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Estudo Bíblico Evangélico

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

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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 2nd temple (Zerubbabel and Herod's).

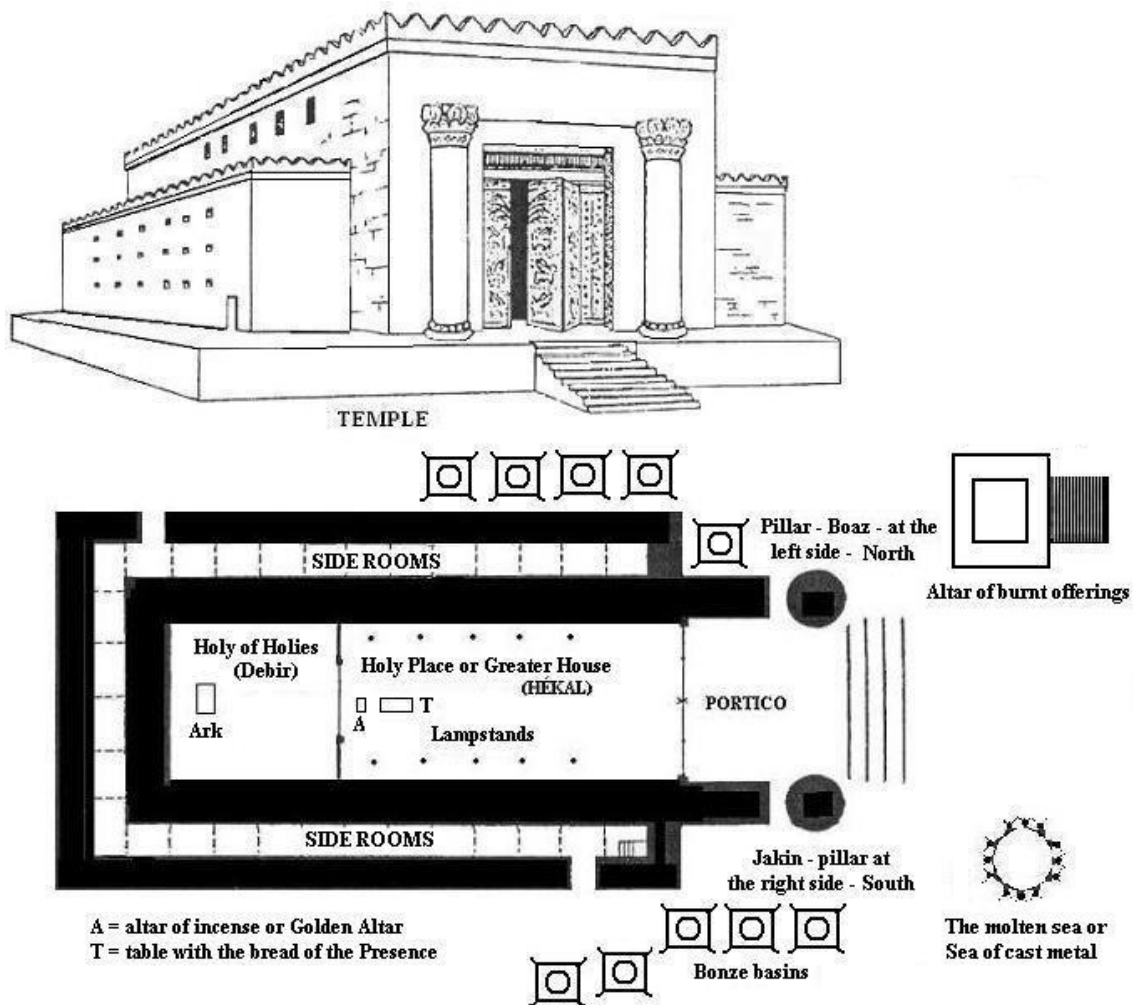


The exterior view of the Temple of Solomon

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). Solomon's

temple was built in seven years (1 Kin. 6: 1; 37; 38) and lasted from 966 BC to 586 BC, therefore 380 years.

The second temple begun by Zerubbabel took four years to be built [520-516 BC – 2nd to 6th year of Darius I (r. 522-486 BC): Hag. 2: 10; 18; Ezr. 6: 15]. This temple was nearly demolished by Herod the Great for a reconstruction that began in 19 BC and ended in 64 AD, during the reign of Agrippa, for a total of 83 years. It lasted until 70 AD, when Titus destroyed it.



The construction of Solomon's temple

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; 1 Kin 6: 1 adds, “In the four hundred eightieth year after the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, which corroborates the hypothesis that the date of the Exodus is 1446 BC”]. 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, for this is the measure given by the footnotes in NIV.

The Outer Court – Utensils

The molten sea or sea of cast metal

The bronze basin of the Tabernacle of Moses 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 bronze basin of Moses



The molten sea of Solomon

The bronze basins

The molten sea had a different purpose from the ten bronze basins around the temple. In the bronze basins, five to right and five to the left, they were to rinse what was used for the burnt offering. But the molten 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).



The Altar of bronze or the Altar for the burnt offerings

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 Holy Place

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 (like the Menorah in the Tabernacle of Moses).

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” (NRSV); “In the same way he made four-sided jambs of olive wood for the entrance to the main hall. He also made two pine doors, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings.” (NIV).

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 (cf. Ezek. 41: 18-19) and were overlaid with gold, and no stone was seen (1 Kin. 6: 15; 18).



The outer door



Decoration of these doors



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

The Menorah

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 thâhor miqshâh ‘âsâh ‘eth-hammenorâhyerêkhâh veqânâh gebhiy’eyhâ kaphtoreyhâ upherâcheyhâ mimmennâhhâyû.” **Menorah** (מְנוֹרָה – Strong #4501 – a feminine noun) 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 text of 2 Chr. 3: 1-14.



Menorah – the lampstand of seven lamps given to Moses

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 Zerubbabel 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).

The Arch of Titus

In the temple restored by Herod the Menorah was also present, but with the destruction of the Temple by Titus in 70 AD, 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 AD), sometimes called the great Jewish revolt, which was the first of three great rebellions of the Jews of Judea against the Roman Empire.

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 AD, 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.



The Arch of Titus

The tables with the bread of Presence

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; NIV, wick trimmers*], basins [sprinkling bowls], dishes for incense, and firepans [NIV, dishes and censers], 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.

The table signified communion and intimacy with God, and the bread signified food and divine provision.



The altar of incense or Golden Altar

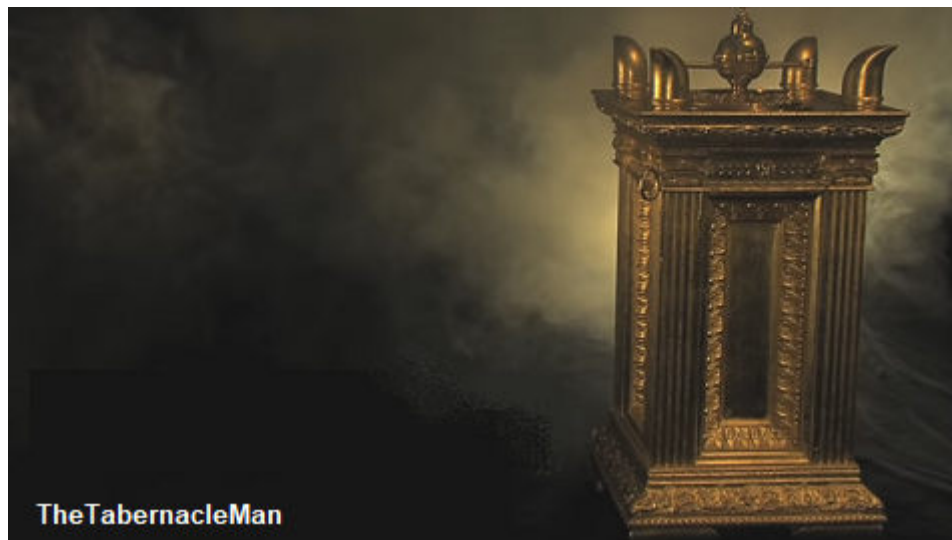
The altar of incense or golden altar, although placed in front of the Ark, out of the curtain in the Holy Place, was considered a part of the Holy of Holies (Heb. 9: 1-10). 1 Kin. 7: 48 says: “So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the Lord: the golden altar, the golden table [2 Chr. 4: 8: tables] for the bread of the Presence.”

We do not know the exact measurements of the altar of incense in Solomon’s Temple, but in the Tabernacle of Moses, it was made of acacia wood, overlaid with

gold, and its measurements were: 1 cubit long, 1 cubit wide, and 2 cubits high (approximately 50 cm x 50 cm x 1 m – Ex 30: 1-10; Ex 37: 25-28). It also had four horns (raised points) on its edges and four rings on the sides through which two poles could be passed so that it could be carried.

- In Ex. 30: 1-10 it is written: “You shall make an altar on which to offer incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. It shall be one cubit long, and one cubit wide; it shall be square, and shall be two cubits high; its horns shall be of one piece with it. You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top, and its sides all around and its horns; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. And you shall make two golden rings for it; under its molding on two opposite sides of it you shall make them, and they shall hold the poles with which to carry it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. You shall place it in front of the curtain that is above the ark of the covenant, in front of the mercy seat that is over the covenant, where I will meet with you. Aaron shall offer fragrant incense on it; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall offer it, and when Aaron sets up the lamps in the evening, he shall offer it, a regular incense offering before the Lord throughout your generations. You shall not offer unholy incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; and you shall not pour a drink offering on it. Once a year Aaron shall perform the rite of atonement on its horns. Throughout your generations he shall perform the atonement for it once a year with the blood of the atoning sin offering. It is most holy to the Lord.”

The golden altar is a life style of prayer and the brightness of the Lord (gold) in our lives, as a good habit that should be cultivated so that our soul and our spirit are in tune with God’s word, i.e., with the Lord’s thoughts for us, and thus, we can reflect His brightness and His truth.



The Holy of Holies

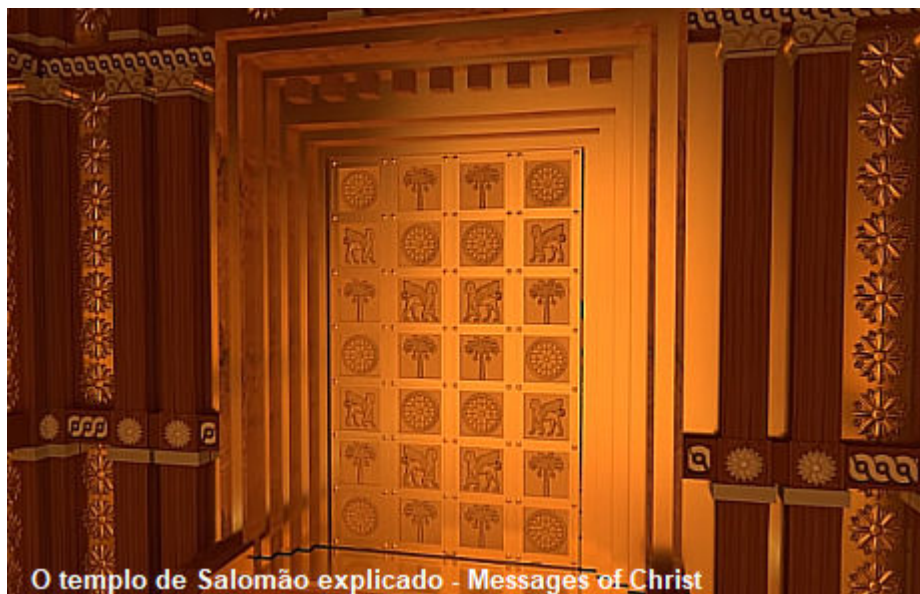
In 1 Kin. 6: 31-32 it is written: “For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood; the lintel and the doorposts were five-sided. He covered the two doors of olive wood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers; he overlaid them with gold, and spread gold on the cherubim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



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



Decoration of the door

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 (unlike the Tabernacle of Moses, which had five columns on the outside and four on the inside, between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place – Ex 36: 35-38).

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 cherubim in the Holy of Holies face the Holy Place

The Ark of the Covenant

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 carried, 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.



The exterior of the Temple

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 temple treasures 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).

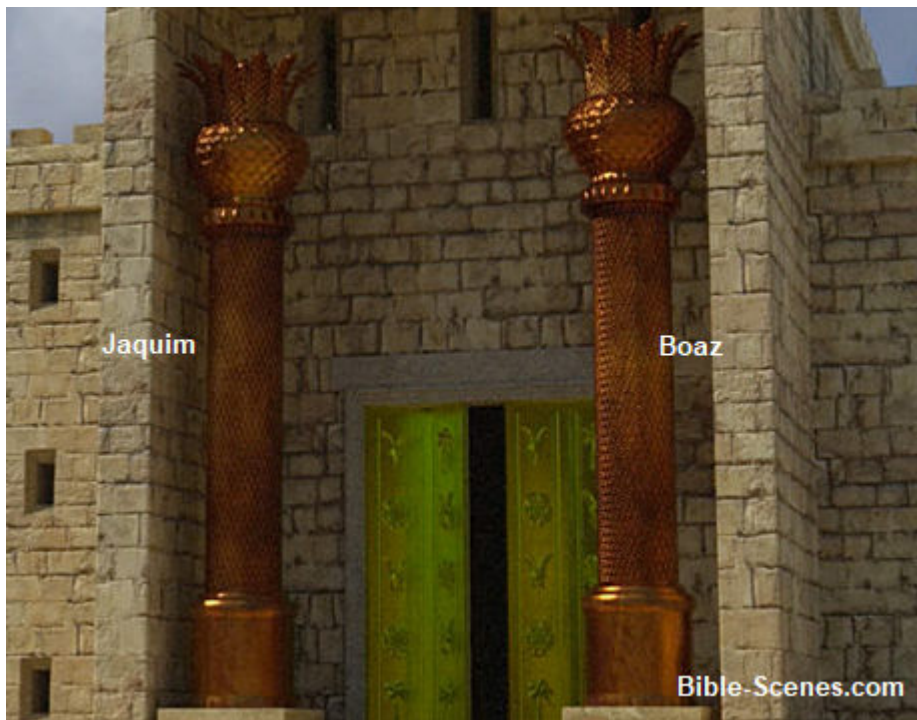


The bronze Columns

- 2 Chr. 3: 15-17 [NRSV]: “In front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high [18.13 meters, both of them], with a capital of five cubits on the top of each [2.59 meters]. 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 [south], the other on the left [north]; the one on the right he called Jachin, and the one on the left, Boaz.” NIV writes: He erected the pillars in the front of the temple, one to the south and one to the north. The one to the south he named Jakin [Jakin probably means he establishes.] and the one to the north Boaz. [Boaz probably means in him is strength.]”

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 that gave power to the Davidic Dynasty [oracle = prophecy or the word of God; divine counsel, responses or utterances; in Hebrew, *dabar*, דָּבָר, ‘thing’, ‘word’, Strong #1697; in Greek: λόγιον, *logion*, ‘divine responses or utterances’, Strong #3051]: “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.



Details of the columns

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.”

The Second Temple – Zerubbabel

Let’s talk a little about **the second temple**, built by Zerubbabel and led by Ezra the priest, after the exile in Babylon. The exiles returned in 538 BC with the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezr. 1: 7-11). They started the construction of the new Temple in 536 BC but stopped until 520 BC, and finished in 516 BC (Ezr. 1: 1-11; Ezr. 3: 2-3; 8; 10). Therefore, this temple took four years to be built [520-516 BC – 2nd to 6th year of Darius I (r. 522-486 BC): Hag 2: 10; 18; Ezr 6: 15] and 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 only fell into the hands of Pompey, a Roman general, in 63 BC. Therefore, it lasted for 473 years (536 C to 63 BC) until Pompey. But it was not destroyed by Pompey, only invaded. In 19 BC, Herod the Great tore down much of the ancient construction and began its restoration (total = 517 years from the 2nd temple to Herod); after 46 years (Jn. 2:20 – 27 AD) it was still not finished. It was finished in 64 AD, in the time of Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa I. This temple of Herod lasted until 70 AD, with the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Titus; therefore, 89 years with Herod.

Thus, “Second Temple” is a designation used for both the temples of Zerubbabel and Herod. In total, the second temple (Zerubbabel and Herod) lasted 606 years (536 BC to 70 AD).

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 sumptuous 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.



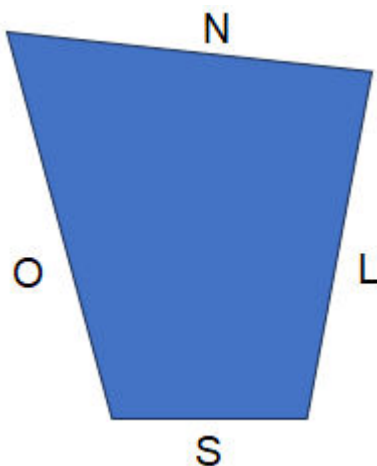
The Second Temple led by Ezra



The Second Temple in the times of the Maccabees

'Herod's temple' or the Second Temple restored by Herod

Herod the Great began the restoration of the temple in 19 BC but continued with its repair by Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa I, until 64 AD. Titus completely destroyed it in AD 70. Thus, Herod's Temple stood for about 89 years. When completed, the Temple Mount was a walled platform shaped like a scalene trapezoid, 1,500 feet (472 m) from north to south **(1)** and about 1,000 feet (304 m) from east to west **(2)**. It measured about 57 square miles (144 km²) [Source: BYU Religious Studies Center New Testament History, Culture, and Society; Lincoln H. Blumell, Editor]. Its walls were built of huge stone blocks 2 feet (60 cm) high and 16 feet (5 m) long (Mark 13: 1) [J. D. Douglas – The New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition 1995], although Josephus mentions: "Now the temple was built of stones that were white and strong: and each of their length was twenty-five cubits (13,00 m); their height was eight (4,2 m), and their breadth about twelve (6,3 m). The temple had doors also at the entrance, and lintels over them, of the same height with the temple itself." [Flavius Josephus, 'Antiquities of the Jews', Book 15, chapter 11.3]. This account by Josephus is consistent with recent archaeological finds of a stone in the southwest wall of Herod's temple. It measures 13.6 meters (45 ft) long, 3.5 meters (11 ft) high, and 4.5 meters (15 ft) wide. The measurements vary slightly from one source to another depending on the value used for the sacral or mosaic cubit (51.8 cm), which was used in its construction; therefore, the rounding may be up or down, but there is not a large discrepancy. It would look something like this:



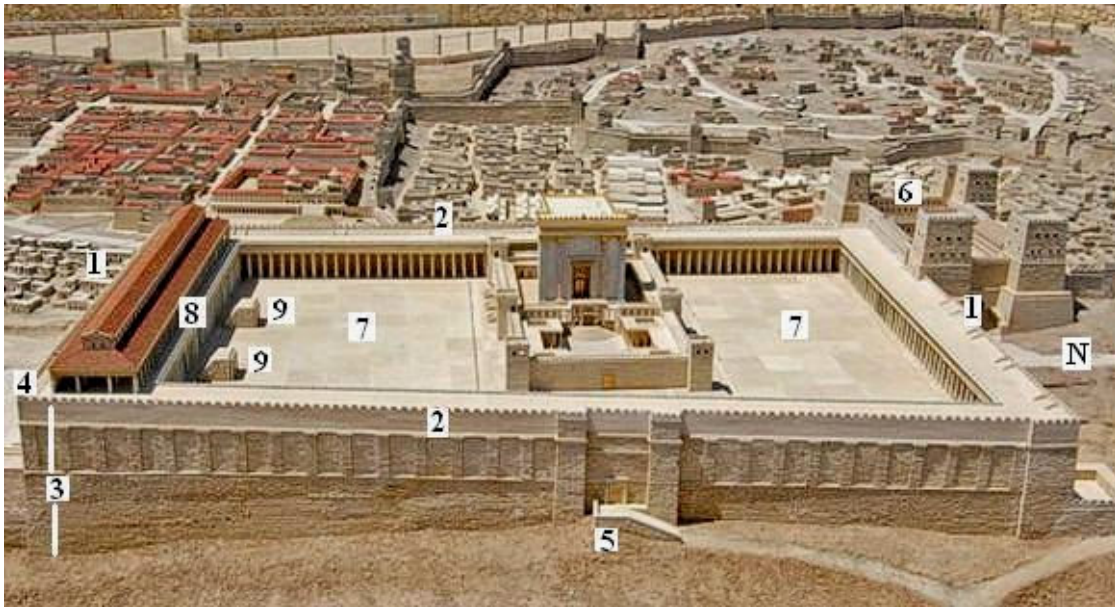
The trapezoid format of the platform of Herod's Temple

Time of construction of Herod's Temple

According to Flavius Josephus, the temple itself was built in a year and a half (by the priests instructed by Herod himself, because Gentiles could not build the holy courts). The porticoes and surrounding courtyards were built in eight years (Antiquities 15:420-21). However, the construction of the entire complex continued for more than eighty years from the time it was begun and was not completed until AD 64 (Antiquities 20:219), a total of 83 years. Most scholars believe that the cubit used in the construction of the temple was the long cubit, known as the sacral cubit, primitive cubit, or Mosaic cubit, mentioned in Ezekiel 43: 13 (51.8 cm, one cubit plus four fingers).

On the southeast, facing the Kidron Valley, the inner court of the temple was about 50 meters above the rock, not counting the descent to the base of the Valley **(3)**, which can confirm Josephus' writings about an immense height if we count the base of the valley and the top of the Royal Stoa: "And this cloister (*He was speaking of the Royal*

Portico or Stoa) deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun. For while the valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, this farther vastly high elevation of the cloister stood upon that height: insomuch that if any one looked down from the top of the battlements, or down both those altitudes, he would be giddy: while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth.” [Flavius Josephus, ‘Antiquities of the Jews’, Book 15, chapter 11.5]. Some historians hypothesize 167 m. Perhaps the parapet above this edge was the pinnacle (4) of the temple (Matt. 4: 5), as archaeologist Benjamin Mazar considered.



Pinnacle of the temple

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). The outer

court of the temple, also called Court of the Gentiles (7), in the south had a building within the walls, which was called the Royal Portico or Stoa (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).

The Antonia Fortress

To protect the Holy Temple, Herod built the Antonia Fortress on the northwest wall of the same, over an ancient fortress of Hasmonean kings and high priests; and they called it the tower (Baris), “in which were repositied the vestments of the High Priest, which the High Priest only put on at the time when he was to offer sacrifice.” Those garments King Herod kept in that place; and after his death they remained in the power of the Romans until the time of Tiberius Caesar. When Herod the Great fortified it, he named it in honor of Mark Antony, the triumvir, who was his friend and the Roman ruler of Judea; hence the name of the tower: Antonia. The “walls were square, and strong, and of extraordinary firmness.” [Flavius Josephus, ‘Antiquities of the Jews’, book 15, chap. 11.4]. The Antonia Fortress 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 Roman garrison was there. From the top of the towers the soldiers observed the temple and through one or two doors they could walk on the wall that surrounded it.

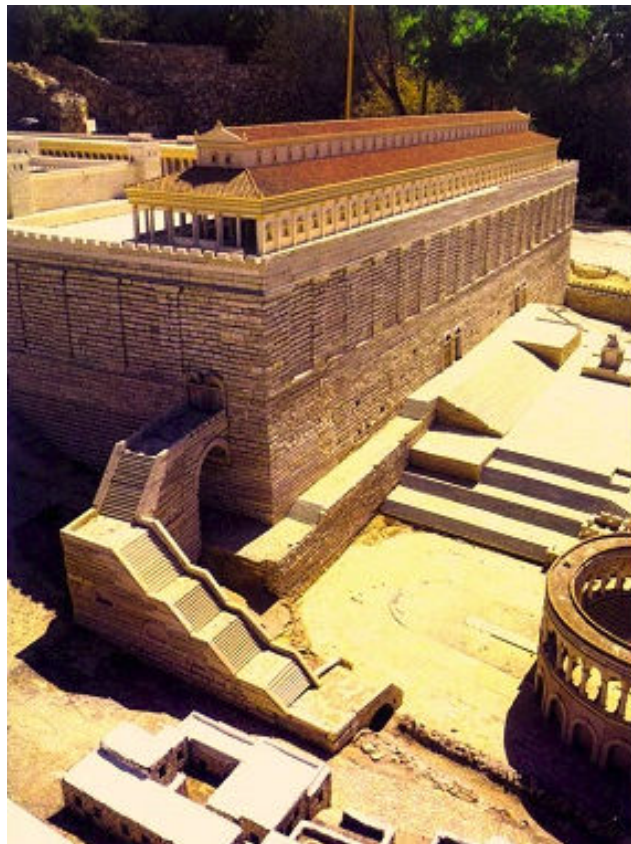


The Royal Portico or Royal Stoa

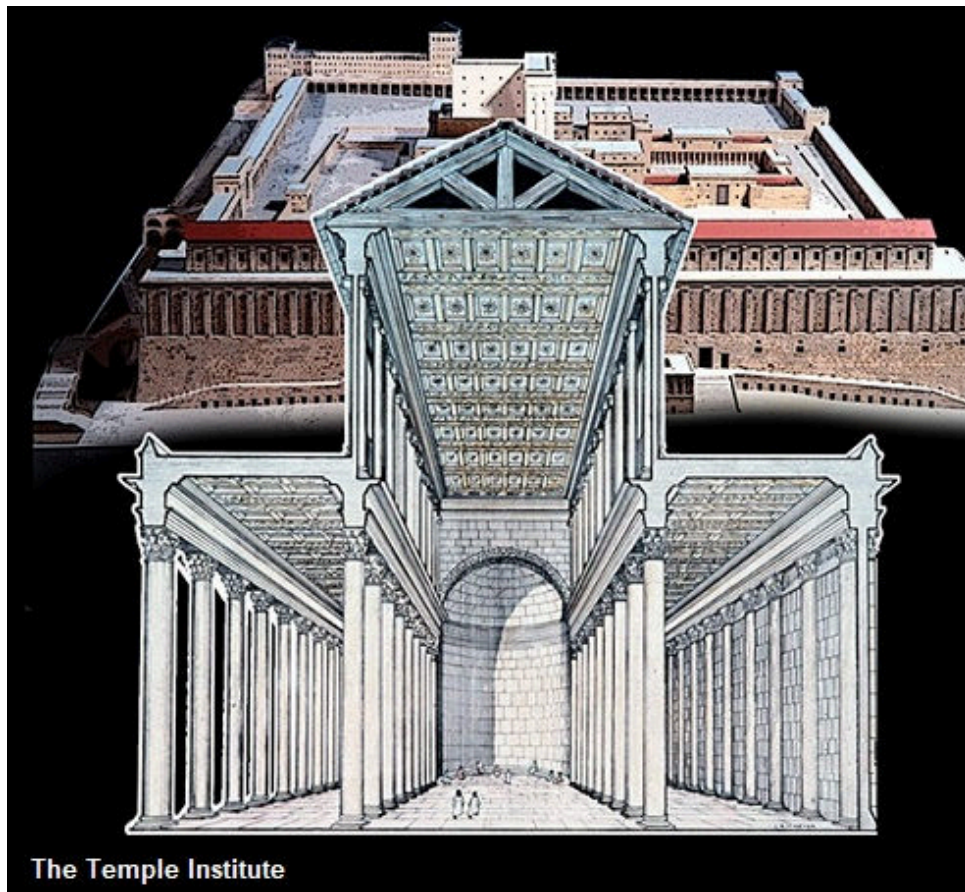
The Royal Stoa (8) (Ha-stav ha-Malkhuti; הסטיו המלכותי, also known as the Royal Colonnade, Royal Portico or Royal Basilica – not to be confused with the Colonnades or Solomon’s Portico) was also constructed by Herod the Great. It was a basilica. In Ancient Roma, a basilica was a large public building with multiple functions, usually built alongside the town’s forum. It corresponded to an element of Greek architecture that consisted of a wide corridor or covered portico intended for public use, with the

roof supported by columns or pillars. Stoa, in Greek is written as Στοά; stoá; lit. 'portico' or 'colonnade'; pl. stoai. The Stoa was a center of public and commercial activity (it was used for banking, courts and other commercial transactions). Its southwest corner was the place where a priest would blow the ram's horn to announce the beginning of the holy days to the people of the residential and commercial districts of Jerusalem. Until the 30s AD, the Portico served as the seat of the Sanhedrin. Some ancient historians believe that Herod's Royal Stoa served as a 'mint', administered by the priesthood.

The historian Flavius Josephus in his work "Antiquities of the Jews" praised the structure of the building for its beautiful construction and wrote that the Basilica had four rows of columns along its length, each row consisting of 40 columns; therefore, it had three parallel halls, the central aisle being 13.5 meters wide and the two lateral ones 9 meters wide. Each column was approximately 1.5 meters in diameter and 15 meters high. The central aisle was twice the height of the aisles, probably about 30-33 meters high. The Israeli archaeologist Ehud Netzer estimates that the Royal Stoa was approximately 33 meters wide and 240 meters long, although Josephus gives its length as that of a Roman stadium (185 meters). The ceiling was decorated with wooden sculptures, representing all kinds of designs. Josephus also describes two more columns, totalizing 162 columns in the building, and it is thought that they were probably at the eastern end of the central nave, as this type of Greco-Roman architecture usually had a semicircular eastern finish with the last 2 columns, and at the western end there was a door.



Royal Portico or Royal Stoa on the south wall



Hypothetical drawing of the interior of the Stoa



Royal Portico or Royal Stoa – Reconstruction (Israel Museum in Jerusalem)

Outer gates of the temple

Flavius Josephus, in his description of Herod's Temple, mentioned a total of 22 or 23 large gates throughout the temple. Some sources may mention different numbers of gates, due to different interpretations of Josephus' sources or the inclusion of smaller gates or openings in the dividing walls. In fact, we can accurately count ten gates in the inner courts (not counting the two smaller ones next to Nicanor's main door and the two secondary side entrances in the Women's Courtyard, but which have no name = fourteen) and eight in the outer walls leading into the city. That would make a total of 22 doors, in fact.

Archaeological evidence has determined that there were the following outer city gates to the Temple Mount: one on the east (Golden Gate), two on the south: the Double Gate and the Triple Gate of Huldah, which we see in the image below (10), four on the west: Robinson's Arch, Wilson's Arch, Barclay's Gate, and Warren's Gate (which we will see next). The Northern Gate, near the Antonia Fortress, which many refer to as the Sheep Gate (or Tadi Gate, according to the Mishnah), is a lesser gate (but of the same size as the other gates) and was not used as an entrance for pilgrims.

The most common entrance for pilgrims coming to the Temple, and passing through the mikveh (ritual bathing pools), were the two splendid southern gates, the Double Gate and the Triple Gate of Huldah, at the front of a staircase of 30 steps, about 210 feet (64 m) long. The steps were grouped 2 by 2, and ended in a group of 4 at the top. The Huldah Gates led through corridors beneath the Stoa, up to the Temple square, and served as the main entrance to the Temple complex for worshippers. These two entrances (9) you can see above in the panoramic image of the Temple.



South view of the temple – Huldah Gates



Detail of the Monument of Huldah or Huldah's tomb

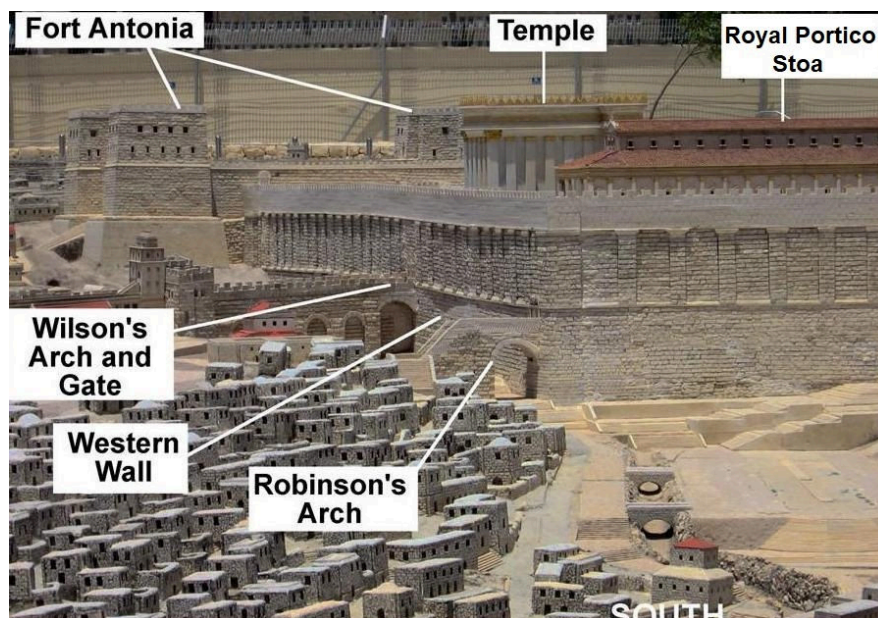


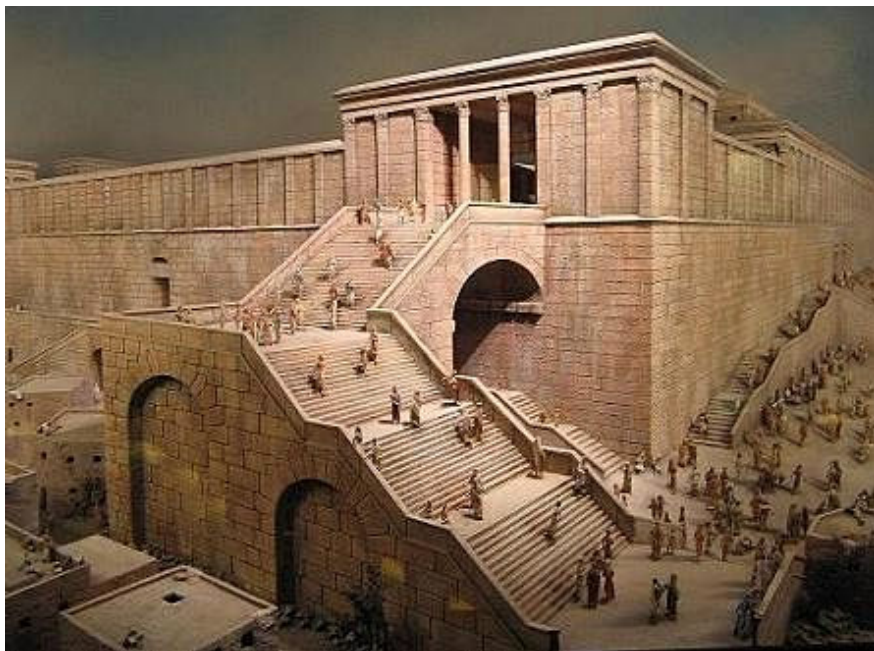
Bible-Scenes.com (Jeremy Park)

The staircase and the arch is what we call today **Robinson's arch**. 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). 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. Robinson's arch was built to connect Tyropoeon valley with Royal Portico Stoa (8), located in the southern part of the temple. The door opened into the Royal Portico in the Outer Court of the Temple. Robinson's arch was one of the four gates along the western wall of the temple, next to another arch known as **Wilson's Arch** (to the north of Robinson's arch). Robinson's arch 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.

Wilson's Arch is the modern name for an ancient stone arch in Jerusalem, the first of a row of arches that supported a great bridge connecting the Temple Mount with the Upper City on the Western Hill and leading to the King's Palace ("Now in the western quarters of the enclosure of the temple there were four gates. The first led to the King's palace, and went to a passage over the intermediate valley." – Flavius Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," Book 15; Ch. 11:5). According to Josephus, south of Wilson's Arch, between it and Robinson's Arch, was a third gate in the Western Wall (Barclay's Gate); and north of Wilson's Arch, before reaching the northern area of the temple, was a fourth gate, called Warren's Gate. These two gates no longer physically exist, but the area where they once stood (the Western Wall) is today a sacred site in the Western Wall.





The remains of Robinson's arch

Today, in the Western Wall, there is a passage leading to Wilson's Arch on the left, under which the Jews built a synagogue



Western Wall, with the passage leading to Wilson's Arch on the left
– photo from 2006



Northeast view of the temple – Golden Gate



The Golden Gate today

The Golden Gate **(12)** or the Mercy Gate (in Hebrew, שַׁעַר הַרַחֲמִים – Sha'ar Haraḥamim). 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). Of all 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 may have been built by Emperor Justinian I in 520 AD, on the ruins of other buildings in Jerusalem. Some historians believe it was built in the 7th century by the Umayyad Caliphate. However, the Mishnah refers to it as the 'Gate of Shushan' (or Susa in English), since it is related to an eastern gate of the Second Temple in Jerusalem when the exiles returned from Babylon; hence its name. The Jews are said to have carved an image of the city of Susa on the gate as a

token of gratitude to the Persians for building the Second Temple [Source: The Temple Institute]. Other sources in Hebrew literature say that it was Cyrus himself who ordered the builders to carve an image of the skyline of Susa over the main entrance, for he was concerned about the possibility of a Jewish rebellion and to remind his Jewish subjects that they were still subjects of the Persian Empire. According to rabbinical sources, including Josephus, the gate of Herod's time was the same as all other gates, measuring twenty cubits high and ten cubits wide (10 meters x 5 meters), with square lintel doors and gold overlays. The current structure has no Herodian characteristics. Rabbis say that a bridge connected it to the Mount of Olives, over the Kidron Valley, and through it the priests entered and left the temple for their rituals, such as releasing the scapegoat into the desert (she'ir l'azazel (שְׁעִיר לַעֲזָאזֵל) as atonement on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) [Source: The Temple Institute].

The current Golden Gate was rebuilt over of the ruins of the earlier gate where Jesus entered the city on Sunday before Passover (Palm Sunday) and was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. 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 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. According to information of some researchers the Sultan 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 also a defensive reason why he did that.

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 always appeared by the east, from the side of the 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. The east was the side from where salvation would come, the Messiah. In Ezek. 44: 1-2, it is written: "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." 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; Ezek. 44: 2) and it's sealed today. 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 Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry 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, Feb.1st, 2013].

Also on the outer side of the northern wall, next to the Antonia Fortress, there is another gate, called “**Tadi Gate**”. The Tadi Gate was little used (J. D. Douglas – The New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition 1995). It is mentioned in the Mishnah as the northern gate closest to the Place of the Hearth and the Priests’ Immersion Chamber within the Court of the Priests in the Temple area. This gate, consequently, did not serve as an entrance for pilgrims, but was used only by the Temple priests who had become impure and were immersed in the ritual bath of purification in the pool. They entered and left through a special tunnel directly to the gate. Some believe that the name was not Tadi, but Tari, which indicates the special doorpost of the gate, built of two stones, one supported by the other, forming a triangle – ‘tri’ in Greek [Source: The Temple Institute]. Like all the gates of the Holy Temple, the Tadi Gate 20 was cubits high (10 meters) and ten cubits wide (5 meters). There is no reference to it in the work of Flavius Josephus, only in the Mishnah.

In the image below, you can see a Model of the Fortress and Tadi Gate (with triangular top) – wikipedia.org



Solomon’s Portico or Solomon’s colonnades

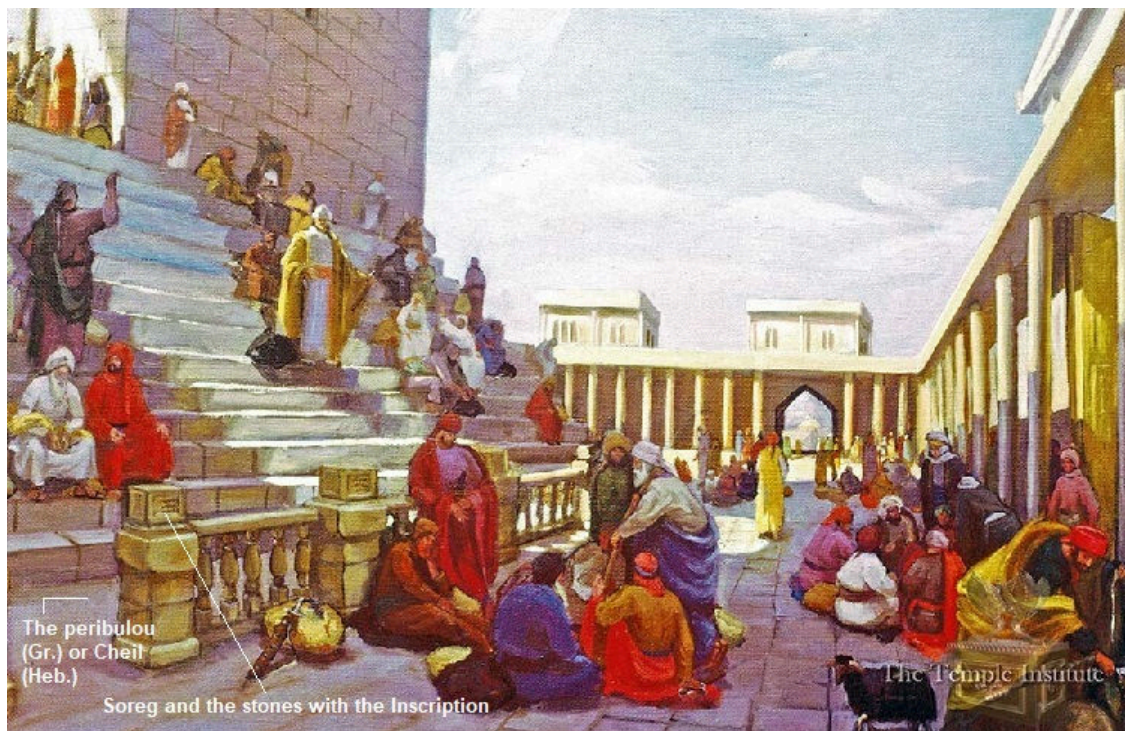
Solomon’s Colonnade or Solomon’s Portico extended throughout the eastern side (Jn. 10: 23; Acts 3: 11; Acts 5: 12). It opened to the East side of the walls through the Golden Gate. It was under these colonnades that scribes kept their schools and their discussions (Lk. 2: 46; Lk. 19: 47; Mk. 11: 27), and in front, in the court of the Gentiles,

is where merchants and money changers had set up their tables (Jn. 2: 14-16; Lk. 19: 45-46). Do not confuse it with the Royal Portico or Stoa, which served as the Sanhedrin and other commercial and political affairs for the priests and leaders.



The Balustrade of Soreg and the Court of the Gentiles

As I mentioned before, the outer court of the temple was also called the **Court of the Gentiles**. The place was basically a bazaar, with merchants selling many things, especially sacrificial animals and edible products for offerings in the temple during the feasts. Currency was also exchanged: Roman currency was exchanged for Tyrian money (Greek currency) and even for the temple shekel, especially when Jerusalem was full of Jewish pilgrims coming for Passover. It was there that Jesus drove out the money changers and sellers as a sign of indignation against commerce in the House of God. Everyone knew that the worshipers should present a sacrifice considered without blemish by the priest. They knew that those who went there should pay the tax per capita, using the currency of the temple (the shekel of the sanctuary), for the priests refused to accept foreign currency (Roman and Greek). Their money-changers were there to exchange money. They just could not acknowledge that they did this for exorbitant rates and that they rejected any animal that was not bought in the temple by these inflated prices. It was a great hypocrisy disguised as appropriate worship to God. That's why Jesus was angry. The holy and the profane walked there together in the House of His Father. This bothered Him too much: the lack of reverence to God, exploitation, theft, hypocrisy, falsehood, injustice and sin.



The inner area was slightly higher than the Court of the Gentiles, and was surrounded by a balustrade (It means a series of balusters; balustrade is a small ornamental pillar or column, forming a handrail, parapet or railing) called the balustrade of Soreg (סורג, Soreg, in Hebrew means 'gate', 'railing'). To go up to the Court of Israel, inside the balustrade of Soreg, there was a staircase of 14 steps, as Josephus wrote in his work 'The War of the Jews': "For that second [court] of the temple was called the sanctuary, and one ascended to it by fourteen steps from the first court". According to Josephus, the Soreg was 1.57 m high.

The area between the Soreg and the Court of Israel is called the Cheil ('rampart'). The width of the Cheil was ten cubits (approximately 50 centimeters, or 20 inches) around the entire Courtyard. Only Jews who were pure (of the spiritual impurity due to the contact with a corpse) were permitted to enter.

The Soreg Inscription or Temple Warning Inscription

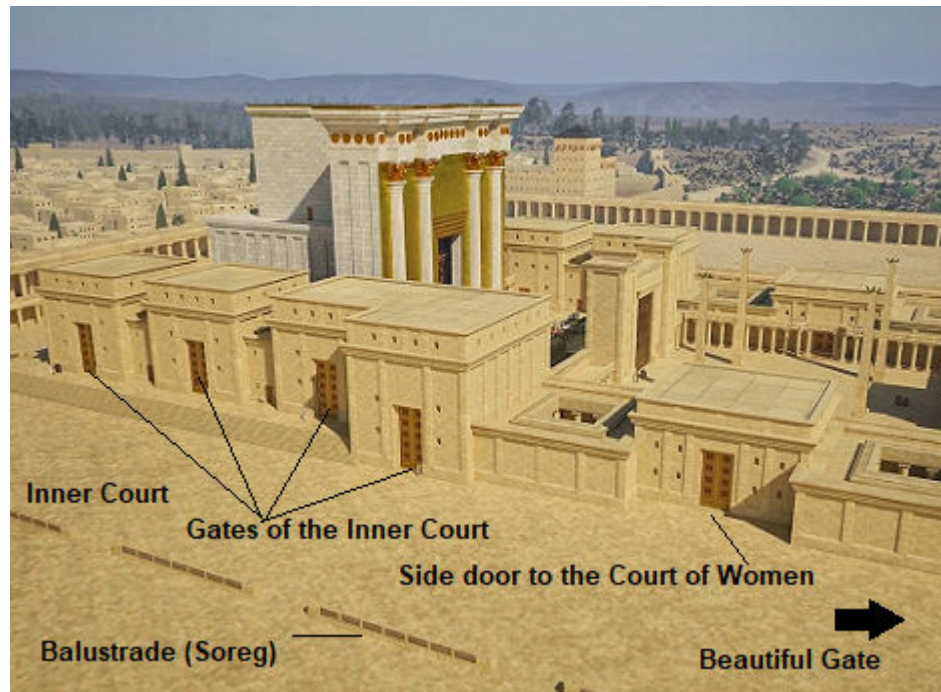
In 1871, the French archaeologist Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau discovered a stele near a courtyard on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and identified it as the 'Temple Warning Inscription', also known as the 'Temple Balustrade Inscription' or the 'Soreg Inscription.' The stone is 90 centimeters long by 60 centimeters high and 39 centimeters deep. The Soreg Inscription is an inscription that warned gentiles not to enter the sacred precincts of the Temple, where Jews were accustomed to access the inner area, i.e. the Court of Israel.

The inscription was in Greek uncial script, which is a style of capital writing with simple, rounded, uniform strokes, used for the study of ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, especially ancient books on parchment. The engraving of Greek capital letters must have been done by a very skilled stonemason. The inscription writes, in Greek, in seven lines:

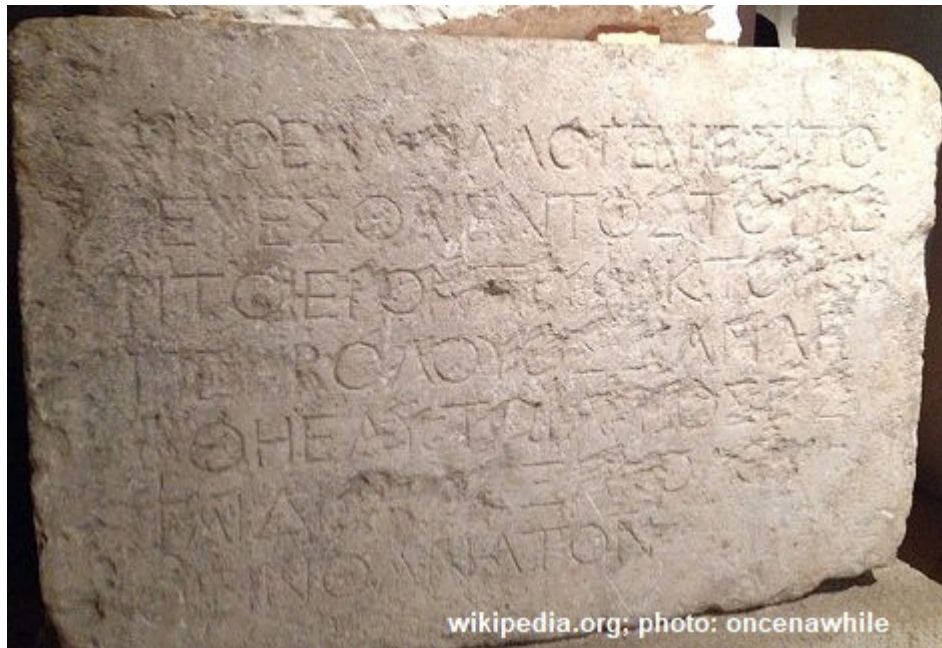
ΜΗΘΕΝΑΛΛΟΓΕΝΗΙΣΠΙΟ (No stranger is to enter)

ΡΕΥΕΣΘΑΙΕΝΤΟΣΤΟΥΠΙΕ (within the balustrade round)

ΡΙΤΟΙΕΡΟΝΤΡΥΦΑΚΤΟΥΚΑΙ (the temple and)
 ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΥΟΣΔΑΝΛΗ (enclosure. Whoever is caught)
 ΦΘΗΕΑΥΤΩΙΑΙΤΙΟΣΕΣ (will be himself responsible)
 ΤΑΙΔΙΑΤΟΕΞΑΚΟΛΟΥ (for his ensuing)
 ΘΕΙΝΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ (death)



Detail of the Balustrade



The Temple Warning inscription (Soreg Inscription) in Istanbul Archaeology Museums



A partial fragment of the inscription that is found in the Israel Museum
Photo: Yoav Dothan – wikipedia.org

The translation is: “Let no foreigner enter within the parapet (The Balustrade, a stone barrier in the outer court; in Greek, Tryphaktou, τρύφακτος) and the partition (a wall enclosing the sacred terrace within the outer court, called peribola; Peribolou, περίβολος) which surrounds the Temple precincts (‘the Holy Place’, the sacred area to which the court led, called ‘the hieron,’ ‘To hieron,’ Το ἱερόν). Anyone caught [violating] will be held accountable for his ensuing death.”

After the discovery of the inscription, it was taken by the Ottoman authorities, and it is currently in the Istanbul Archaeology Museums, a group of three archaeological museums located in Istanbul, Turkey. In 1935, a partial fragment of a copy of the inscription was found by J. H. Iliffe outside the Lions’ Gate in Jerusalem; it is on display in the Israel Museum.

The historian Flavius Josephus mentions the existence of several stelae in Greek and Latin, erected at equal intervals, forbidding foreigners from crossing the sacred precincts. Since the warning was for foreigners and not for Jews, it was not written in Hebrew. It served to protect only the inner courtyard of the Temple. In fact, it was not the Jews who had the authority to carry out the death penalty, particularly against non-Jews, but this would come from the hands of God.

Since Herod wrote the inscription, it is assumed that this warning did not apply to Gentile converts, for Herod was an converted Idumean (or Edomite) and was unlikely to exclude himself or his descendants. Some scholars, however, say that it referred to all gentiles.

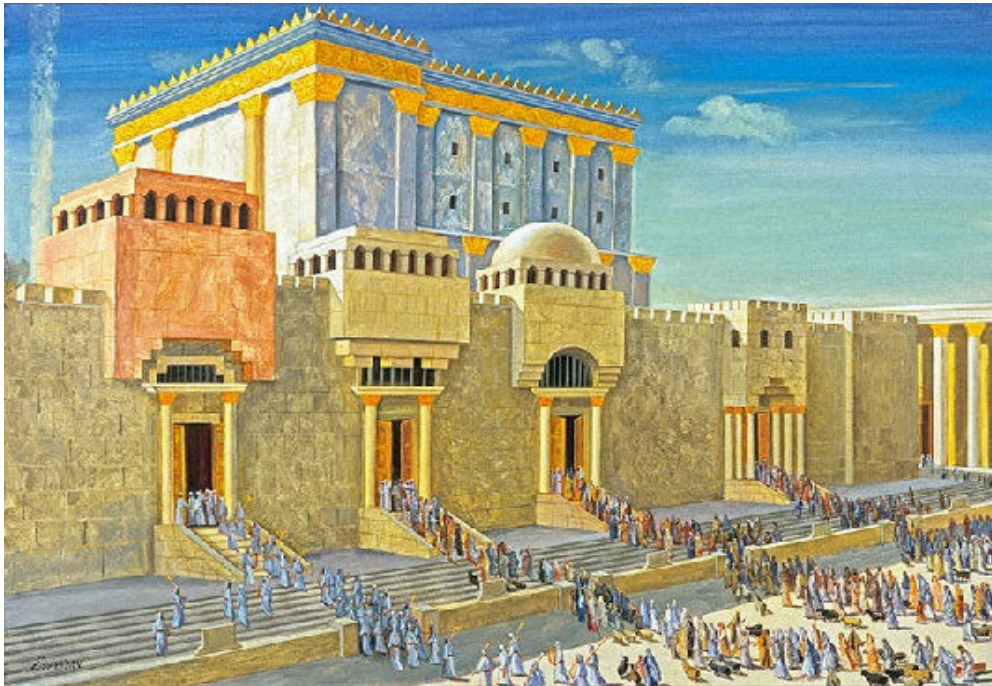
Inner Gates of the Temple

All the inner gates of the Temple were twenty cubits high (10 m) and ten cubits wide (5 m) and had a square lintel (with the exception of the Tadi Gate in the north wall of the Temple), and its doors were overlaid with gold and silver. But the Tadi Gate was also twenty cubits high (10 m) and ten cubits wide (5 m), like all the others.



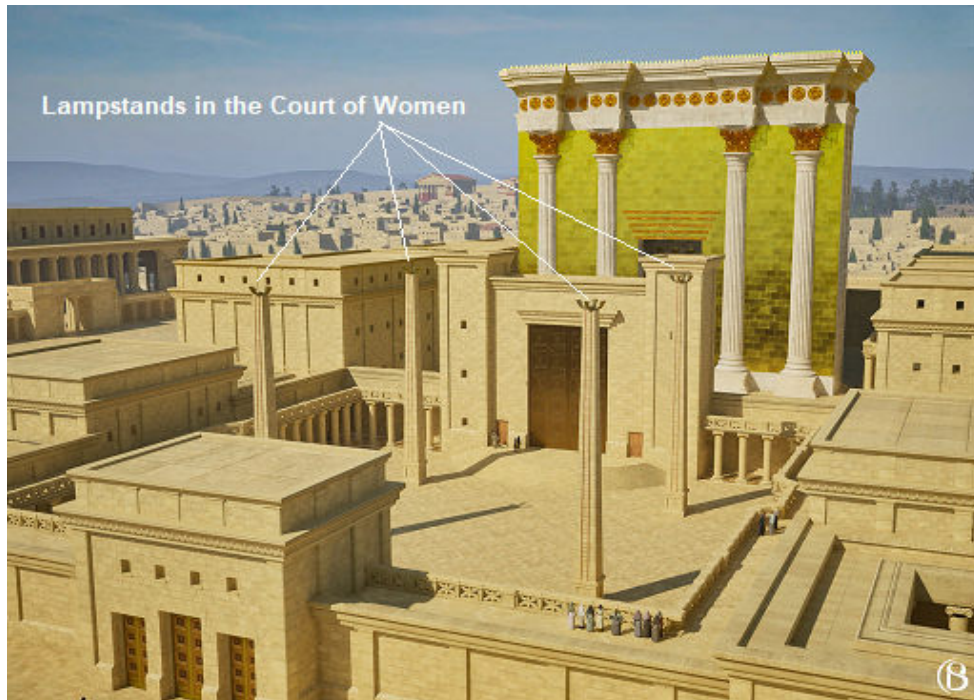
According to Flavius Josephus, there were ten entrances from the Court of the Gentiles to the inner courts: four gates gave access to the north and south sides (1), and

one gate gave access to the east side – the Beautiful Gate of the temple (2). From the tower of the Antonia Fortress there was an underground passage to the Beautiful Gate (within the walls, in the Court of the Women). There was also one that led from the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel, called the Nicanor Gate (3). Therefore: there were ten gates to the inner courts (not counting the two side gates of Nicanor and the two side doors of the Court of Women, which were secondary doors and had no names = fourteen).

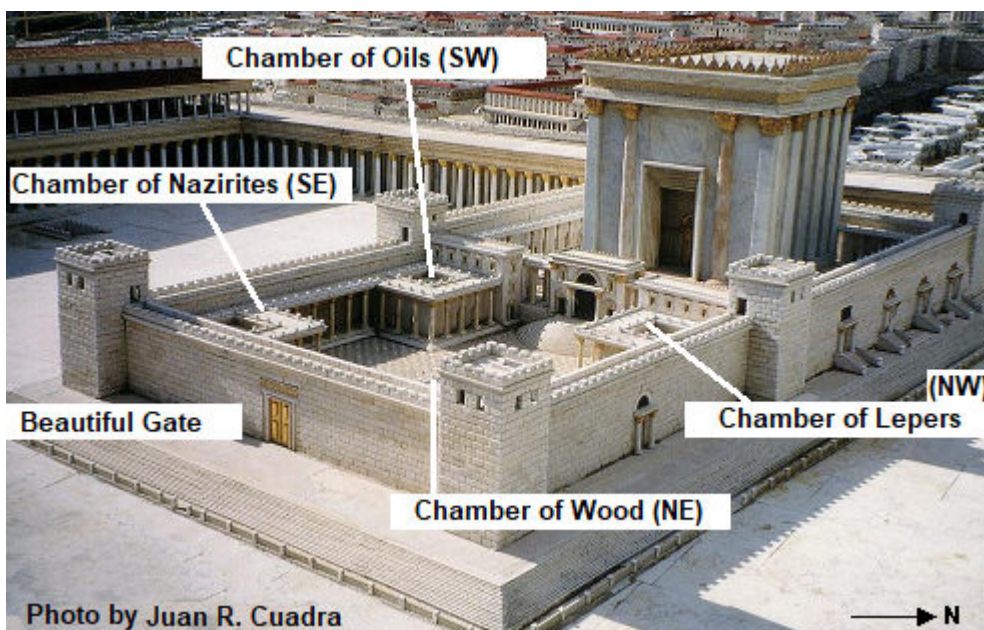


The first court inside the temple (the Court of Women – 17) contained the temple treasury (where the contributions of the worshipers were placed for the temple – Mk.

12: 41-44), just inside the Beautiful Gate. According to Flavius Josephus, four large lampstands were placed in this courtyard, each with four lamps, to light the temple, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles.



There were also four chambers: the Chamber of Wood (northeast), the Chamber of Nazirites (southeast), the Chamber of Oils (southwest) and the Chamber of Lepers (northwest).

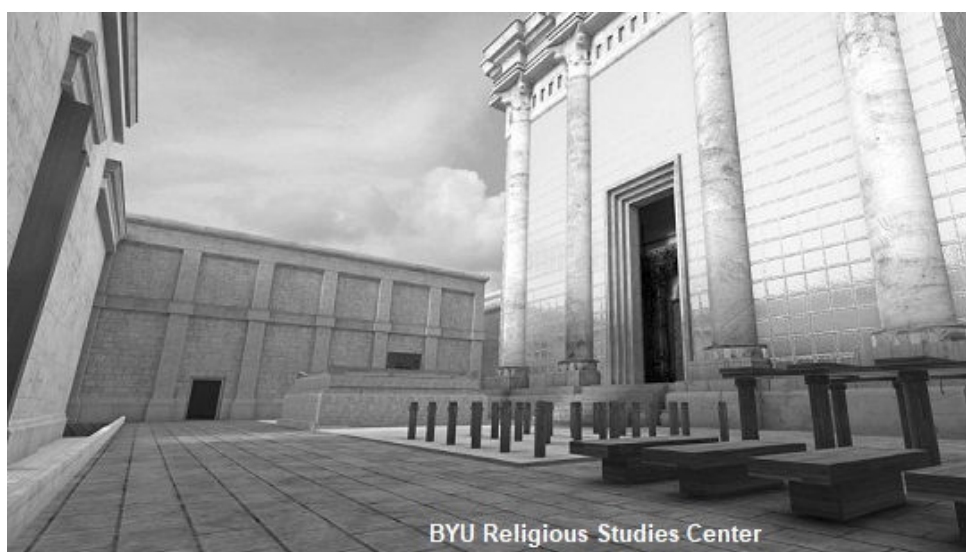


Men were allowed to enter the Court of Israel (18), raised above the level of the Court of Women (17), and at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles they could enter the inner court (the Priests' Court – 19) to walk around the altar of burnt offering. From the Court of the Women, men and women could observe the sacrifices through the Nicanor Gate.

The Nicanor Gate (20) separated the Court of Women from the Court of Israel (18), which only men entered and climbed 15 steps. According to Josephus, the gate was 25 meters high and 20 meters wide, requiring the efforts of 20 men to move. According to archaeological findings (Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement, 1903), it was named after Nicanor, a Jew who belonged to a wealthy Alexandrian Jewish family. He is mentioned in the works of Josephus and the Talmud as the donor of the bronze doors of the Court of the Women in the Second Temple in Jerusalem.



The Court of Israel and the Court of the Priests



The Court of Israel and the Priests'

The Court of Israel courtyard was a long, narrow space, separated from the Court of the Priests by a line in the sidewalk. Israelites were allowed entry to pray or prostrate themselves. The Court of Israel measured 135 by 11 cubits (70m x 5,8 m). Impure individuals, as well as those who needed to bring an offering to complete the process of their purification, but had not yet done so were forbidden entry. Someone who was unclean for touching a dead person was allowed to enter the Temple Mount, but was not allowed to enter the Court of Israel [Source: The Temple Institute].

Outside the Sanctuary, in the Temple Courtyard (or Court of the Priests), three floors of rooms (23) surrounded the north, south and west sides, to a height of 40 cubits (20.52 meters). The gates and chambers were as follows:

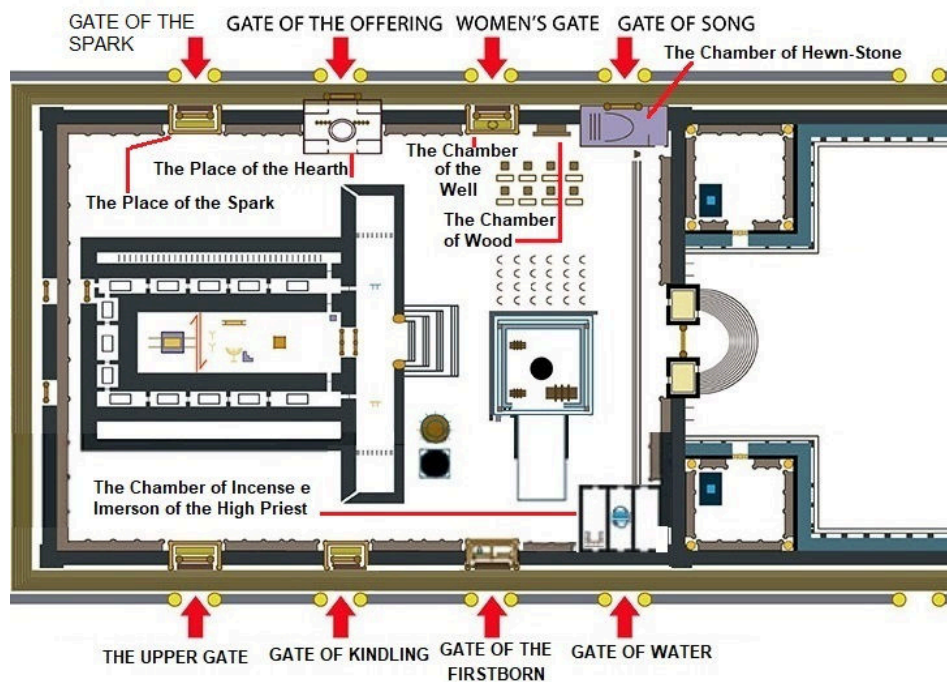
The side gates of the Temple Courtyard

The Temple Courtyard (or Court of the Priests) had four gates on the south side, beginning with the southwest corner:

- The Upper Gate (Sha'ar HaElyon) - it received this name, perhaps, because it was situated on the ascent of the mountain or to be above the Women's Court.
- The Kindling Gate (Sha'ar HaDelek), where wood was brought in.
- The Gate of Firstborn (Sha'ar HaBechorot), where people offered the firstborn animals.
- The Water Gate (Sha'ar HaMayim), where a flask (waterskin) of water from the Shiloah Spring was brought up to the Temple, to be used for the water libation in the Feast of Succot (Feast of the Tabernacles). Above this gate there was a ritual bath the (High Priest's Immersion Chamber) in which the High Priest would immerse himself on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement).

On the north side, beginning with the northwest corner, there were four gates:

- The Gate of the Spark or Gate of Jeconiah (Sha'ar Yechonyah), where kings of the Davidic line entered (Jechoniah was the last one before the Babylonian captivity). This gate was also called the Gate of the Spark because above it, there was the Place of the Spark, a chamber where the fire was kept burning and from which a spark was taken if the fire on the altar ['mizbeach' מִזְבֵּחַ] of the sacrifices was extinguished.
- The Gate of the Offering (Sha'ar HaKorban), where the most holy offerings were brought for slaughter, for the slaughter and collection of the blood were done to the north of the Courtyard. In other words, the offerings of devotion and worship, such as the burnt offering ('ôlâ qorbân or oleh qorbân).
- The Women's Gate (Sha'ar HaNashim), where women entered into the main courtyard (Azara) to pray, to give thanks or to offer their sacrifices, such as purification after childbirth, the guilt offering, their burnt offerings, etc.
- The Gate of Song (Sha'ar HaShir), where the Levites entered with their musical instruments.



The chambers of the Temple Courtyard building

Above the doors on the north side were chambers in the building, starting from the northeast:

- The Hall of Hewn Stones (Hebrew: לשכת הגזית Lishkat haGazit), also known as the Chamber of Hewn Stone, was the meeting place, or council-chamber of the Sanhedrin during the Second Temple period (6th century BCE – 1st century CE). The Talmud deduces that it was built into the north wall of the Temple in Jerusalem, and resembled a basilica, half inside the sanctuary and half outside, with doors giving access both to the temple and to the outside, through two entrances: one on the east and one on the west.



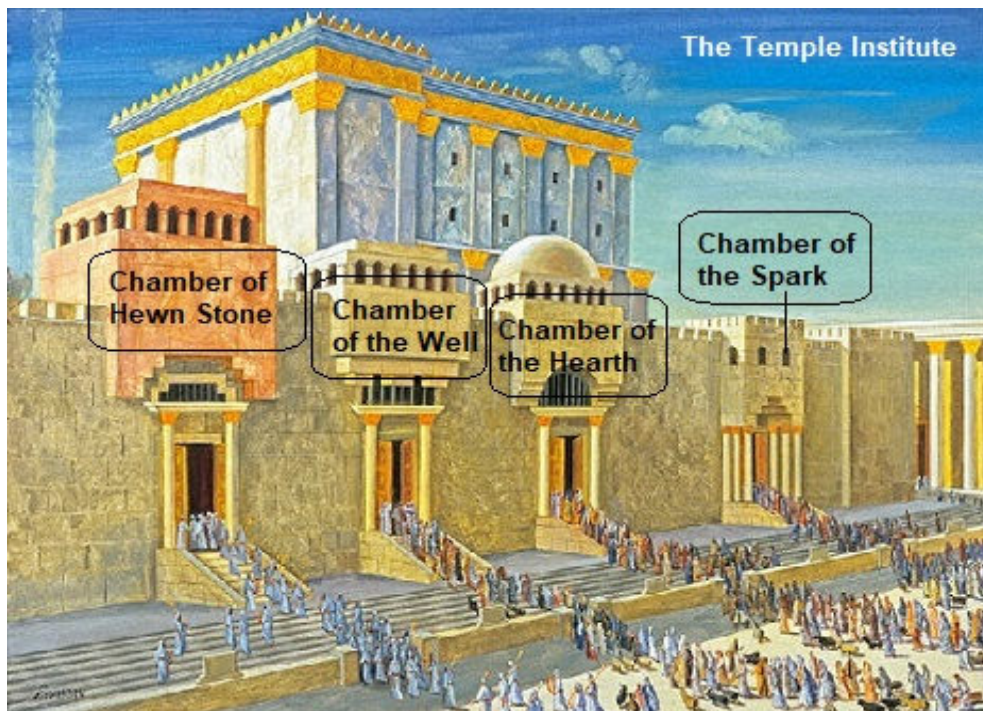
The Chamber of Hewn Stones – meeting place of the Sanhedrin

- The Chamber of Wood was the chamber of the high priest, where the Menorah was placed and where he stayed 7 days before the Day of Atonement.
- The Chamber of the Well. From this chamber, water was supplied for use in the Court. There was a wheel (In Hebrew, galgal) located within the chamber, that was used to draw the water from a pit in the ground.



The Priests' Immersion Chamber

- The Place of the Hearth had two entrances. One opened to the Court, and the second entrance opened to the Cheil (The Inner Courtyard within the Soreg). According to rabbinical sources, the priests who served in the Temple slept in a dormitory called the Hearth Room because of the fireplace that kept the sleeping quarters warm. The Hearth Room was built into the eastern part of the northern wall that surrounded the sacred precinct of the Temple itself (the Temple Courtyard or the Courtyard of the Priests). Within the sacred precinct, the priests were required to be in a state of ritual purity, so the dormitory had its own mikveh or ritual bath in a lower chamber outside the sacred precinct. In the four corners of the Place of the Hearth there were small chambers for the 'Approved Offerings' (lambs without blemishes), for the Chamber where the Showbread loaves were prepared, and the place where the priests descended through a spiral staircase into the Immersion Chamber.
- Still on the north side, further to the northwest, there was a final chamber, the Chamber of the Spark, above the Gate of the Spark (also called the Gate of Jeconiah), which was guarded by the priests; there, the fire was kept burning and a spark was taken from it if the fire on the altar [‘mizbeach’ מִזְבֵּחַ] of the sacrifices was extinguished.



In the southern part of the Court there were more chambers in the building, starting from the southeast:

- Above the Gate of Water there were two chambers: The Chamber of Avtinas (The Chamber of Incense), and adjacent to it the High Priest's Immersion Chamber. In the Chamber of Avtinas the sacred incense was prepared and stored. As reported in the Mishnah, the Avtinas family was the only family who knew the secret of how to prepare the incense. It's strange that they say there were 11 spices, when God only gave Moses 4 (Storax, Onycha, Galbanum and Frankincense), seasoned with salt.

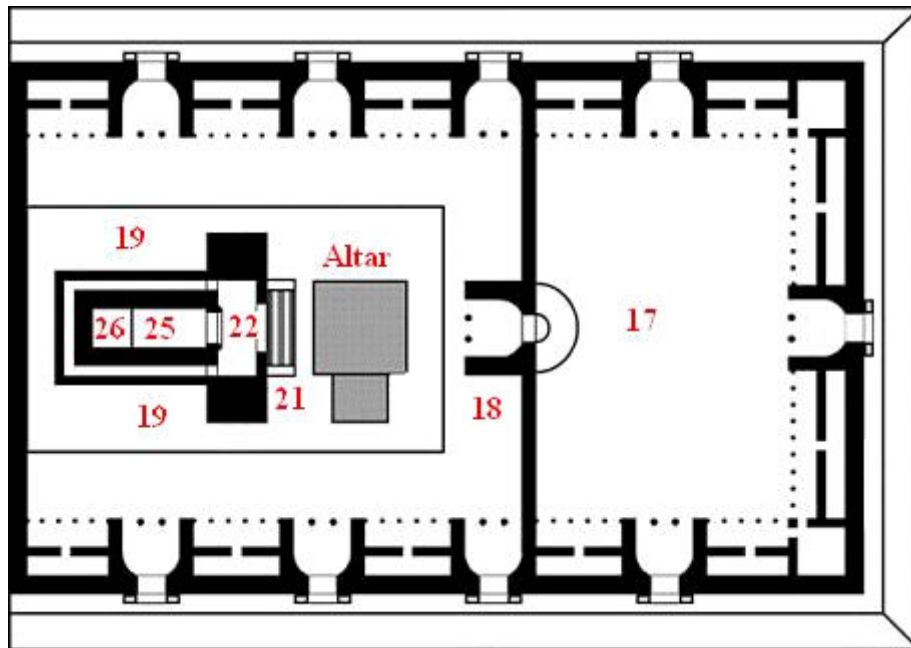
- Above the Gate of Firstborn, where people offered the firstborn animals, probably there was another chamber.

The Altar of the sacrifices

The altar was built with rough stones, not hewn, and was 22 cubits (11.40 meters) away from the portico of the sanctuary. There, only the priests and Levites were allowed to serve in the area around the altar. The stone altar measured 40 feet by 40 feet by 15 feet. A ramp led to the top of the altar, which had horns on all four corners. North of the altar was the Slaughter Place, where animals were sacrificed and skinned. Between the altar and the temple was a large bronze basin providing water for washing. Each of the priests washed his hands and feet before and after officiating in the temple (Ex. 30: 20-21).

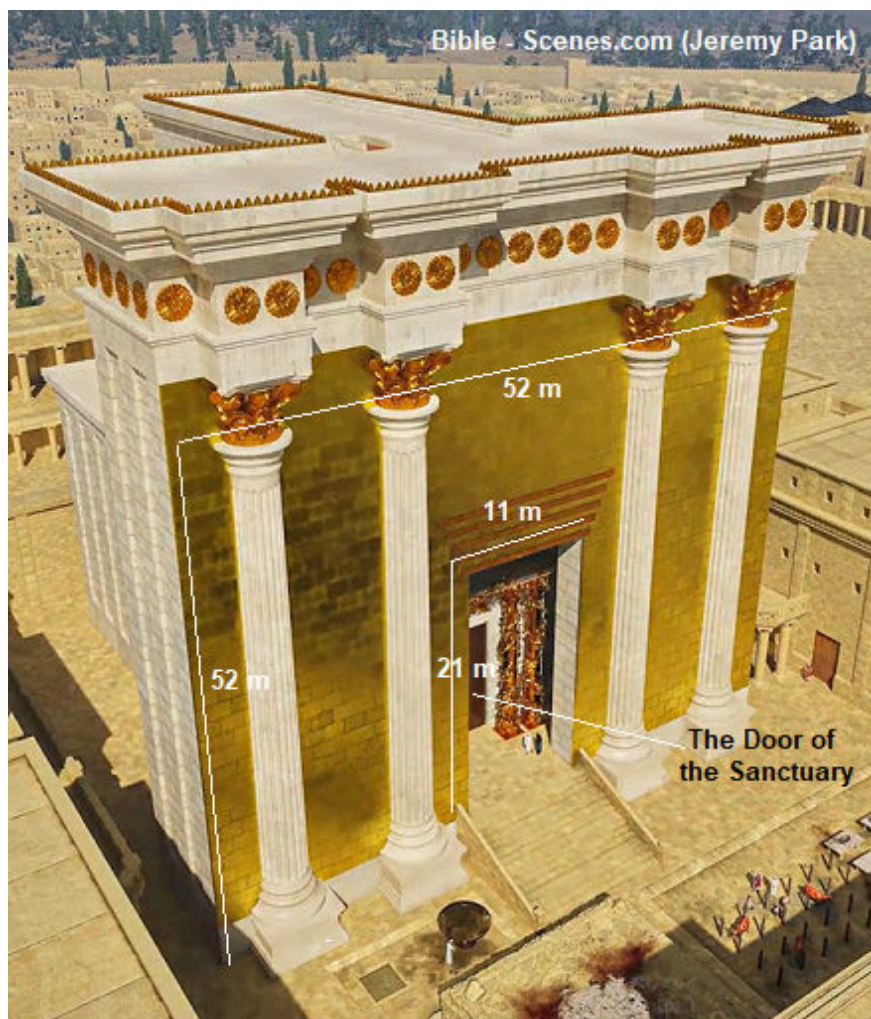


The Altar and the Courtyard where the sacrifices were made – Bible-Scenes.com
(Jeremy Park)



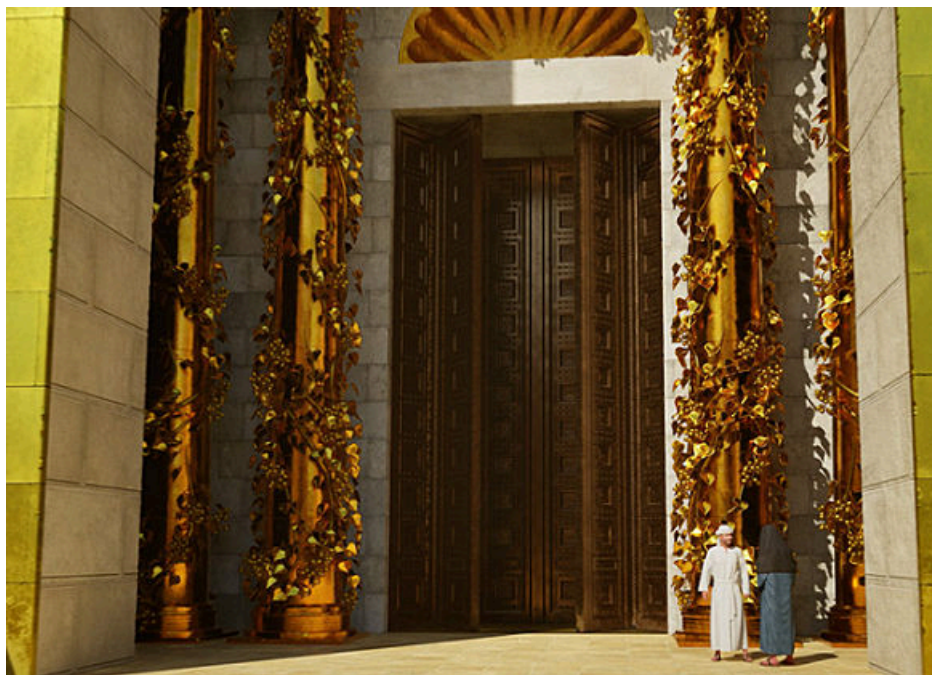
The plan of the sanctuary was a copy of Solomon's temple

The Sanctuary

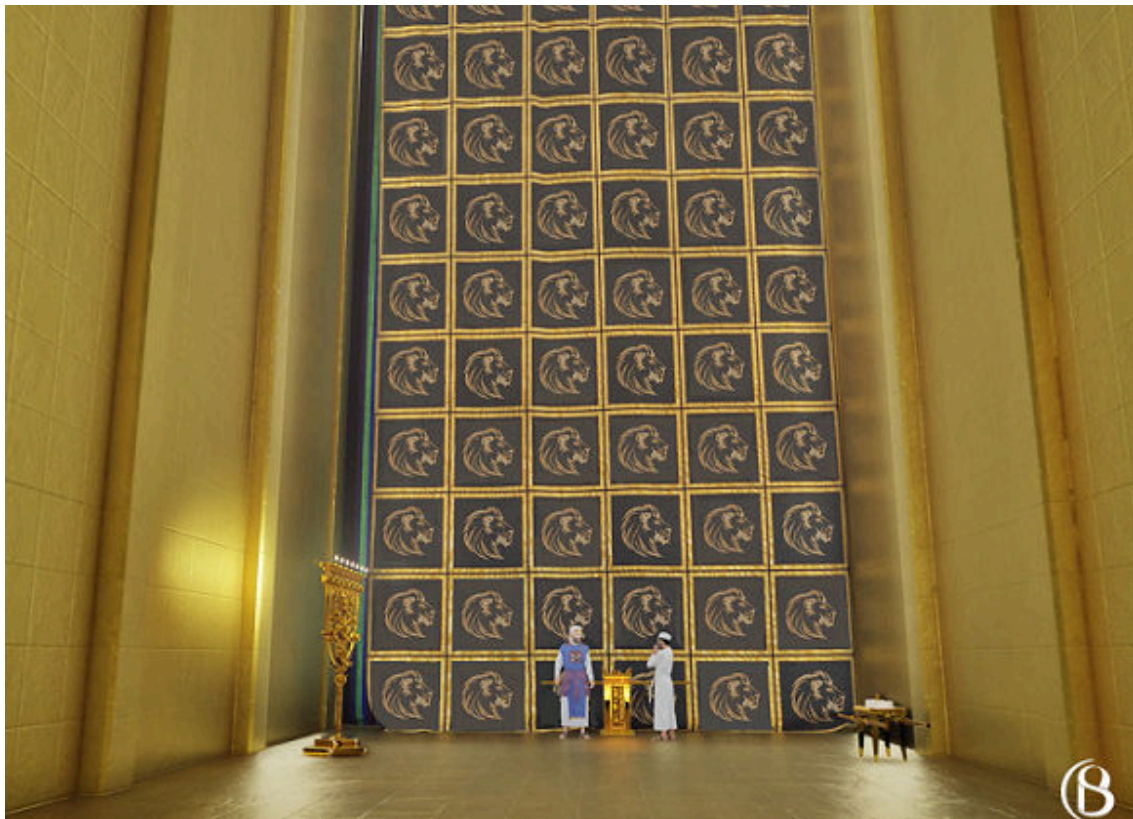


Twelve steps led up to the portico **(21)** or ‘ulam’, where stood four great marble columns; it was 100 cubits wide and 100 cubits high (51.80 meters), and its wall was overlaid with gold. Before the Entrance Door of the Sanctuary (‘Naós’) there was a space 20 cubits wide (10.36 meters) and 40 cubits high (20.52 meters), which gave access to the Holy Place **(22)**. There were gold spikes **(24)** in the roof to prevent birds from settling there.

The Sanctuary Gate had two sets of double folding doors, and according to Flavius Josephus, there were four pillars, two on each side (as seen on coins and synagogue images of the time). He also describes a golden vine hanging down from it, which was placed above the door and wrapped around the pillars: “The temple had doors also at the entrance, and lintels over them, of the same height with the temple itself. They were adorned with embroidered veils, with their flowers of purple, and pillars interwoven; and over these [*pillars*], but under the crown-work, was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and fine workmanship of which was a surprising sight to the spectators, to see what vast materials there were, and with what great skill the workmanship was done.” (“Antiquities of the Jews” 15.394; 15.395). It was decorated with the expensive gifts brought to the temple. On these stairs the priests assembled daily to recite the priestly blessing over the people (Num. 6: 23-27). Behind these double doors was a large curtain of many colors before entering the Holy Place [source: BYU Religious Studies Center; New Testament History, Culture, and Society – LDS].



The Holy Place, like the Holy of Holies, was covered entirely with gold, and contained the Menorah, the table with the Showbread (or bread of Presence), and the golden altar. Only the priests were allowed to enter to light the lamps and burn incense (like Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist). The lamp was the only source of light in the temple. This Holy Place **(25)** was 40 cubits (20.52 meters) long and 20 cubits (10.36 meters) wide.



The Holy Place (Bible-Scenes.com)

A curtain divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (‘the curtain of the temple’: Matt. 27: 51; Mark 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 temple veil consisted of two curtains hung about seven inches apart. The outer curtain was rolled up on the south side, and the inner curtain on the north side. They provided an aisle for the high priest to enter the Most Holy Place so that no one else could see into the room. And only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year [Source: BYU Religious Studies Center New Testament History, Culture, and Society – LDS]. And there was no Ark of the Covenant there, just an empty square [Bible-Scenes.com].

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. The interior was covered with hammered gold plates. 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. This room was empty because the Ark of the Covenant was no longer there. A recess in the rock indicated where the Ark had once stood. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice, as was done in the OT, on the Ark of the Covenant.

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.



The Empty Place, without the Ark of the Covenant

“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.

As I said briefly also in the related topics (The Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle of Moses, Levites, Menorah),...

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... The Temple or Tabernacle constructed this way has a resemblance to our being and our lives. 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.

Conclusion – What I could notice from this study

It is interesting to note that there was an ‘addition of details’, we can say, and consequently, a deeper spiritual meaning since the Tabernacle of Moses in the desert, Solomon’s Temple and the second Temple restored by Herod. There was not only a material enrichment such as the gold and utensils placed in the building (even of a larger size, almost exaggerated as Solomon did) and the ornaments and gifts offered even by the Gentile kings and ordinary men of the people to the God of Israel and the sumptuous temple built at that time for Him. Hag. 2: 6-9 is proof of this, for God was comforting those who found the Temple built after the return from exile despicable in relation to Solomon’s. There was also a deeper spiritual meaning to each of these Houses that the Lord separated and consecrated to be with His people on earth, also showing a greater anointing and a greater responsibility to each of His children.

The Tabernacle of Moses, although embellished and enriched with gold brought from Egypt, had a simple linen curtain separating God’s people from the things of the world, and a bronze altar and a basin for washing, curtains and garments for those who ministered to show what God wanted to show by ‘holiness.’ When Solomon built the temple, there was already a change: no more curtains, but doors, more gold and larger utensils. The three enclosures (the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place and the outer court) remained, but the Bible does not say that Solomon’s Temple had walls around it. The Talmud names four enclosures: the Outer Court, where people gathered to worship (Jews and Gentiles who feared the God of Israel – 1 Kin. 8: 41-43; 2 Chr. 6: 31-32 – my note), the Inner Court or Court of the Priests, and the Temple building itself with the Holy Place (hekhal) and the inner sanctuary called the Holy of Holies or Kodesh HaKodashim or Debir.

When we look at Herod’s Temple, for example, we notice a greater difference, not only in its more refined and more fortified structure with strong gates and walls (a characteristic of Herod’s constructions), but also in the sense of greater separation between Jews and non-Jews. It is as if there were, spiritually speaking, more difficulty in reaching the Sanctuary itself, as if God were making it clear to us that there is a need for greater separation in order to approach Him and be His priests on earth. According to the Talmud, the original enclosures remained: the larger Temple enclosure, the restricted Temple courts, and the Temple building itself, namely: 1) all the Temple buildings on the Temple Mount platform, including the Royal Stoa and the Court of the Gentiles; 2) the Court of the Women, the Court of the Israelites (reserved for ritually

pure Jewish men – inside Nicanor Gate), the Court of the Priests [which some Jewish scholars separate from the Temple Court or Azarah, where the Bronze Basin (kiyor), the Altar of Burnt Offering (mizbe'ah), the Place of Slaughter were located]; and 3) the Temple building itself, likewise with its distinct chambers: 1) the Vestibule or Temple Porch (Ulam); 2) the Holy Place or 'Great House' (hékal or hekhal), which is the main part of the building; 3) the Holy of Holies (Kodesh HaKodashim or Debir), the innermost chamber.

Making a comparison with us

Outside the walls, the wicked or those who did not worship God did not enter; just as the wicked and the perverse do not enter our lives. Within the outer walls were the buildings and facilities for civil affairs (such as the royal Stoa) and the Court of the Gentiles, made up of ordinary people who recognized the existence of God but had not yet consecrated themselves to Him, so much so that they even did business there. So between them and the courtyard dedicated to the Jews (the courtyard of Israel) there was a very strong prohibition like the Inscription of Soreg, which could never be broken so that no offender would die. Spiritually speaking, it means the separation between the Israel of God (the Church of the Lord) and those who live in this world, those who are often aware of God but do not take Him very seriously, are unaware of the true meaning of the word 'holiness' and do not feel the need for greater intimacy with Him.

Although Josephus describes the courtyard within the Soreg as 'the Temple precinct' ('the Holy Place', 'the hieron', 'To hieron', To ἱερόν), where only converted Jews could enter, I had a very clear impression that before entering the 'Holy Place' itself (the lampstand, the table of Showbread and the Golden Altar), it was as if there was another boundary to be respected before reaching the place of the priesthood. It seems that between the courtyard where the sacrifices were performed there was an additional barrier, separating common men from priests, as well as men from women, which has a deeper spiritual symbolism. Even the Mishnah confirms this, listing concentric circles of holiness around the Temple: Holy of Holies; Holy Place; Vestibule; Court of the Priests; Court of the Israelites; Court of the Women; Temple Mount; the walled city of Jerusalem; all the walled cities of the Land of Israel; and the borders of the Land of Israel.

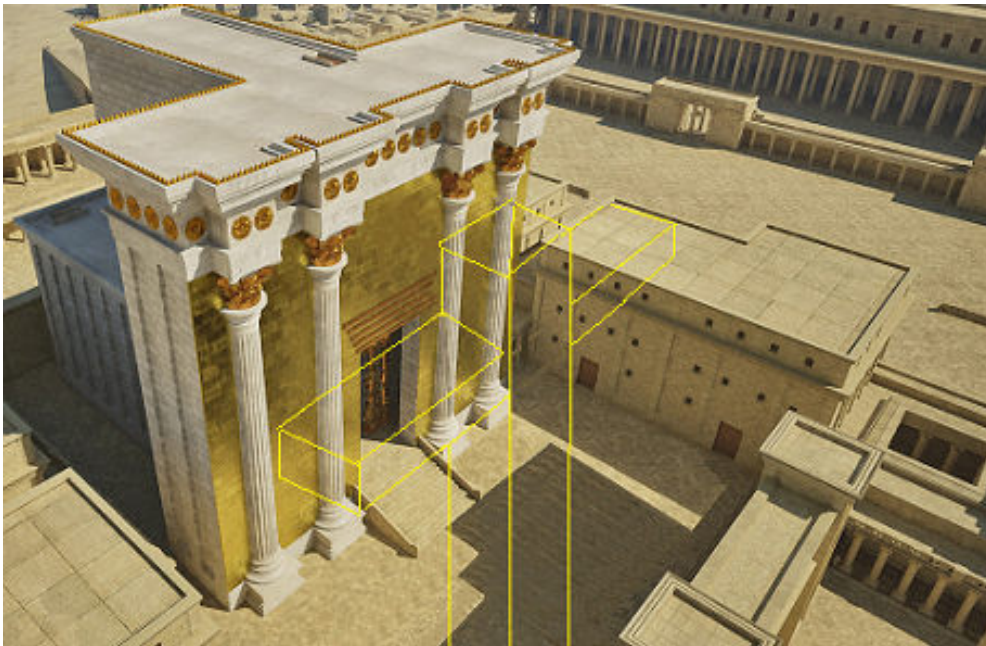
And I had this clear spiritual impression, especially in relation to the Church of Christ itself and the different spiritual levels of the people of God: it is as if believers lived in the Courtyard of the Israel of God, outside the inner gates of the Temple itself. All believers are there, even those who are still carnal, but only into the Courtyard of Israel and the Court of women enter those who have managed to climb a step higher in their spiritual search with God, it does not matter if they are men or women, those who seek God, but are still more occupied with their daily earthly affairs, because they have not yet felt a stronger call to separation (like those who have secular jobs go to church only on Sunday, for it is the only moment they can dedicate a little more to the reading and studying of the Word). Those people who have already felt the strength of the calling would enter the Court of Israel itself (doesn't matter if man or woman), a little before the Courtyard of the Priests, but they still need to have deeper experiences with God, for they don't have a more defined ministerial calling yet, like those in the Courtyard of the priests where they wash themselves in the bronze basin and perform the 'sacrifices' of greater personal offering to God.

Just as these four gates on the north and south of the Sanctuary area were used for many purposes (bringing in wood, the firstborn animals consecrated to the Lord, the

burnt offerings ('ôlâ qorbân or oleh qorbân), musical instruments, performing the rituals of the Feast of Tabernacles), women also entered with their offerings, such as purification after childbirth, the guilt offering, their burnt offerings, etc. Therefore, I said that they are the ones who may enter the Court of Israel, regardless of whether they are men or women. The word 'ôlâ or oleh means 'that which ascends,' and they were burned completely on the altar as a demonstration of devotion, and the priests did not eat them. We must bring to the Lord the best we have.

And only in the Sanctuary itself, where the priests of Aaronic lineage entered in the OT, do those who have a calling of greater separation from God for a ministry enter, therefore, a call to keep themselves in greater holiness, because they get to know His secrets more closely and have a greater responsibility to teach His people, and their prayers are more constant to the Lord, being heard, answered and revealed by Him.

With all this, the Lord shows us that the more we want to have intimacy with Him, the more we will have to separate ourselves from the things of the world and from sin. This completely changes our concept of Christian life, often leaving aside religious customs and without devotion, because they have become a sad routine, and we begin to seek God with greater intensity and surrender ourselves more to His will and His plan.

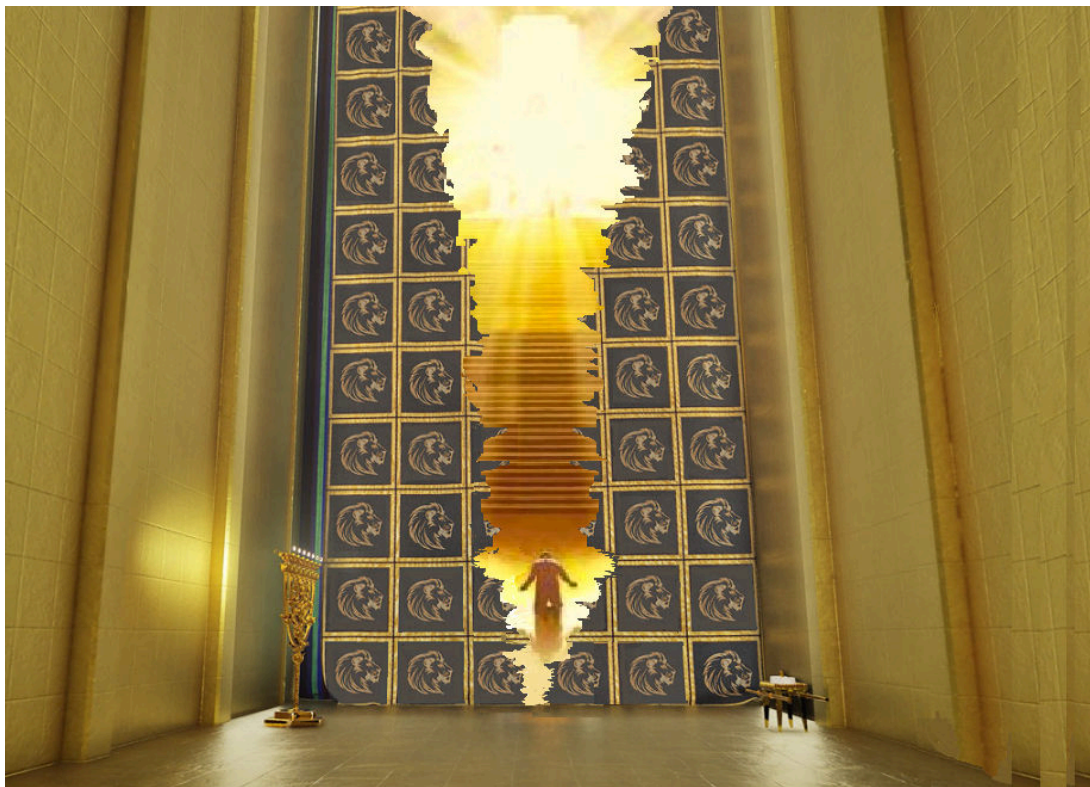


Jesus made everything simpler

“Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.” (Jn. 2: 19-21, NIV).

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple” (1 Cor. 3: 16-17).

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.” (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).



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