth*, 5:4; *Mishnah Tamid*, 2:5–3:1; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 20, 24; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 37.
- 53 *Mishnah Middoth*, 5:4; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 20, the sketch on 13.
- 54 Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.5.4 (§207); *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:6.
- 55 *Mishnah Tamid*, 1:4–2:1; illustrations are found in Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 17–18.
- 56 *Mishnah Yoma*, 3:10; *Mishnah Tamid*, 1:4; 3:8; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 23–24; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 37–38.
- 57 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:9; *Mishnah Shekalim*, 6:4; *Mishnah Tamid*, 3:5; *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:5; Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People*, 2:305; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 24; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 37, 38.
- 58 *Mishnah Tamid*, 4:1–3; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 24, 27.
- 59 *Mishnah Middoth*, 3:2; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 37, 39.
- 60 Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.4.3 (§§161–82); Bahat, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, illustration on 38–39.
- 61 Bahat, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, 56.
- 62 Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, vol. 29 of *The Anchor Bible*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 1:845.
- 63 Leen Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, 54–55.
- 64 Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 228–29.
- 65 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 78; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 51.

- 66 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 9:10–11, gives the size of typical celebratory groups as five to ten persons with the possibility of expanding; so Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 83. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 222, wrote ten to twenty; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 51, hold the group size to be twenty to thirty, a rather high estimate.
- 67 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:1.
- 68 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 79, illustration on 76–77; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 53.
- 69 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 78–79.
- 70 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 4:5.
- 71 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 51.
- 72 Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 78–79.
- 73 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 222.
- 74 Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 82.
- 75 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, the temple plan on 13, the illustrations on 17, 18, 51,
- 76 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 222–23; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 51.
- 77 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:5, 7; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 78.
- 78 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:6; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 75, 78–79.
- 79 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, the illustrations on 18, 38.
- 80 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:6; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, the illustration on 78–79.
- 81 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:9.
- 82 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 215; Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 101–2.
- 83 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:10.
- 84 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 223–24.
- 85 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:7; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 79.

- 86 *Mishnah Middoth*, 2:3; Rittmeyer and Rittmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 50, the temple plan on 13, the illustrations on 11, 59.
- 87 Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 75.
- 88 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 7:1–2; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 79.
- 89 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 232–33.
- 90 Brown, *The Testimony of Luke*, 982, 985, 987.
- 91 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 5:1; 10:1.
- 92 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:5.
- 93 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:9; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 79.
- 94 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 3:1.
- 95 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 219–20.
- 96 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 234–35; Richman, *The Holy Temple*, 75, 79, the illustrations on 74, 76–77.
- 97 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 3:4; Edersheim, *The Temple*, 231, 237.
- 98 Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with an Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 150, footnote 6.
- 99 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 2:6.
- 100 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:1; Edersheim, *The Temple*, 235, 237.
- 101 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 238–39.
- 102 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 239, 243.
- 103 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 239–40.
- 104 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:4; Edersheim, *The Temple*, 240.
- 105 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:5–6; Danby, *The Mishnah*, 151, footnotes 2, 3 and 4.
- 106 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 241–42.
- 107 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 242, 246–47.
- 108 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 242–43.
- 109 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 243–44.
- 110 Edersheim, *The Temple*, 230.
- 111 *Mishnah Pesahim*, 10:7, 9.

- 112 Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 127; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, volume 28 of *The Anchor Bible*, 2 volumes (New York: Doubleday: 1981), 1:441–42.
- 113 *Mishnah Middoth*, 5:4; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 20, the sketch on 13.
- 114 Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 79, 81; Anthony J. Scaldarini, “Pharisees,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:293–94, 301–3; Gary G. Porton, “Sadducees,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:892–95.
- 115 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 20, the sketch on 13, the illustrations on 11, 20, 50, 58–59, 69; Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, 348, the sketch on 345.
- 116 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 20, the sketch on 13, the illustration on 50; Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, 348.
- 117 Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer, *The Ritual of the Temple*, 50; Ritmeyer, *The Quest*, 348.
- 118 Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 128–29; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX*, 1:443–44.



