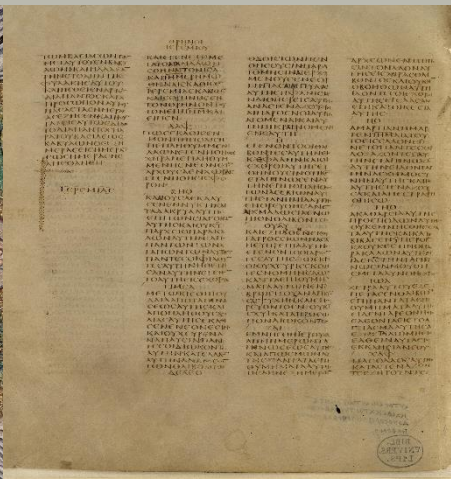


1. *Historical and cultural background of early Christianity*

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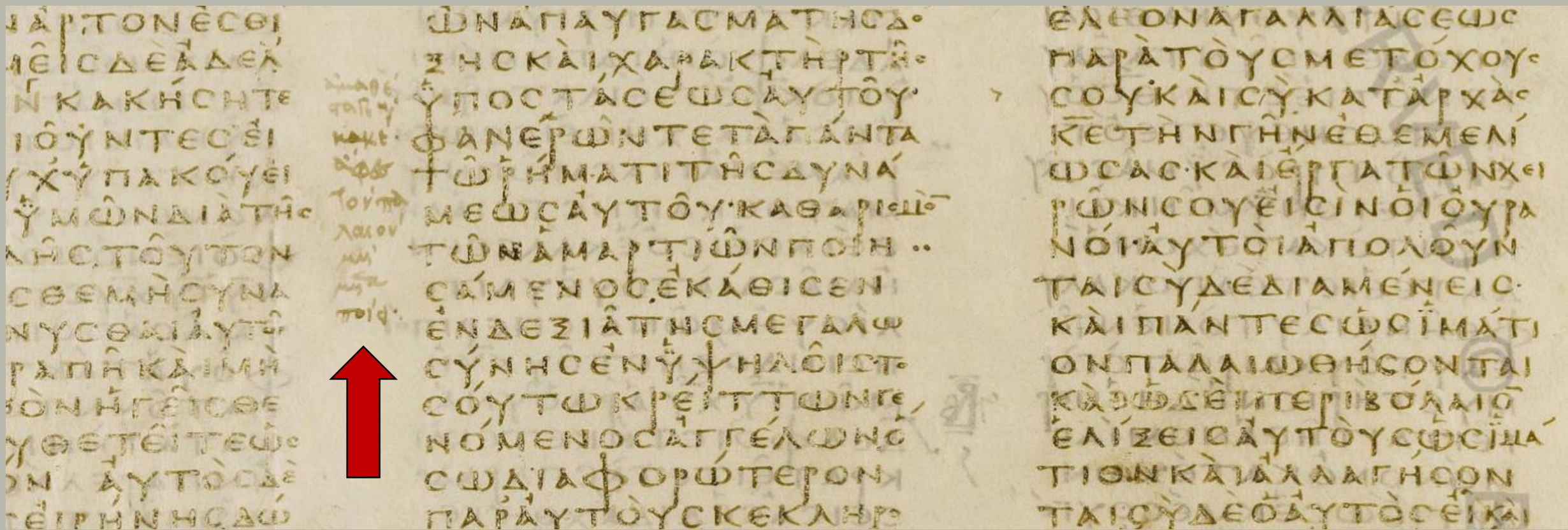


The text of the New Testament

1. We do not have the originals of any of the books of the New Testament.
2. The surviving handwritten copies (i.e., “manuscripts”) were all made much later – in most instances, many centuries later. We have some 5,700 manuscripts in Greek, from the early second century (just one small fragment) to the sixteenth century. Most are from the Middle Ages.
3. All of our surviving manuscripts contain mistakes, made either accidentally or intentionally. Some of the differences among our manuscripts are significant, radically affecting the interpretation of a book.
4. Scholars have devised a series of rules to help them determine what the authors actually wrote:
 - a. The text found in the earliest, most geographically dispersed, and qualitatively superior manuscripts is to be preferred.
 - b. The reading that is “more difficult” is to be preferred (since scribes more often tried to correct than to create mistakes).
 - c. Readings that coincide with what is otherwise known about the author’s own language, style, and theology are to be preferred.

Few examples

- *Mark* 16, 9-20 (the “short” and the “long” endings of *Mark*)
- *Luke* 22, 43-44 (“sweating blood”)
- *Luke* 23, 34 (forgiveness for those crucifying Jesus)
- *1 John* 5, 7-8 (the Trinity)



Codex Vaticanus (Ms. Vat. Gr. 1209, p. 1512)

ἀμαθέστατε καὶ κακέ, ἄφες τὸν παλαιόν, μὴ μεταποίει

“Fool and knave, leave the old reading, don’t change it!”

Canon(s)

- **Marcion († c. 160)**
 - *Luke* + 10 epistles of Paul (“law-free” canon) + editing out of “judaizing” sections
- **Tatian († c. 180)**
 - *Diatessaron* (combination of all four “canonical” gospels into one text)
- **Muratorian Canon (dated anywhere between 200-400)**
 - Includes *Apocalypse of Peter* and excludes *Hebrews* and one *Epistle of John*
- **Codex Siniaticus (c. 350)**
 - Includes the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*
- **Cheltenham Canon (c. 360)**
 - Excludes several canonical writings (*Hebrews, James, Jude*)
- **Codex Claromontanus (c. 550)**
 - Includes *Shepherd of Hermas, Acts of Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*
- **Athanasius († 373)**
 - His paschal letter from 367 contains the first “orthodox” canon list

Religion and Philosophy in the Greco-Roman World

1. Almost all religions in the Roman Empire were:
 - a. **Polytheistic:** worshiping many gods.
 - b. Concerned with the **present life** instead of the afterlife.
 - c. Focused on cultic acts of **worship rather than doctrines** (what to believe) **or ethics** (how to behave).
 - d. **Closely connected with the political state.**
 - e. **Tolerant** of other religions and **non-exclusivistic** (i.e., none of them insisted that it was right and that all others were wrong).
2. Magic – that is, religious practices that were not socially acceptable – was widely practiced in the Greco-Roman world.
3. Mystery cults that emphasized individual relation to the divine and benefits after death were widely spread throughout the world.
4. The philosophical schools, including the Stoics, Platonists, and Epicureans, answered some of life's most difficult questions and stressed the importance of right (ethical) lifestyles.

Jewish context

1. Even though Judaism was widely diverse (e.g., in such groups as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes), it had several distinctive characteristics:
 - a. Jews were to worship just one God, the God of Israel.
 - b. This God has chosen Jews to be his special people.
 - c. Jews were to respond to their election by God by obeying his will, as expressed in the Law.
 - d. God could be worshipped by sacrifices made in the Temple in Jerusalem and by prayer and the study of the sacred traditions of Israel in synagogues located throughout the ancient world.
2. The history of ancient Israel involved one military/political disaster after the other, as the promised land was successively overrun by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Syrians, and the Romans.
3. About 150 years before the birth of Jesus, the Maccabean Revolt led to the establishment of Israel as a sovereign nation on its own land, which lasted until the Romans conquered it in 66 B.C.E.
4. From about the time of the Maccabees, and in the century or so that followed, there emerged a variety of “parties” within Judaism of Palestine:
 - a. **The Pharisees**, with a rigorous adherence to the oral laws that allowed them to keep fully the Law of Moses;
 - b. **The Sadducees**, Jewish aristocrats in charge of the Temple in Jerusalem, who emphasized the need to follow the laws of worship found in the Torah;
 - c. **The Essenes**, a separatist group that believed in maintaining its own ritual purity away from the polluting influences of society at large, in anticipation of the coming of the end;
 - d. **The “fourth philosophy”**, which urged a violent overthrow of the foreign oppressors occupying the promised land.

Snippets from the Jewish history

- 721 B.C.E. Kingdom of Israel (northern part) conquered by the Assyrians.
- 587-586 B.C.E. Kingdom of Judah (southern part) conquered by the Babylonians, destruction of the Temple.
- 559-332 B.C.E. Palestine ruled by the Persians, then conquered by Alexander the Great.
- 300-198 B.C.E. Palestine ruled by the Ptolemies (Egypt).
- 198-142 B.C.E. Palestine ruled by the Seleucids (Syria).
- 175 B.C.E. Antiochus IV Epiphanes ascends to the throne of the Seleucid kingdom, thus becoming the ruler of Judea
 - High Priest Jason in Jerusalem, Hellenization (assimilation) of the elites
 - Conflict between Jason and Menelaus for high priesthood (both Hellenized Jews)
- 168-167 B.C.E. Syrian forces plunder the Temple, stay garrisoned in Jerusalem, introduction of the worship of Zeus (~ Syrian Baal Shamem).
- 167-164 B.C.E. Introduction of anti-Jewish laws (circumcision is forbidden, Jews cannot keep Sabbath, something bad happens in the Holy of the Holies of the Jerusalem Temple).
- Enter *Daniel* 11.

A structure was built around the walls of the temple containing three levels. The lower chamber was 7.5 feet (2.3 m) wide, the middle chamber was 9 feet (2.7 m) wide, and the upper chamber was 10.5 feet (3.2 m) wide (1 Kings 6:5–6, 8, 10).

Two ornate wooden doors, overlaid with gold, separated the inner sanctuary from the nave (1 Kings 6:31–32).

The nave had clerestory windows with recessed frames (1 Kings 6:4).

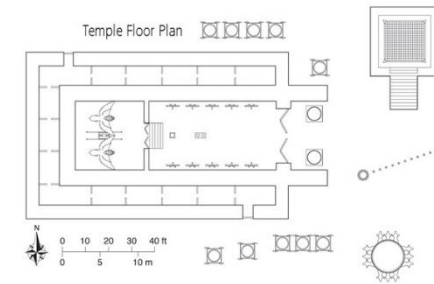
The vestibule was 30 feet (9.1 m) wide and 15 feet (4.6 m) deep (1 Kings 6:3; cf. 2 Chron. 3:4)

The inner sanctuary (or Most Holy Place) was a 30-foot (9.1-m) cube (1 Kings 6:15–29; 2 Chron. 3:8–14). Such rooms were often elevated in temples of the ancient Near East. Two massive golden cherubim were on either side of the ark, each 15 feet (4.6 m) tall with 15-foot (4.6-m) wingspans (1 Kings 6:23–28). The ark of the covenant was between the two cherubim (1 Kings 8:1–11; cf. 2 Chron. 5:2–14).

The nave (or Holy Place) was 60 feet (18.3 m) long and 30 feet (9.1 m) wide (1 Kings 6:15, 17–18; cf. 2 Chron. 3:5–7). It contained the golden altar for incense; the golden table for the bread of the Presence; and ten golden lampstands, five on the north and five on the south (1 Kings 7:48–49; cf. 2 Chron. 4:7).

Ten bronze wheeled stands and basins held burnt water for rinsing off what was used for the burnt offerings (1 Kings 7:27–38; cf. 2 Chron. 4:6).

The "Sea" was a metal basin 7.5 feet (2.3 m) tall and 15 feet (4.6 m) in diameter. It held 12,000 gallons (44,000 liters) of water for the priests to wash in. It was supported by twelve bronze oxen in sets of three, facing in each direction (1 Kings 7:23–26; cf. 2 Chron. 4:2–5).



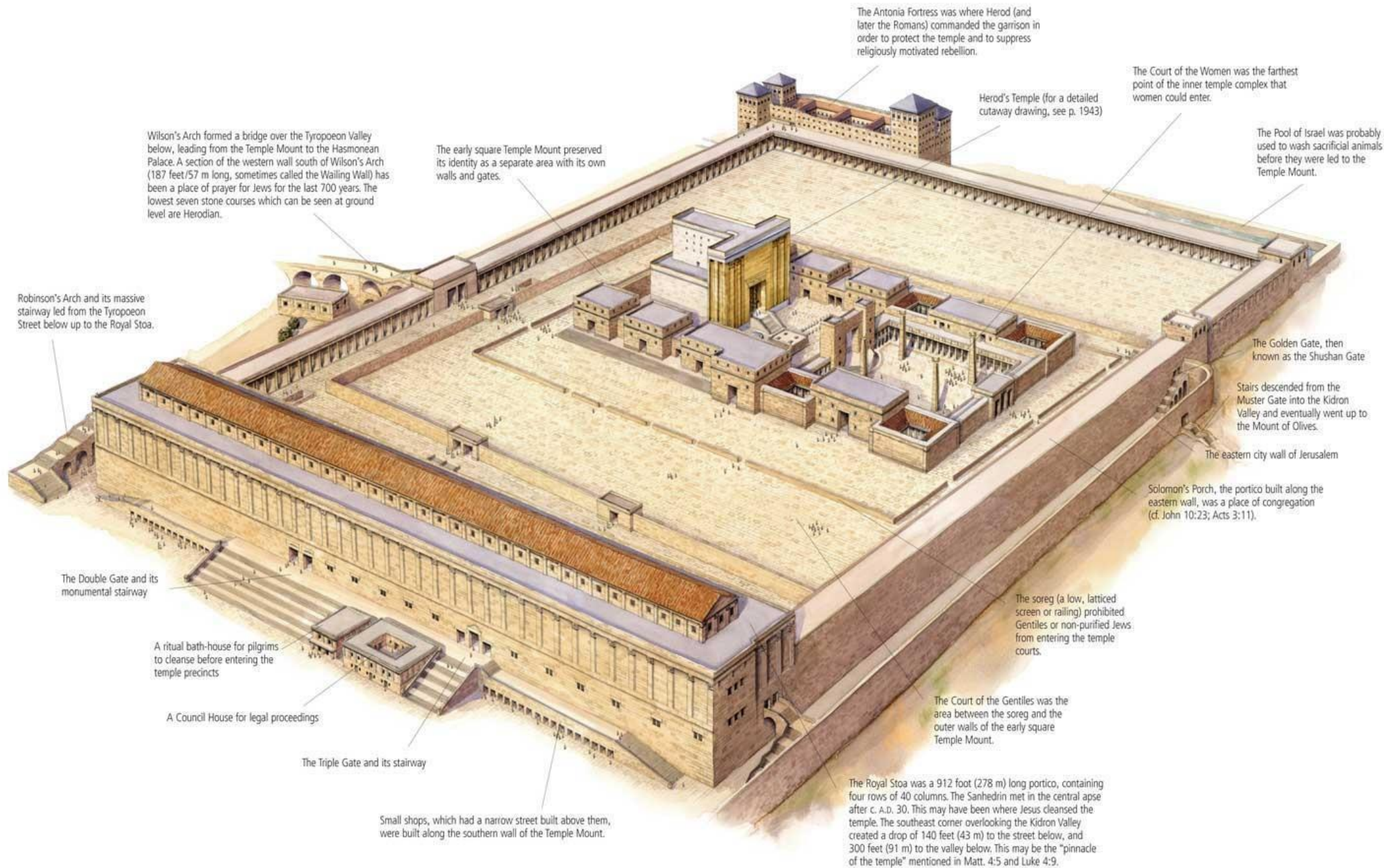
The hollow bronze pillar on the north was called "Boaz," and the one on the south was called "Jachin" (1 Kings 7:21; cf. 2 Chron. 3:17).

Two ornate wooden, folding doors, overlaid with gold, separated the nave from the vestibule (1 Kings 6:33–35).

The bronze altar for burnt offerings was 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) long and wide (cf. 2 Chron. 4:1).

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

Solomon began to build "the house of the LORD" in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah in the spring of 967 or 966 B.C. (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chron. 3:1–2) and completed it seven years later, in the fall of 960 or 959 B.C. (1 Kings 6:38). The temple itself, not including the surrounding chambers on three sides, was 90 feet (27.4 m) long, 30 feet (9.1 m) wide, and 45 feet (13.7 m) high. It resided in the middle of a court with boundary walls.



The Antonia Fortress was where Herod (and later the Romans) commanded the garrison in order to protect the temple and to suppress religiously motivated rebellion.

The Court of the Women was the farthest point of the inner temple complex that women could enter.

The Pool of Israel was probably used to wash sacrificial animals before they were led to the Temple Mount.

Herod's Temple (for a detailed cutaway drawing, see p. 1943)

Wilson's Arch formed a bridge over the Tyropoeon Valley below, leading from the Temple Mount to the Hasmonean Palace. A section of the western wall south of Wilson's Arch (187 feet/57 m long, sometimes called the Wailing Wall) has been a place of prayer for Jews for the last 700 years. The lowest seven stone courses which can be seen at ground level are Herodian.

The early square Temple Mount preserved its identity as a separate area with its own walls and gates.

Robinson's Arch and its massive stairway led from the Tyropoeon Street below up to the Royal Stoa.

The Golden Gate, then known as the Shushan Gate

Stairs descended from the Muster Gate into the Kidron Valley and eventually went up to the Mount of Olives.

The eastern city wall of Jerusalem

Solomon's Porch, the portico built along the eastern wall, was a place of congregation (cf. John 10:23; Acts 3:11).

The Double Gate and its monumental stairway

The soleg (a low, latticed screen or railing) prohibited Gentiles or non-purified Jews from entering the temple courts.

A ritual bath-house for pilgrims to cleanse before entering the temple precincts

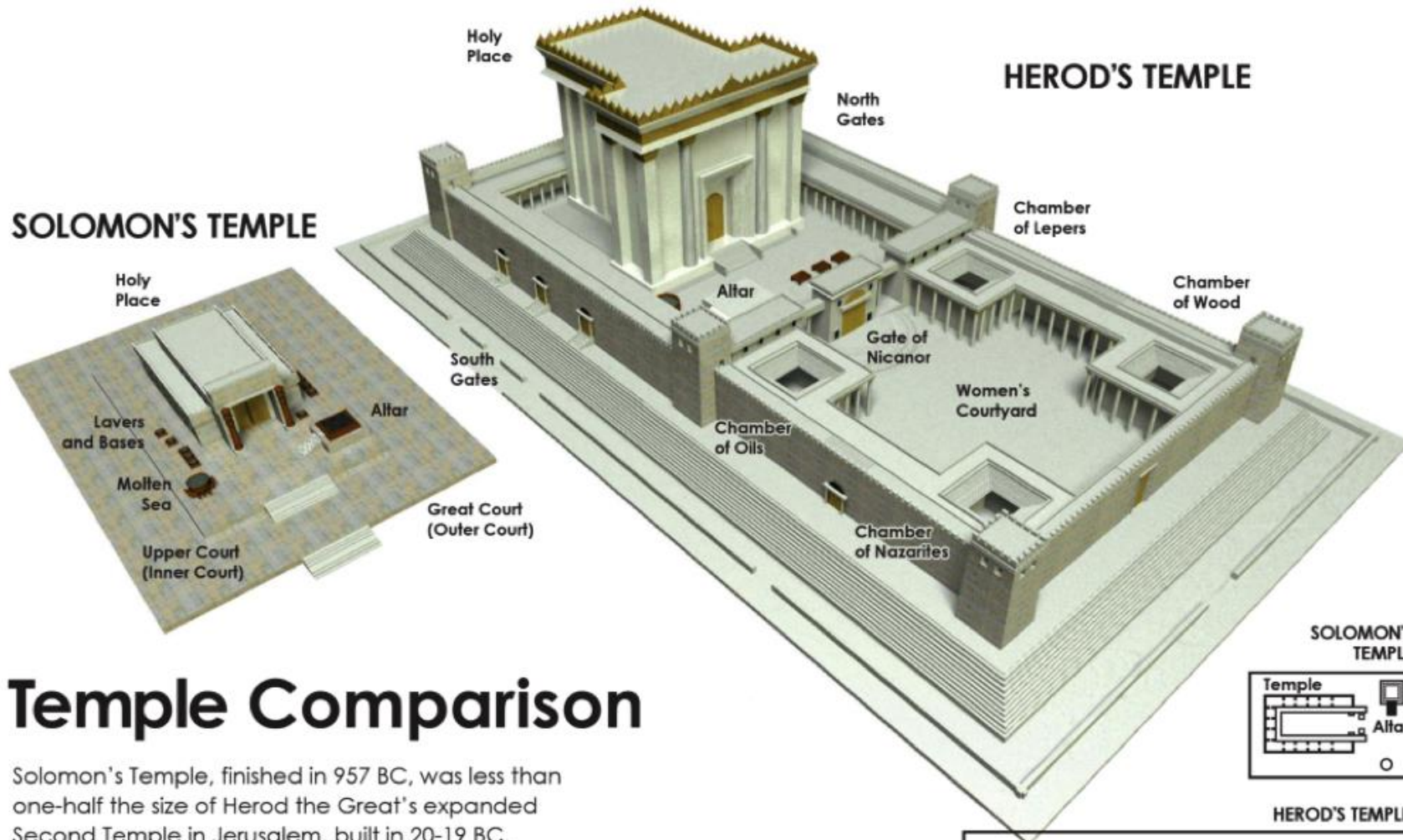
The Court of the Gentiles was the area between the soleg and the outer walls of the early square Temple Mount.

A Council House for legal proceedings

The Triple Gate and its stairway

Small shops, which had a narrow street built above them, were built along the southern wall of the Temple Mount.

The Royal Stoa was a 912 foot (278 m) long portico, containing four rows of 40 columns. The Sanhedrin met in the central apse after c. A.D. 30. This may have been where Jesus cleansed the temple. The southeast corner overlooking the Kidron Valley created a drop of 140 feet (43 m) to the street below, and 300 feet (91 m) to the valley below. This may be the "pinnacle of the temple" mentioned in Matt. 4:5 and Luke 4:9.

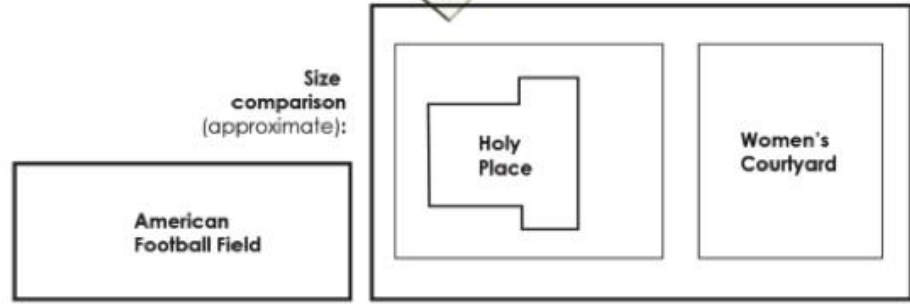
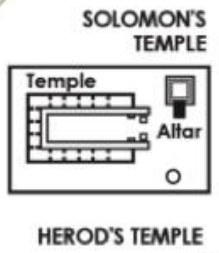


SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

HEROD'S TEMPLE

Temple Comparison

Solomon's Temple, finished in 957 BC, was less than one-half the size of Herod the Great's expanded Second Temple in Jerusalem, built in 20-19 BC.



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Further development

- 167 B.C.E. Mattathias refuses to sacrifice to the Greek gods → guerilla warfare against Antiochus & the Syrians (and the Jews siding with them).
- 165 B.C.E. † Mattathias, succeeded by his son Judas Maccabeus (“hammer”), Jerusalem is captured.
- 164 B.C.E. Temple is cleansed and rededicated to one true God (cf. Hanukkah), control of Judea assumed → rule of the Hasmonean dynasty (effectively ruling Judea 142-63 B.C.E.).
- 63 B.C.E. Pompey takes control of Jerusalem → beginnings of the Roman rule.
- 37 B.C.E.-6 C.E. Herod the Great and his sons rule in Judea as client kings, followed by direct Roman rule (cf. Pontius Pilate).
- 63 C.E. Jerusalem Temple Complex is finished (leaving 18,000 workers unemployed).
- 66 C.E. Jewish Revolt.
- 70 C.E. Destruction of the Temple, the end of Jewish sacrificial system.
- 132-135 C.E. Bar Kochba (sometimes spelled Kokhba) revolt → destruction of Jerusalem, *Aelia Capitolina* is established on its ruins.