



Ministério Seara Ágape
Ensino Bíblico Evangélico

<https://www.searaagape.com.br/estudoevangelicossobreotemplodesalomao.html>

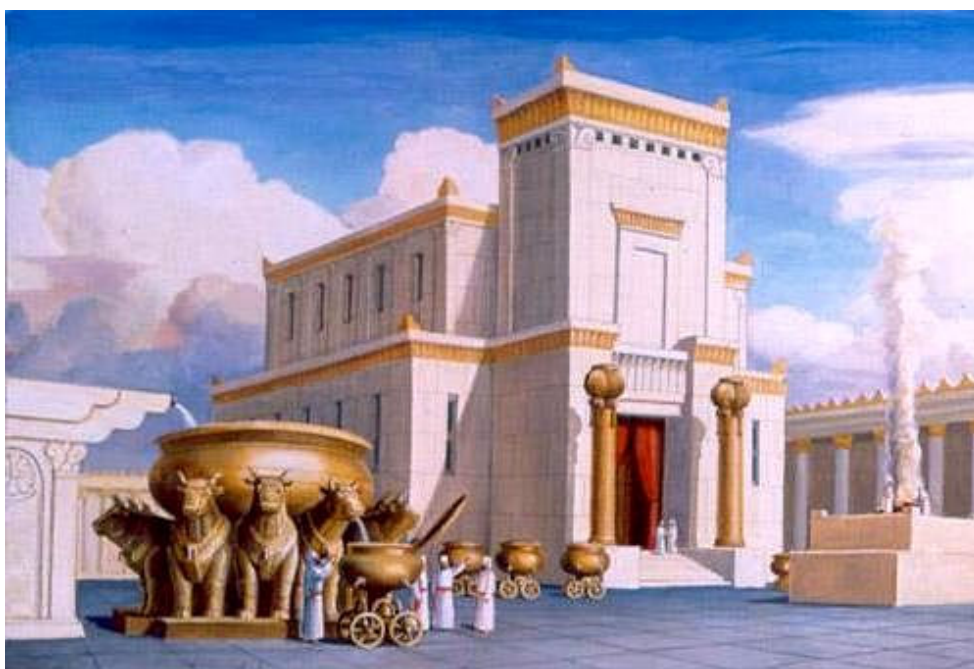
BIBLICAL TOPICS FOR STUDY – EVANGELICAL STUDY ABOUT THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

Author: Pastor Tânia Cristina Giachetti – 2013

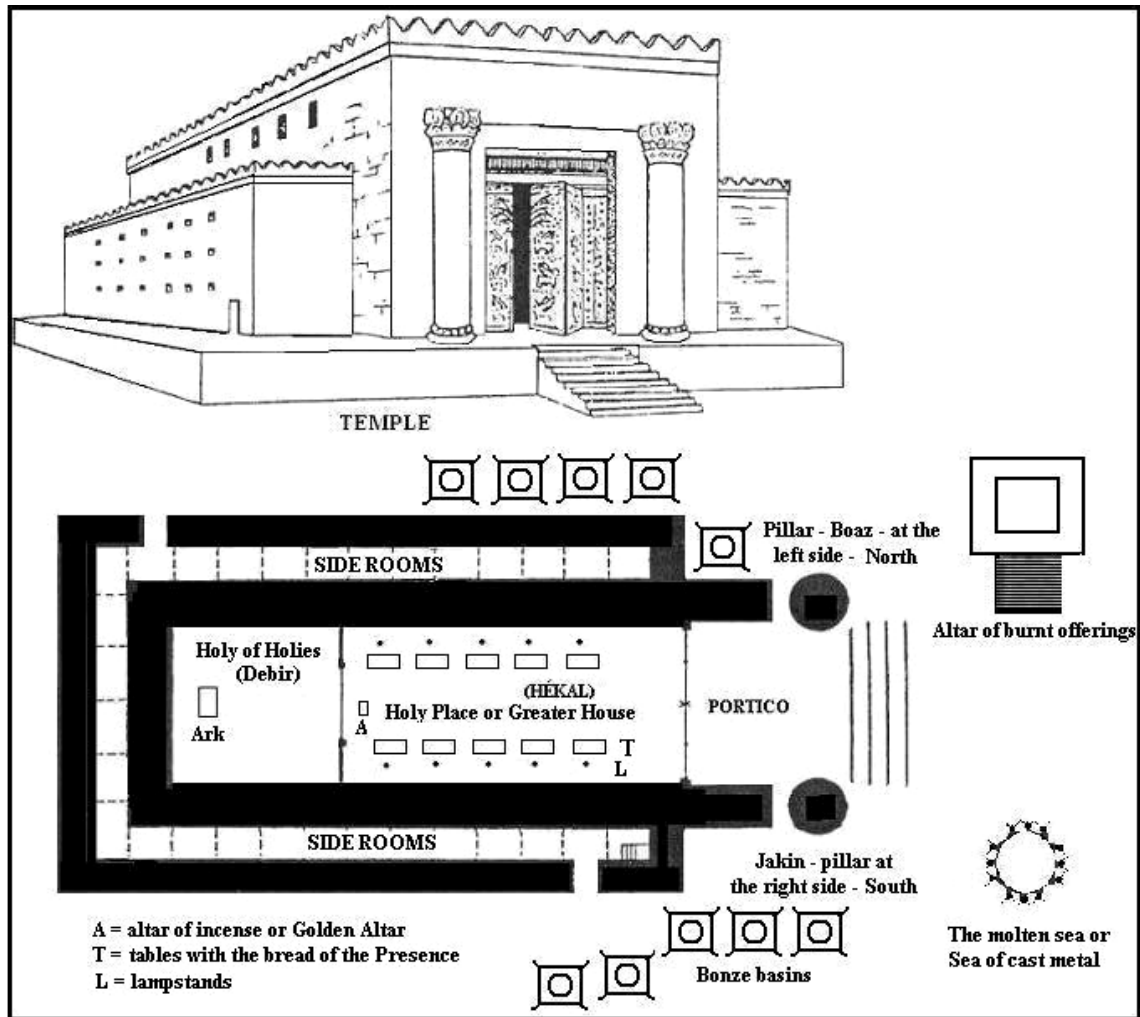
In this study we will talk about the temple of Solomon, as well as its resemblance with us as sanctuary of the living God. We will also talk about the temple of Ezra (the 2nd temple) and Herod's.

The temple of Solomon was planned according to the model of the **tabernacle** given to Moses (Ex 25; 26; 27), however, with some changes, especially with respect to the utensils and materials used in its construction: no more curtains, outer coverings or tent stakes but with hewn stones, wood of cedar, cypress and olive tree, gold and precious stones, among others. Also the bronze basin where the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the Tent of Meeting (Ex 30: 17-21; Ex 38: 8) was replaced by the molten sea, also called sea of cast metal (2 Chr. 4 : 1-6).

First, let's see some pictures:



The exterior view of the Temple of Solomon



The bronze basin of Moses...



... and the molten sea of Solomon

Let's start the study by the biblical text from 2 Chr. 3: 1-14 cf. 1 Kin. 6: 1-10; 1 Kin. 6: 23-28; 1 Kin. 7: 15-22 (NRSV):

“Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah [*Gen. 22: 2, where Abraham offered Isaac in sacrifice – my note*], where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had designated, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. He began to build on the second day of the second month of the fourth year of his reign [*The reign of Solomon was from 970 to 931 BC; therefore, he began the construction of the temple in 966 B.C.*]. These are Solomon's measurements for building the house of God: the length, in cubits of the old standard [*Mosaic cubit or primitive cubit, whose measure is 51.8 cm; or a cubit plus a handbreadth, and used for sacred purposes*], was sixty cubits [*31 meters length*], and the width twenty cubits [*10.36 meters wide. In 1 Kings 6: 2, it is also added, 30 cubits high = 15.54 meters high*]. The vestibule [*’ülâm – Portico, NIV*] in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long [*10.36 meters wide*], across the width of the house; and its height was one hundred twenty cubits [*in Hebrew and Masoretic. In Syriac and in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, is 20 cubits = 10.36 meters high*]. He overlaid it on the inside with pure gold [*1 Kin. 6: 3: ... Its depth was ten cubits in front of the house = 5.18 meters*]. The nave [*NIV, the main hall, which corresponds to the Holy Place. In Hebrew: = hékâl or hekhal, which derives from the Sumerian expression: É GAL = Great House*] he lined with cypress, covered it with fine gold, and made palms and chains on it. He adorned the house with settings of precious stones. The gold was gold from Parvaim [*uncertain location. It's assumed that today is Yemen. It is usually a generic name for the eastern regions from where gold came, such as Ophir, for example*]. So he lined the house with gold – its beams, its thresholds, its walls, and its doors; and he carved cherubim on the walls. He made the most holy place [*Debir, the Holy of Holies*]; its length, corresponding to the width of the house, was twenty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits [*10.36 cubic meters – a perfect cube*]; he overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold [*1 talent corresponds to 34 kilograms, therefore, 20,400 kilograms*]. The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold (600 grams). He overlaid the upper chambers with gold. In the most holy place he made two carved cherubim and overlaid them with gold. The wings of the cherubim together extended twenty cubits [*10.36 m*]; one wing of the one, five cubits long [*2.59 m*], touched the wall of the house, and its other wing, five cubits long [*2.59 m*], touched the wing of the other cherub; and of this cherub, one wing, five cubits long [*2.59 m*], touched the wall of the house, and the other wing, also five cubits long [*2.59 m*], was

joined to the wing of the first cherub. The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits [10.36 m]; the cherubim stood on their feet, facing the nave [The Holy Place]. And Solomon made the curtain of blue and purple and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and worked cherubim into it. In front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high [18.13 meters, the two together], with a capital of five cubits [2.59 m] on the top of each. He made encircling chains and put them on the tops of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains. He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right [NIV, South], the other on the left [NIV, North]; the one on the right he called Jachin [Jakin], and the one on the left, Boaz.”



In short: the temple was 31 meters long, 10.6 meters wide and 15.54 meters high. The Portico was 10.36 meters wide, 10.36 meters high, and 5.18 meters deep. The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube of approximately 10.36 cubic meters (according to the primitive cubit of 51.8 cm for sacred purposes).

In order to build the temple, Solomon recruited many workers, including Israelites, who tilled the stones to ground it; they prepared timber and stones to build the house. In 1 Kin. 6: 7 it is written: “The house was built with stone finished at the quarry (In 1 Kin. 5: 15 it’s written: “Solomon also had seventy thousand laborers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hill country”), so that neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron was heard in the temple while it was being built.” The bible doesn’t make clear the size of the stones used for the Temple but mentions the size of the stones used in the construction of the royal palaces:

In 1 Kin. 7: 9-11 it’s written about the stones used in the building of the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon, the king’s palace, the palace for Pharaoh’s daughter, whom Salomon had married, and all the royal palaces: “All these were made of costly stones, cut according to measure, sawed with saws, back and front, from the foundation to the coping, and from outside to the great court. The foundation was of costly stones, huge stones, stones of eight and ten cubits [3.60 m and 4.50 m]. There were costly stones above, cut to measure, and cedarwood.” Here we can assume that was used the common cubit of 45 cm.

Following the reading of the Scriptures (1 Kin. 6: 31-35; 2 Chr. 4: 22), we can see that there were double doors of cypress wood separating the Holy Place from the Portico, each composed of two leaves. The windows with recessed frames [NIV, narrow

clerestory windows – 1 Kin. 6: 4)] were open and were near the ceiling and illuminated the Holy Place with the altar of incense (Golden Altar), the table and the five pairs of lamps, that is, the lampstands.



Menorah – the lampstand of seven lamps given to Moses

Here we will come back to what I said previously about some differences between the tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon. The menorah is one of them (Ex. 25: 31-40; Ex. 37: 17-24). In Ex. 37: 17 it is written: “He also made the lampstand of pure gold. The base and the shaft of the lampstand were made of hammered work; its cups, its calyxes, and its petals were of one piece with it.” In Hebrew is: “Vayya’as ‘eth-hammenorâh zâhâbh tâhor miqshâh ‘âsâh ‘eth-hammenorâhyerêkhâh veqânâh gebhiy’eyhâ kaphtoreyhâ upherâcheyhâ mimmennâhhâyû.” **Menorah** means lamp, candlestick, lampstand with seven shafts used in the Tabernacle. In 2 Chr. 4: 7 (cf. 1 Kin. 7: 49) it is written: “He made ten golden lampstands as prescribed, and set them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north.” In Hebrew is: “vayya’as ‘eth-menoroeth hazzâhâbh ‘eser kemishpâthâm vayyittênbahêykhâl châmêsh miyyâmiyn vechâmêsh misemo’vls.” **Menoroeth** is the plural of **Menorah**, and this means that Solomon made 10 lampstands to put in the Holy Place of the temple. In the Menorah, there are seven shafts in total: a central shaft and three shafts going out from each side. The lampstands of gold were placed in groups of five, one in front of another in the Holy Place, as it can be seen in the drawing above (page 2).

These lampstands were taken to Babylon in the moment of the invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 52: 17-23), who also took with him the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and all the vessels of the temple. In the second temple built by Ezra the Ark of the Covenant no longer existed (Jer. 3: 16), and another golden lampstand had to be made, another Menorah, to be placed in the second temple, along with the table and the bread of the Presence. There is also mention to the vessels and utensils of the temple that were returned by Cyrus when he allowed the return of the Jews to Jerusalem: Ezr. 5: 1-2; Ezr. 1: 7-11. The absence of the Ark in the second temple was a factor to make it inferior in opulence than that of Solomon (Ezr. 3: 12; Hag. 2: 3).

In the temple restored by Herod the Menorah was also present, but with the destruction of the Temple by Titus in 70 A.D., not only the Menorah but the other objects in the temple were taken to Rome. This occurred in the first Jewish-Roman war (66-73 A.D.), sometimes called the great Jewish revolt, which was the first of three great rebellions of the Jews of Judea against the Roman Empire. It began in the year 66 A.D., initially due to religious tensions between Greeks and Jews with protests anti-taxation and attacks on Roman citizens. Then, the Roman legions under the command of Titus (Titus Flavius Vespasian Augustus, son of Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasian) besieged (from April 14th to September 8th, 70 A.D.), destroying the center of rebel resistance in Jerusalem on 1st August, 67 A.D., culminating in the destruction of the temple sometime in August, 70 A.D., defeating the Jewish remaining forces [3 ½ years]. There is reference to 30th August [Bunson, Matthew (1995). *A Dictionary of the Roman Empire*. Oxford University Press. p. 212. ISBN 978-0-19-510233-8], but perhaps it is a little disconnected from what the Jews call Tisha B'Av (9th day of the month of 'Abh). The Romans set fire to the Temple (there is disagreement as to whether it was on Titus' order or just a torch accidentally thrown by a soldier). Resistance continued until September, but finally the upper and lower parts of the city were also taken and the city was burned to the ground. Herod's Palace fell on September 7th and the city came completely under Roman control on September 8th. Titus spared only the three towers of the Herodian citadel as testimony to the city's ancient power. This act had a huge impact: many people were killed and enslaved and large parts of the city were destroyed. One of the last acts of this war [the last 3 ½ years] was the destruction of the Fortress of Masada on April 16th, 73 A.D., a rugged plateau southwest of the Dead Sea, a natural fortress built by Herod the Great as his palace and as a place of refuge, but occupied by rebel sicarii at the time of its destruction by the Romans. The sicarii were an extremist group within the zealot party. Masada means 'safe place' or 'fortress.'



The Arch of Titus

Tisha B'Av (9th day of the month of 'Abh), that is, of the 5th month of the Hebrew calendar corresponding to Jul-Aug in the Gregorian calendar, is an important date in the Jewish calendar, whose origin is not biblical, but was created by rabbis to lament some disasters that occurred in the history of Israel, practically after the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (although Jewish books such as the Talmud mention it since ancient times in the OT, but it is not recorded in the Bible).

This destruction by Titus was not only a landmark on the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies (Matt. 24: 1-2; Mk. 13: 1-2), as it was also depicted in the form of relief on the Arch of Titus in Rome. The Arch of Titus, all made of marble, was erected as a triumph, commemorating the conquest of Jerusalem, and built in 81 A.D. after the death of the emperor because of a fever. On the Arch are carved: the table with the bread of Presence, the silver trumpets and the Menorah. It is 15.4 meters high, 13.5 meters wide and 4.75 thick.

On it one can read the following inscription:
 "SENATVS·POPVLVSQVE·ROMANVS·DIVO·TITO·DIVI·VESPASIANI·(FILIO)
 VESPASIANO·AVGVSTO", which means: "The Senate and the Roman people [dedicate] to the divine Titus Vespasian Augustus, son of the divine Vespasian." Never, no Jew of Rome or any other country in the Diaspora passed beneath the Arch of Titus, but only in 1948, when the State of Israel was founded, for they passed beneath the arch celebrating the new conquest of their land and for having survived the Roman Empire.



In the bible, in relation to the tables made by Solomon, they are reported in 2 Chr. 4: 8; 19-20 and 1 Kin. 7: 48-50. In the first text it is written: "He also made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made one hundred basins of gold...So Solomon made all the things that were in the house of God: the golden altar, the tables for the bread of the Presence, the lampstands and their lamps of pure gold to burn before the inner sanctuary, as prescribed." In 1 Kin. 7: 48-50 it is written: "So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the Lord: the golden altar, the golden table for the bread of the Presence, the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south side and five on the north, in front of the inner sanctuary; the flowers,

the lamps, and the tongs, of gold; the cups, snuffers [*instruments that cut the excess melted wax that dripped*], basins, dishes for incense, and firepans, of pure gold; the sockets for the doors of the innermost part of the house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the nave of the temple, of gold.” The text that leaves no doubt about the number of the tables with the bread of Presence, if there were ten tables or only one, is in 1 Chr. 28: 15-16: ... “the weight of the golden lampstands and their lamps, the weight of gold for each lampstand and its lamps, the weight of silver for a lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each in the service, the weight of gold [*the bible was talking about the treasures stored by David to build the temple*] for each table for the rows of bread, the silver for the silver tables...” So **there were also ten tables** for the bread of the Presence.

As for the Ark of the Covenant there is an important detail about the poles, for many pictures we see are not faithful to the biblical report. The bible says:

- 1 Kin. 8: 6-8: “Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. The poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day.”

- 2 Chr. 5: 7-10: “Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. The poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day. There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel after they came out of Egypt.”



This means that the poles were placed in the width of the ark, not in the length, so that when loaded, the cherubs were seen side by side and not one behind the other. The image above shows the correct placement of the poles. Therefore, the bible says that they could be seen from the Holy Place, in front of the curtain that separated it from the Holy of Holies.

We can also see in the drawing at the beginning of the text that the bronze basin where the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 30: 17-21; Ex. 38: 8) was replaced by the molten sea, also called sea of cast metal (2 Chr. 4: 1-6). The molten sea was a round structure (circular in shape – NIV) of ten cubits from brim to brim (4.5 meters in diameter), and five cubits high (2.25 meters). A line of thirty cubits was (13.5 meters) encircled it completely, and its thickness was a handbreadth – four fingers (8 cm). Its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily and it held two thousand baths (16,00 gallons or 60,000 liters). Below the brim and around it there were twelve bulls, four groups of three, each group facing the four cardinal points, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel, as they were placed around the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The molten sea was placed on the southeast side of the temple, in the opposite side to the altar of bronze (for burnt offerings) that was placed on the northeast.

The molten sea had a different purpose from the ten bronze basins around the temple. In the bronze basins they were to rinse what was used for the burnt offering. The sea was for the priests to wash in (2 Chr. 4: 6). The basins were supported on stands with wheels. The supports were 1.80 meter long and wide and 1.35 meter high. On the surfaces of their panels the artists carved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, as well as on their bases. The diameter of each wheel was a cubit and a half (60 cm).





As for the altar of bronze, it is described in 2 Chr. 4: 1 and was 9 meters long and wide and 4.5 meters high. It was for the burnt offerings. It was different from the altar of burnt offering of the tabernacle of Moses, which was made of acacia wood covered with bronze (Ex. 27: 1-2), measuring 5 cubits long, 5 cubits wide and 3 cubits high (about (2,5 meters x 2,5 meters x 1,5 meter)).



The door of the Holy of Holies. The curtain is behind the door,
in front of the Ark of the Covenant

In 1 Kin. 6: 31-32 it is written: “For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood; the lintel and the doorposts were five-sided. He covered the two doors of olive wood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers; he

overlaid them with gold, and spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees.” In 1 Kin. 7: 50b it is written: “the sockets for the doors of the innermost part of the house [the inner sanctuary or the Holy of Holies], the most holy place, and for the doors of the nave of the temple, of gold.” It shows us that between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place there was not only a curtain or veil, as described in 2 Chr. 3: 14 (“And Solomon made the curtain of blue and purple and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and worked cherubim into it”), but also a door, which makes the temple far more sumptuous than the tabernacle in the wilderness, even because it would not be possible to carry all these things (Ex. 26: 31-37). In the bible there is no evidence that the Holy of Holies was on a higher level than the Holy Place, for no one speaks of stairs to get to it.

Where in our translation it is written “... the lintel and the doorposts were five-sided” the Hebrew translation interprets as 1/5 of the dividing wall, therefore, 4 cubits. Some say it was because there were five frames around this door, whereas the front door of the temple had only four frames.



Decoration of the door

For the entrance into the Holy Place Solomon also made a door placed between two four-sided jambs, whose doorposts were of olive wood and leaves of cypress wood, carved with cherubs, flowers and palm trees and covered with gold (1 Kin. 6: 33-35: “So also he made for the entrance to the nave doorposts of olivewood, four-sided each, and two doors of cypress wood; the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. He carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, overlaying them with gold evenly applied upon the carved work”).



The outer door



Decoration of these doors

As it was said, the wall panels were of cedar, and the floor of cypress (the Hebrew word for cypress is berôsh = pine), also overlaid with gold. All the walls and doors were carved with flowers, palm trees and cherubim and were overlaid with gold, and no stone was seen (1 Kin. 6: 15; 18).



The walls and doors were carved with flowers, palm trees and cherubim

The cherubim in the Holy of Holies were of olive wood and overlaid with gold and were about 5.18 meters high (1 Kin. 6: 23). Two wings touched one another in the center, above the Ark of the Covenant. The other two wings touched the walls of the north and south (1 Kin. 6: 23-28; 2 Chr. 3: 10-13).



The outer walls of the sanctuary had the projection of 1 cubit (in the Holy of Holies and in the Holy Place) to bear the beams of cedar of three floors of the small chambers around. The chamber of the ground floor was smaller than that of the middle floor, and this was smaller than the upper floor (5 cubits or 2.59 meters wide 1st chamber, 6 cubits or 3.11 meters the 2nd and 7 cubits or 3.62 meters the 3rd – 1 Kin. 6: 6). The southern door gave access to a spiral stair leading to the upper floors (1 Kin. 6: 8).





The floors of the house were 2.59 meters high and were attached to the house with cedar wood. These rooms served as warehouses and, dressing rooms, accommodations for the priests and warehouses for cash offerings and merchandises given by worshipers. The treasures of the temple were there. The chambers served as State treasury and place to store the spoils of war. These warehouses were looted during the reign of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, by Shishak of Egypt (1 Kin. 14: 26). Posterior kings as Hezekiah (2 Kin. 18: 13-15) and Asa (1 Kin. 15: 18), who had adorned the temple, made use of it to buy allies or to pay tribute and move the invader away. Joash (835-796 BC) gave the gold of the temple to the king of Syria, Hazael (2 Kin. 12: 18). King Ahaz introduced an altar from Assyrian model and removed the altar of burnt offering, the molten sea and the basins of bronze as a sign of his submission to Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kin. 16: 10-18). Josiah, centuries later (640 BC), needed to repair the temple, financed by the contributions from worshipers (2 Kin. 22: 4). Finally, in 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar destroyed and plundered the temple (2 Kin. 24: 13-17).

As for the columns of Salomon's temple, they were loose and did not support the ceiling of the Portico, but were in front of it as part of the furniture, not the building of the temple. Their names may be the first words of the oracle (= what was written) that gave power to the Davidic dynasty: "YHWH will establish your throne forever" (Jakin – Yakhin – the right – south) and "in the strength of YHWH the king shall rejoice" (Boaz – be'ōz = strength – the left – north) – 1 Kin. 7: 21; 2 Chr. 3: 15-17 cf. Jer. 52: 21. The height of each was 18 cubits (9.32 meters – 1 Kin. 7: 15), besides the capitals above them, 5 cubits high (2.59 meters), and a circumference of 12 cubits (6.21 meters). 1 cubit of the old standard used here had sacred purposes and corresponded to 51.8 centimeters. The column was hollow, made in bronze, a handbreadth thick (8 cm) – Jer. 52: 21. As for the different measures of the size of columns that we see in 1 Kin. 7: 15 (18 cubits high) and 2 Chr. 3: 15 (35 cubits high, besides the capital of five cubits on them), we can clarify the doubt reading Jer. 52: 21: "As for the pillars, the height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits; it was hollow and its thickness was four fingers." The height of them was eighteen cubits. According to some theologians, the explanation for this may be that this is a mistranslation, since the two numbers (thirty-five and eighteen) are easily confused in Hebrew, or the number thirty-five is the original length of casting (the two pillars together). The ornate columns or obelisks were very common in Ancient times.



All the vessels and the columns of the temple made of bronze were cast in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan (Zeredah):

- 2 Chr. 4: 16-18: “The pots, the shovels, the forks, and all the equipment for these Hiram-abi made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the Lord. In the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredah. Solomon made all these things in great quantities, so that the weight of the bronze was not determined.”

- 1 Kin. 7: 45-47: “The pots, the shovels, and the basins, all these vessels that Hiram made for King Solomon for the house of the Lord were of burnished bronze. In the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan. Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because there were so many of them; the weight of the bronze was not determined.”

Let's talk a little about **the second temple**, the temple led by Ezra the priest, after the return of the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem. This temple lasted longer than that of Solomon. Solomon's temple was built in 966 BC and fell in the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC; therefore, it lasted 380 years. The second, although its construction started in 536 BC and stopped for 16 years, returning to be built in 520 BC, only fell into the hands of Pompey, a Roman general, in 63 BC. Therefore, it lasted for 473 years. Herod the Great began the restoration of the temple in 19 BC, and after 46 years (Jn. 2: 20) it had not yet been completed. It ended in 64 AD, in the time of Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa I. This temple lasted until 70 AD, with the fall of Jerusalem in the hands of Titus. The exiles returned in 538 BC with the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezr. 1: 7-11). They began the construction of the new temple in 536 BC, but stopped until 520 BC and ended in 516 BC (Ezr. 1: 1-11; Ezr. 3: 2-3; 8; 10). Ezra returned from Babylon in 480 BC to minister in the new temple. According to scholars, this temple was 60 cubits long (31.08 meters) and 30 cubits high (15.54 meters), and also had warehouses around it and chambers for the priests (Ezr. 6: 3). The Ark of the Covenant had disappeared and was never recovered or replaced (Jer. 3: 14-18). So, the second temple was smaller and less stately than the first. That's why many of the people cried by seeing the building of the second temple: Ezr. 3: 8-13 (with focus on verses 12 and 13) and Hag. 2: 1-9. In the place of Solomon's lampstands it was built

another menorah of seven lamps, along with the table for the bread and the altar of incense. These objects were again taken from the Israelites by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV, also called Antiochus Epiphanes, around 168-166 BC (Period of Seleucid dominion over Israel), placing there a pagan statue ('the abomination that causes desolation' – Dan. 11: 31; Dan. 12: 11; or 'the desolating sacrilege' – Matt. 24: 15, NRSV). Under the leadership of Judah Maccabee, the temple was cleansed, and at the end of 164 BC its furnishings were replaced. The Jews turned that place into a so powerful fortress that withstood the siege of Pompey (63 BC) for 3 months.

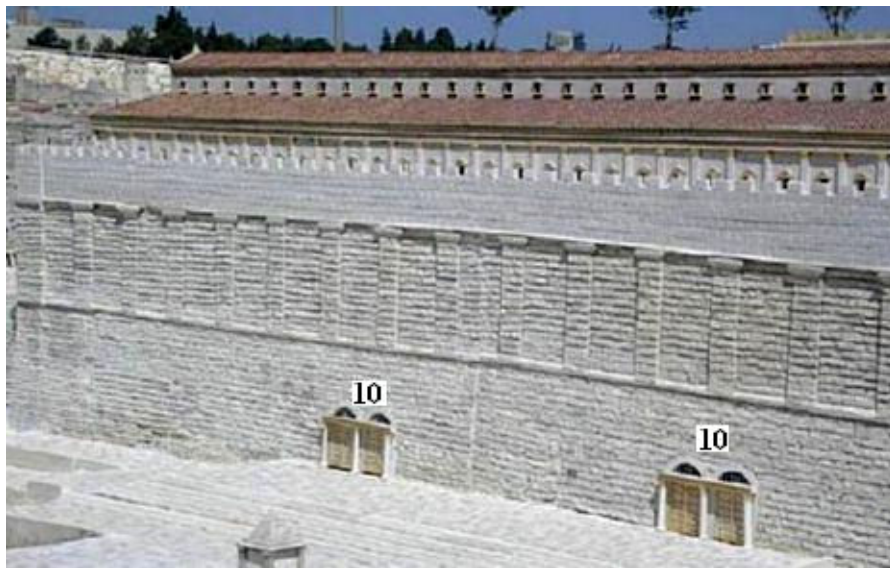


‘Herod’s temple’



Herod the Great began the restoration of the temple in 19 BC but continued with its repair until 64 AD. Its dimension reached 450 meters from north to south (**1**) and 300 meters from east to west (**2**). According to the scholars, its walls were built with huge

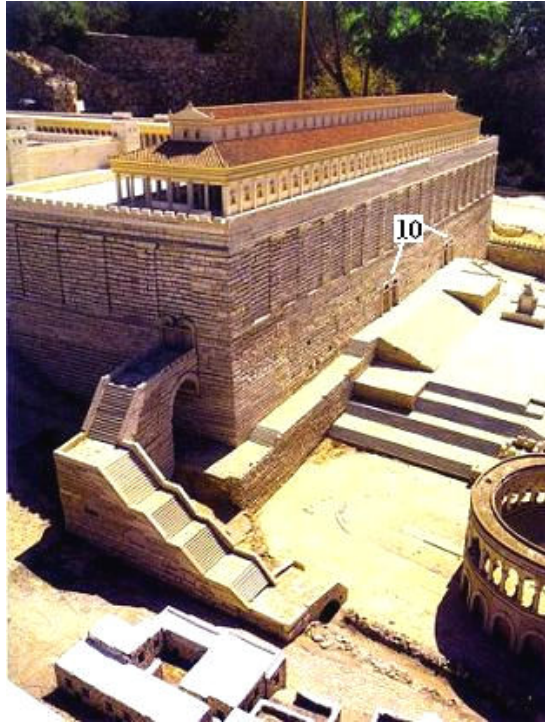
stone blocks of **60 cm high and 5 meters length** (Mk. 13: 1). On the southeast, facing the Kidron Valley, the inner court of the temple was about **50 meters above the rock (3)**. Perhaps the parapet above this edge was the **pinnacle (4)** of the temple (Matt. 4: 5) **50 meters high**. So there was a ramp **(5)** that led the worshipers from this level until the level of the temple court. At Northwest of the temple was the **Fortress of Antonia (6)** and it was the residence of the Roman procurator when he was in Jerusalem and it was built by Herod the Great to protect the temple. **The outer court of the temple**, also called **Court of the Gentiles (7)**, in the south had a Portico within the walls, and had four rows of columns and was called the **Royal Portico (8)**. In front of it there were **two passages (9)** to the southern wall of the temple, which opened to the city through the **Huldah Gates (10)**.



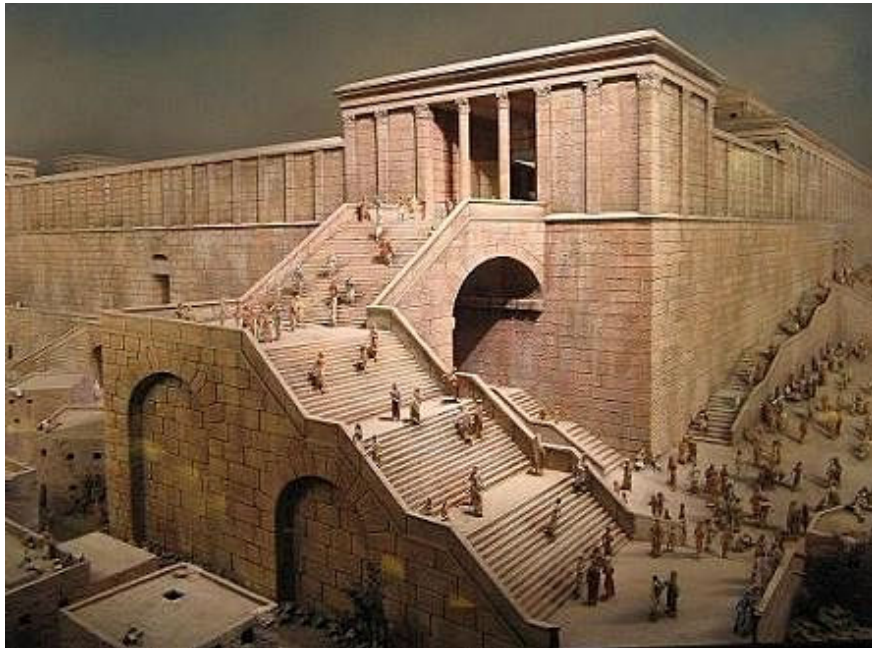
South view of the temple – Huldah Gates



Pinnacle of the temple



The staircase and the arch you see above is what we call today **Robinson's arch (RA)**. Robinson's arch is the name given to the remains of an arch (or bridge) on the southwest side of the temple in Jerusalem. It was built by Herod the Great, at the end of the first century BC (20 or 19 BC) and destroyed after the first Jewish-Roman war (66-70 AD), sometimes called the great Jewish revolt.



Reconstruction model of the original Robinson's arch

The first Jewish-Roman war was the first of three major rebellions of the Jews of Judea against the Roman Empire and occurred in the government of Vespasian (69-79 AD). It ended when the Roman legions under the command of Titus (son of Vespasian) laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed the center of rebel resistance, with the destruction of the temple, as prophesied by Jesus. After Vespasian came his two sons: Titus (79-81 AD) and Domitian (81-96 AD). Robinson's arch was so named in honor of the American biblical scholar Edward Robinson, who identified its remnants in 1838. His work was focused on Biblical Geography and Biblical Archaeology.



West side of Herod's temple with Robinson's arch and Wilson's arch



The remains of Robinson's arch

Robinson's arch was built to connect Tyropoeon valley with **Royal Portico Stoa**, located in the southern part of the temple. It was one of the four gates along the western wall of the temple, next to another arch known as **Wilson's Arch**. It was about fifteen meters long and three meters and a half wide, starting from twelve meters to north of the southwest corner of the wall, and with a height of about sixteen meters (other researchers say twenty-three meters) above the street level that ran parallel to the western wall (the Wailing Wall), a site planned for prayers of the faithful Jews and Gentiles who visit Jerusalem. In the days of Herod there were very beautiful houses in the west hill in Jerusalem.



(Solomon's Portico) Solomon's colonnades (11)

Solomon's Colonnade or Solomon's Portico (11) extended throughout the eastern side (Jn. 10: 23; Acts 3: 11; Acts 5: 12). It opened to the East side of the walls through the Golden Gate (12). It was under these colonnades that scribes kept their schools and their discussions (Lk. 2: 46; Lk. 19: 47; Mk. 11: 27), and it was there that traders and moneychangers had put their tables (Jn. 2: 14-16; Lk. 19: 45-46).



Northeast view of the temple – Golden Gate



The Golden Gate today

The Golden Gate (in Hebrew, שַׁעַר הַרְחָמִים – Sha’ar Harahamim) is also known as Gate of Mercy. In Arabic is known as Gate of Eternal Life, Gate of Mercy (Bab al-Rahma – the southern one) and Gate of Repentance (Bab al-Taubah – the northern one). It is one of the eight gates in Jerusalem’s Old City walls. It is the oldest of them and used in Ancient times that offered direct access to the temple. It is located at the north third of the eastern wall of the Old City. The current Golden Gate was rebuilt over of the ruins of the earlier gate where Jesus entered the city on Sunday before Passover and was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. It was rebuilt by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (In Turkish, Süleyman or Kanunî Sultan Süleyman – 1494-1566) in the 16th century (1541) together with the city walls but sealed it with great stones and they stay this way until today. This archaeological evidence was found by archaeologist James Fleming in 1969, when he fell into a pit filled of bones at that location and discovered the arch of a door, engraved in the stone of the pit, in the same shape as the door above him, probably from the time of Jesus or Solomon. However, his investigations could not proceed because a Muslim cemetery was built in that place. Seeing it from within the Mount we can notice that it has two vaulted halls which lead to the Gate of Mercy (Bab al-Rahma, the southern one) and the Gate of Repentance (Bab al-Taubah, the northern one). This gate has undergone many interventions: it was closed by Muslims in 810, reopened in 1102 by the Crusaders and walled by Saladin after recovering Jerusalem in 1187. As Jerusalem was plundered in 1244 by other followers of Islam (the Khwarazmian Tatars) and between 1250 and 1517 the Mamlukes destroyed the sacred places of Christians on Mount Zion, it is assumed that the previous wall was opened again where the gate was. It was rebuilt by Suleiman the Magnificent together with the city walls but sealed with great stones and they stay this way until today. According to information of some researchers he blocked the Gate with stones so that the Messiah could not enter the city and thus the prophecy was not accomplished; the prophecy that the Messiah will enter this door at His second coming. The Muslim cemetery built there would also bar His way. There may be a defensive reason why he did that too. According to Jewish tradition this is the gate through which the Messiah prophesied in the OT would choose to enter Jerusalem, because for them the Divine Presence used to appear by the east, the side of sunrise (Ezek. 43: 4: “As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east...”). And will appear again

when the Anointed One (Messiah) comes (Ezek. 44: 1-2: “Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. The Lord said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut”). The east was the side from where salvation would come, the Messiah. Although they think that a new gate will be open to Him in that place, we Christians can see this prophecy already fulfilled, by the fact of Jesus having entered through it (Lk. 19: 28-40). We can also affirm this too by the words of Jesus Himself (Lk. 19: 39-40): “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, order your disciples to stop.’ He answered, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.’” Ezekiel wrote that this gate would remain shut and should not be opened, and indeed it is shut. Jesus said that the stones would shout out if His disciples were silent, and indeed the stones that are there proclaim the veracity of His words; they show there was a gate in that site by which the Messiah entered Jerusalem.

[Source: Rodrigo Silva – Programa: Evidências NT – 033 A Porta Dourada (Série Evidências) – Novo Tempo – YouTube].

The inner area was slightly higher than the Court of the Gentiles (7), and was surrounded by a balustrade, called Balustrade Soreg or Sorek (14). Four gates (15) gave access to the north and south sides, and one gate gave access to the east side (the Beautiful Gate of the temple – 16). From the tower of Antonia Fortress there was a subterranean passage to the Beautiful Gate (Inside the walls, in the Court of Women). Four gates in the outer walls gave access to the west side of the town, to the Tyropoeon valley, and the only remnant of those walls today is the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem (Western Wall Plaza).



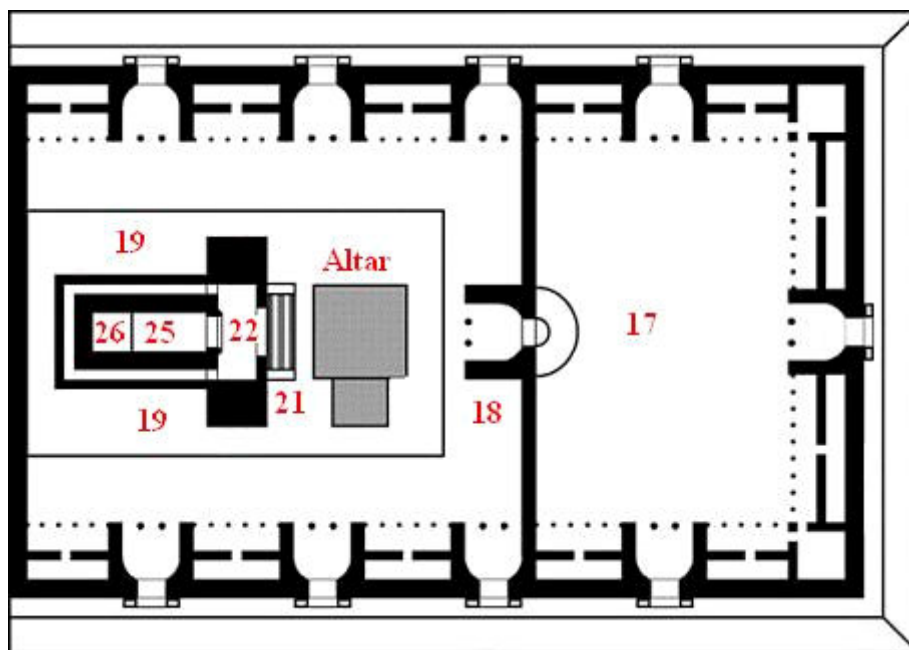




The first court inside the temple (the Court of Women – 17) contained the temple treasury (where the contributions of the worshipers were placed for the temple – Mk. 12: 41-44). Men were allowed to enter the Court of Israel (18), raised above the level of the Court of Women, and at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles they could enter the inner court (the Priests' Court – 19) to walk around the altar of burnt offering. Nicanor Gate (20) separated the Court of Women from the Court of Israel. The altar mentioned above was built with rough stones, not hewn, and was 22 cubits (11.40 meters) away from the portico of the sanctuary (Matt. 23: 35). The plan of the sanctuary was a copy of Solomon's temple. The portico (21) was 100 cubits wide and 100 cubits high (51.80 meters). An entrance (22) of 20 cubits wide (10.36 meters) and 40 cubits high (20.52 meters) allowed people to enter, and another entrance with half of these dimensions led to the Holy Place.



Nicanor Gate



This Holy Place (**25**) was 40 cubits (20.52 meters) long and 20 cubits (10.36 meters) wide. A curtain divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Matt. 27: 51; Mk. 15: 38 cf. 2 Chr. 3: 14 – it was not placed the wooden door that there was between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place in the temple of Solomon). The inner chamber (the Holy of Holies – **26**) was 20 cubits (10.36 meters) square in the likeness of the Holy Place, and 40 cubits (20.52 meters) high. An empty room above the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies rose to the height of the portico, 100 cubits (51.80 meters), thus making the roof leveled. Three floors of rooms (**23**) surrounded the north side, the south and the west till a height of 40 cubits (20.52 meters). There were gold spikes (**24**) in the roof to prevent birds from settling there.

This structure was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The Menorah, the table with the bread of Presence and other objects (for example, the silver trumpets, as it was said about the Arch of Titus) were taken to Rome in triumph.

“How can we translate everything we read and bring its meaning to our lives?”

In this study we can see the greatness of God, at the same time His simplicity and His great love for us, giving us His Son to die in our place, and not only freeing us from eternal death because of our sins, but giving us His Spirit of life and understanding that puts us face to face with His mind and makes us know His secrets. More than that, His Spirit that transforms our lives into something simple, however, filled with His power, so that we can be instruments of healing and deliverance to all who are bound in the chains of sin and religiosity and, consequently, in useless rituals and unnecessary efforts to please Him and to attain perfection and His heart. Thanks to Jesus who freed us from the complications of the human ego and the confusions of Satan!

By giving us the new birth, He gave us the understanding that we are the true temple where He wants to dwell and to make shine the light of His presence, the Holy Spirit (Menorah), when we really want to keep that intimacy (table and bread) through prayer (incense) and the sacrifice of praise (altar of burnt offering). We're not just a temple but an Ark that is transported by Him according to His will in order to take His glory and His light where darkness prevails. His word is our manna, which sustains us throughout this desert on earth until we reach our true heavenly dwelling in the New Jerusalem. With His spiritual authority (Aaron's rod) and His anointing in our spirit (the

oil in the lampstand) we'll manage to put down all barriers that arise, trying to prevent our covenant of love with Him (tablets of the covenant) and the achievement of His will for us. What matters to Him is our interior disposition to give Him what is the most precious for us (gold), at the same time that we overlay ourselves internally with it, carving our soul with the fruit of His Spirit and with the flowers of the joy of seeing them to flourish in other sincere and innocent hearts. Everything that is unclean and has no commitment with His project must be outside our walls or our tent. Finally, we must remember that what supports us (columns, pillars) in our life are the joy and the strength of the Lord (Boaz), as well as the faith that He will establish us (Jakin), that He will honor us in all challenges we have to face. With this faith in Him, He establishes our throne. The pomegranates that crown our head are the symbol of a life that bears fruit and has always anointed words that serve as a remedy for the sick hearts.

The Temple or Tabernacle constructed this way has a resemblance to our being and our life. The Outer Court represents our social relationships in which many people see us, greet us, but know little about us. The Holy Place is our soul, in which participate the closest people as our family and friends who know us better and know what goes on in our hearts. In the Holy of Holies, which corresponds to our spirit, where are the inmost of our desires and our true self, only the Spirit of God has access.



**The garments of the priests (Levites) of the Old Testament and
the garments of the high priest**