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ERA OF THE TEMPLES IN ISRAEL



THE HOUSE OF GOD AT SHILOH

When the Israelites entered into the promise land they set up the Tabernacle in Shiloh (**Joshua 18:1**). The ark signifying God's presence was in Shiloh for many years before being captured by the philistines. Things were relatively quiet during this period. Throughout the days the ark was in Shiloh it was the High priests who judged and ruled Israel. The Bible seldom mentioned the house of God except when they went up to inquire about going up to battles. The Bible also mentioned the House of God in Shiloh, when Hannah went on to pray for a child. The Tabernacle remained in Shiloh for many years and very little mention is made of it during the time of the Judges up to the time of the emergence of the priesthood of Eli.

Israel by this time had become like a harlot among the Nations in the sight of God. They had become like Harlots because they followed after other gods and were not faithful in executing the judgment of God among the nations. They were supposed to be married to God, but they broke the covenant which God required of them to obey if they were to be at peace with Him.

During the priesthood of Eli, the priesthood was corrupt in those days, His Children greatly dishonored God. The people were also corrupted the more as a result of an unfaithful priesthood in their midst. God raised up a prophet who went before the face of Eli and prophesied His Downfall and the raising up of a new priesthood that will follow after God (**1Samuel 2:12-36**).

Shortly after this Israel was defeated in Battle and the ark of God was taken into captivity by the Philistines. The Lord executed judgment the same day on the House of Eli; the two sons of Eli the high priest died in battle while they bore the Ark and Eli died on receiving the news. The family line of Eli was wiped out in a day as prophesied by the prophet of God. [**1 Samuel 4:1-22**].

THE TENT OF DAVID

Like the prophet had said earlier on the Israelites were beaten in battle and the glory of the Lord which is the ark was captured by the philistines. To add insult to injury they further took the ark into Ashdod a Philistine City to place it in a temple of their god Dagon.

Psalms 78:60-61

60 So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, The tent He had placed among men, 61 And delivered His strength into captivity, And His glory into the enemy's hand.

As a result of this very act, the Philistines were greatly troubled and plagued by sicknesses and death because of the God's Jealousy for His ark in their midst. [**1Samuel 5**].

The ark was with the Philistines for seven months, they were wise enough to decide to let the Ark go back to Israel. The Philistine took the Ark to a border village of Israel called Beth-shemesh. The inhabitants were extremely glad to receive the ark of God and made burnt offerings unto the Lord. The inhabitants of the land forgot the terrible name that is in the name of the Lord and dared to look inside the Ark. This act brought about the death of over fifty thousand men [**1Samuel 6**].

Of course the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh became terrified by the deaths and sent the ark to Kirjath-jearim. The ark stayed in the House of Abinadab for twenty years until the days of King David. [**1Samuel 7:1**]

David and indeed the Israelites began to miss the presence of the ark of God. They remembered the days of glory and blessing in years past. There is every reason to believe the ark of God was being kept for safety reasons because Israel didn't really settle until the days of David. Probably no one had the boldness or even that true desire to bring the ark up out of Kirjath-jearim after all that had happened.

David a man after God's heart initiated the move to bring the ark of God back to the seat of power.

There was a hitch along the line though, while the ark was being brought into the city of David, Uzzah touched the ark of God and was struck dead immediately. He touched it while trying to prevent it from falling. The act terrified David who then decided to leave the ark of God in the House of Obed-edom. The ark was there for only three months and God blessed The household of Obed-edom so much that David was provoked in bringing back the ark to the place He had prepared for it. (**2 Samuel 6:10-11**).

David had prepared a tent which acted as the holy place and placed the ark in its rightful place inside the tent. Not much detail is given about the tent but by the spirit we know it must have had the table, lampstand and the incense alter inside, while the brazen alter and the brazen laver were without.

The ark remained in this place till the death of David. David prospered in all that He did because of the presence of the ark in their midst.

KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE (THE FIRST TEMPLE)

Moses' model of the tabernacle was a temporary structure for the children of Israel who were constantly on the move due to their journeying in the wilderness. They had to disassemble the tabernacle and all its structure whenever the Lord indicated that they should move. The Tabernacle boards, curtains and all other structures were dismantled whenever the Lord indicated they should move. The furniture and utensils were covered in a certain way before they moved. In fact this constant movement was the reason why God directed rings where be attached at the edges of the Furniture and two poles made to fit into the rings on opposite sides so that the children of Israel could carry this holy objects without having to touch and defile them.

Four hundred and fifteen years after the children left the bondages of Egypt a more solid and permanent tabernacle structure was erected in Jerusalem. By this time Israel was stable and was going through a period of peace under the kingship of Solomon. After four hundred in the Promised Land the population of Israel had obviously multiplied greatly, the priesthood tribe of Israel had also increased. The time had come to upgrade the original tabernacle of God into a more befitting temple to the glory of God's name. Even the nations all around Israel had Temples unto their gods so it is obvious that they also had to construct a Temple befitting unto the name of the Lord. Four Hundred years later God's dwelling was only a tent that housed the Ark of God; it was less glorious than even the Tabernacle of the wilderness. It was so because in the cause of conflicts and wars as a result of Israel's disobedient ways, some of the pieces that formed the original Tabernacle got missing.

David a man after God's Heart openly wondered aloud saying why His God and creator of the very Heavens and earth should dwell in a tent while He dwelt in the luxury of His palace. He rose up the issue of building a befitting Home for His God but wasn't to have the privilege. God speaking through a prophet said he was a man of war, which was contrary to the Lord's idea of the glorious era of the kingdom to come. [2 Samuel 7:1-17] God directed that it should be done during the reign of His son Solomon (the meaning of Solomon is Peace), God assured that it would be a reign of peace in Israel. Solomon was the one appointed by God to build this temple originally thought out by His Father David. He built the Temple on Mount Mariah the place were Abraham over eight hundred years earlier on, had offered to sacrifice His only Son Isaac. It was also a spot were King David purchased and built an altar to the glory of God. All this have their significance spiritually and we will surely touch these subjects later on in the book.

Solomon was a flamboyant king, being the richest and wisest man in the world; He had no lesser intention than to make the Temple a wonder of the world. It was a more solid and elaborate structure than the tabernacle structure of Moses in every respect. But the beauty of it all was that it was basically the same with the tabernacle structure

that the children of Israel had used for God service in the Wilderness except that it was built to a larger scale and was a permanent structure. Of course the Population in Israel had grown, so more priests and more activity was expected within the walls of the Temple. The Temple of Solomon had ten tables of gold, ten golden lampstands and ten lavers for cleaning the sacrifices as against one gold table, one golden lampstand, and one laver seen in the Moses model. In addition to the ten lavers there was a larger laver called the brazen sea dedicated to only the priests for washing.

The period of Solomon's Temple lasted for 410 years, until it was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Near the end of this era, King Josiah of Israel commanded that the Holy Ark of the Testimony, the golden lampstand, and other vessels be hidden away before the destruction.

BLUEPRINT FOR TEMPLE GIVEN TO DAVID

Just as the Lord gave His Tabernacle blueprint to Moses over 400 years earlier on the Mountain of Sinai, the Lord equally gave the blueprint of the second tabernacle (Solomon's Temple) to King David which would eventually be built in the times of Solomon His Son. The whole project was directed by the God's spirit and nothing of Man is seen here. From all I read in the Bible, I never saw anything that described or likened King David to an architect. David was a Shepherd, a Warrior, a musician and lover of God. As we read in the scripture below this was a project from above, it was a project thought out and designed by the true eternal architect.

1 Chronicles 28:11-19

11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; 12 and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; 13

also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD. 14 He gave gold by weight for things of gold, for all articles used in every kind of service; also silver for all articles of silver by weight, for all articles used in every kind of service; 15 the weight for the lampstands of gold, and their lamps of gold, by weight for each lampstand and its lamps; for the lampstands of silver by weight, for the lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand. 16 And by weight he gave gold for the tables of the showbread, for each table, and silver for the tables of silver; 17 also pure gold for the forks, the basins, the pitchers of pure gold, and the golden bowls--he gave gold by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls, silver by weight for every bowl; 18 and refined gold by weight for the altar of incense, and for the construction of the chariot, that is, the gold cherubim that spread their wings and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 19 All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans."

“Oh praise God”, as I read this scripture I can’t but marvel at the awesomeness of God, whether we believe it or not the Lord is doing the same work today, as we read this book by His spirit, He will open our eyes to see another plan from the Master Architect, Jesus. The Lord reveals His secrets to His servants and His loved ones as He did to Moses and David.

THE DESIGN OF SOLOMON’S TEMPLE

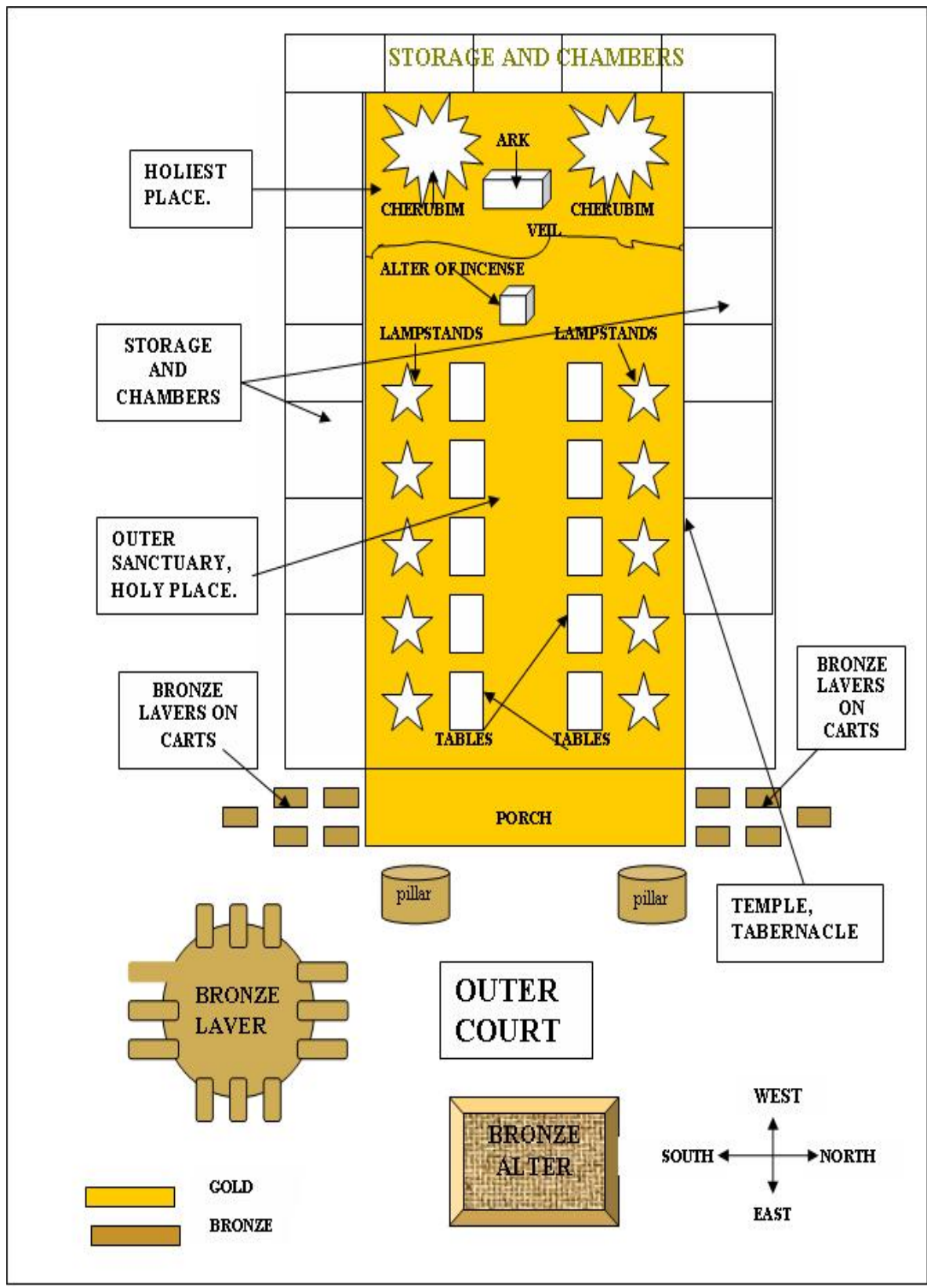
2 Chronicles 4:19 -22

19 Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God: the altar of gold and the tables on which was the showbread; 20 the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, 21

with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold, of purest gold; 22 the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold. As for the entry of the sanctuary, its inner doors to the Most Holy Place, and the doors of the main hall of the temple, were gold. 15 Also he made in front of the temple two pillars thirty-five cubits high, and the capital that was on the top of each of them was five cubits. 16 He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put them on top of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates, and put them on the wreaths of chainwork. 17 Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz.

The Lord God is the same yesterday, today and forever, man might change from time to time but it is not so with God. A man might make a design today and change it tomorrow because of a flaw or to better the design. This is not so with God, we clearly see the similarities with the temple of Solomon and the tabernacle of Moses, they were basically the same except that the Solomon model was more Solid owing to the fact that it was a permanent structure, and it was also much more larger in scale owing to the increased availability of resources at His disposal. The Temple was much also larger because of the projected increase in activity in the temple. A sketch of the Temple is shown below.

A sketch of the Temple is shown below.



Solomon's temple was the wonder of the world during its existence. Kings and men, both great and small traveled from the

ends of the earth to view this architectural beauty. In present times, a structure like that can't be built anymore owing to costs and complexity. To date there has been no greater structural wonder than that of King Solomon's.

The temple had three major compartments they are (a) **the Temple courtyard**, (b) **the outer chamber of the Temple**, (c) **the inner chamber of the Temple**. A door was at the entrance to the temple from the courtyard, while a veil divided the outer chamber (Holy place) of the temple from the inner chamber (Holiest place).

A brief summary of the Temple's major parts along with brief comparison with the tabernacle of Moses are

- i) **THE COURT YARD** (Chronicles 4:9-18) was similar to the outer court of the tabernacle with all its structures like doors, utensils etc overlaid with bronze, just like the outer court of the tabernacle of Moses. It was obviously much more bigger than the outer court of Moses
- ii) **THE BRONZE SACRIFICIAL ALTAR** (2 Chronicles 4:1 2) was made of Bronze just like that of Moses except that it was much bigger. Solomon's model had a volume of 400 metric cubits while that of Moses had a volume of 75 metric cubits.
- iii) **THE SEA OF BRONZE MOUNTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS AND TEN BRONZE LAVERS** Chronicles 4 :2-6 1 Kings 6:18-22. The sea of bronze was equivalent to the bronze laver in Moses model. The major differences were the volume of water available in the courtyard for water. Apart from the extremely large bronze laver (bronze sea), there was an additional ten lavers of Bronze for washings of the animals and utensils.
- iv) **THE INWARD PART OF THE TEMPLE WAS OVERLAID WITH PURE GOLD AND HAD**

CARVINGS OF CHERUBIM AND PALM TREES [2 Chronicles 3:5-9]:

- v) This is similar to the Moses tabernacle model, that model had its inner part all covered in gold, it was all overlaid with gold on the inside and had a linen cloth with designs of Cherubim on it, though palm trees were not mentioned. Always remember palm trees talk of fruitfulness for those who dwell in the house of the lord.

The palm trees go on and on over the years bearing fruits, even if it reaches hundred years in age. Another thing to notice about the palms is that their branches and leaves remain ever green. It is a place of divine health and prosperity in God. **Psalms 92:12-15** compares the righteous to the palm tree. Who are the righteous? Those whose lives are hid in Christ are the righteous ones of God. These ones are the ones who dwell constantly in the temple of God and constantly seek His face they are the righteous ones of the most high.

The temple had two parts the outer chamber (Holy place) and the inner chamber (Holiest place). This corresponds to the holy place and the holies of holies in the tabernacle of Moses.

IN THE OUTER CHAMBER OF THE TEMPLE OR OUTER SANCTUARY (HOLY PLACE) THERE WERE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

- vi) **TEN GOLDEN TABLES OF THE SHOWBREAD** 2 **Chronicles 4:8:** this is similar that of Moses except for the greater numbers, that of Moses had one golden table of shewbread.
- vii) **TEN LAMPSTANDS** 2 **Chronicles 4:7** like the tables the lampstands were also 10 times more that the lampstands in the Moses model.

- viii) **INCENSE ALTAR 1 Kings 6:22** : The temple had one altar of incense just before the inner chamber

THE INNER CHAMBER OR INNER SANCTUARY OF THE TEMPLE WAS SEPERATED BY A VEIL [2 Chronicles 3:14] JUST LIKE THAT OF MOSES. INSIDE THE INNER CHAMBER OR SANCTUARY (THE HOLIEST PLACE) THE FOLLOWING ITEMS COULD BE FOUND:

- ix) **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT [1Kings 6:19]** the temple of Solomon also had the ark of God in it like the tabernacle Moses. This is the point of attraction in God Temple, because His presence was always there. It signified God's glory in the midst of His people.
- x) **TWO LARGE CHERIBUM [2 Chronicles 3:10-13]:** the temple also had two large cherubim overlaid with Gold. The Cherubim were placed in such a way that they overshadowed the ark of God in the inner Chamber. The concept here is the same concept with that of the tabernacle of Moses.

OTHER THINGS OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE

- xi) **PRIESTS' CELLS THAT HAD DOORS OF BRONZE**
- xii) **STORES AND CELLS THAT HAD DOORS OF BRONZE**
- xiii) **TWO LARGE BRONZE PILLARS IN THE OUTER COURT CALLED JACHIN ANDBOAZ**

The glorious dedication of the temple was done with much splendor, majesty and honors unto the Lord with

Solomon leading [2Chronicles 5:1-14] the ceremony. God once more showed His approval and filled the temple with His clouds of His presence and glory, so that nobody could enter to minister. Remember this was the same sign he gave at the dedication of the tabernacle of Moses (EXODUS 40:33-38).

2Chronicles 5:1-14 ----- 12 Also the Levites *which were* the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets;) 13 It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For *he* is good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD; 14 So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

*This sign of approval of the temple of God is a very important sign and will definitely be revisited in the latter part of this book. God did not do this just for fanfare, the is and educational message wrapped up in all of this. We should also note that there were one **hundred and twenty Priests** blowing trumpets in the ceremonial procession that moved towards the temple.*

THE TEMPLE OF ZERRUBABEL (THE SECOND TEMPLE)



We know how rebellious Israel was dealt a deadly blow for their rebellion towards God. They broke the covenants and refused to hearken to the Prophets the Lord sent to warn them. The result of this rebellion was a painful overthrow of Israel, the cities were burnt, waters fountains stopped, princes bound in fetters, priests killed, supply of food hindered. They were overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon at that time.

The beautiful temple of God which Solomon built was also destroyed and its treasures and valued vessels of gold and silver were taken down to Babylon. Reports have it that the ark was hidden away

before the Babylonians could get there. Israel was completely wiped out and it took seventy years for a restoration. Seventy years talks about passing away of a whole generation.

The Lord laid it in the heart of the King of Cyrus at that time to let the people go up to their abandoned land and rebuild it. Zerubbabel was Leader of the Jews at that time and they rebuilt the temple with the aid of Prophets and skilled men.

Some of the items of the temple taken away by Nebuchadnezzar the then king of Babylon were returned. They included the golden objects like lampstands, tables, cups, vessels etc.

From all this it is known that Zerubbabel built the temple based on the original blue print.

The temple of Zerubbabel was not as glorious as that of Solomon, like the prophet Haggai said it was a mere shadow of the old temple. When the temple was completed there is no account of the glory cloud of God coming down into the temple of God, The temple of Zerubbabel just wasn't it. When a model fails God does not look back he moves forward. The physical temple model failed with the destruction of the temple of Solomon and the ark of God was never mentioned any more in the Bible. Always remember that God's presence always came down because the ark of God dwelt in the previous sanctuaries.

Haggai 2:2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, 3 Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

The prophet Haggai further prophesied that the glory the Lords temple shall be greater than even that of Solomon [Haggai 2:4-9]. Even with all the delusion regarding the Temple of Zerubbabel in comparison to that of Solomon, God still foresaw a greater temple than that of Solomon

When Haggai made this prophecy He was speaking by the spirit of God and probably did not have an idea of what He was saying. We know to this present time no physical temple has been built with greater splendor than that of Solomon.

Some people still in the dark, dream of the day when a physical temple will be built in Jerusalem with that Glory which Haggai prophesied about. They will be greatly disappointed. Even if men eventually create a Temple, they will discover that God is not in that plan.

THE TEMPLE OF HEROD (REBUILDING OF THE SECOND TEMPLE)

After some centuries, the temple created by Zerubbabel was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, and was later sacked by the Romans and was left in a bad condition. The temple was afterwards rebuilt by Herod the Great, following which it was known as Herod's temple. This temple was further less glorious than those that were before it. It was built to have the outer court, holy place and the holiest place, but it lacked the ark of God which is God's presence.

Herod's temple was the temple Jesus met in the days of ministry. The temple by then had been reduced to a synagogue of Satan.

As Jesus predicted, the temple was razed to the ground. It was completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD and has never been rebuilt. All that remains is the foundation of the west wall. Jews go there to lament the temple's destruction so it is now known as the Wailing Wall.