

# Solomon's Temple

Told and retold myriad times, the poetic blend of faint truths and splendid myths that shape the creation of a people and a religion have, over time, acquired a greater reality in the imagination than they could ever have sustained in fact. What follows, without question, are the major elements of these tales out of which the Temple of Solomon was formed.

Before there was Jerusalem, before there was Judea, Mount Moriah, Temple Mount, was known to God. In the book of Genesis,<sup>1</sup> God ordered the first Hebrew patriarch Abraham to “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation . . .” His father’s house was in the city of Ur<sup>2</sup> in Mesopotamia, a wealthy and civilized city well over a thousand years old when Abraham was summoned.<sup>3</sup> After years of wandering and suffering, Abraham arrived in Canaan, the land chosen by God, and was told “Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it. And Abram<sup>4</sup> moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the terebinths of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD:”<sup>5</sup> Hebron is a name and town that has survived into the present.<sup>6</sup>

Twenty-five years after arriving in Hebron, Abraham produced a son, Isaac; Abraham was 100 years old. Genesis records God’s dreadful instruction to an aged father, “Take now . . . thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac,<sup>7</sup> and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”<sup>8</sup>

As he prepared the sacrifice, the son called out “My father . . . Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham replied, “God will see for himself the lamb for a burnt offering.”

The lamb was Isaac. Then “Abraham built the altar . . . and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.” The son offered no resistance. “And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.” Only then did this demanding God provide a beast for sacrifice: “And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.”<sup>9</sup>

Abraham's reward for such obedience was to become the father of a people. “I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven” said God “and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”<sup>10</sup>

The book of Genesis was set down almost three millennia ago, formed in a time when there was no singular idea of God, yet here in these events is the emergence of one Supreme Being.<sup>11</sup> The image of a father being forced to prove his faith by killing his son reveals the character of this singular God. Nothing could be more graphic in demonstrating the burden of this faith. And Mount Moriah, still in the midst of Jerusalem, would forever hold the memory of this presence closely watching Abraham and the prone figure of Isaac, bound upon a funeral pyre.

In *Antiquities of the Jews*, a work completed toward the end of the first century of the Common Era, Jewish-Roman historian Josephus Flavius (henceforth referred to as Josephus) retells in his own words much of the content of the books of the Old Testament. It occasionally offers surprising contrast to scripture. Josephus explains God's actions: “It was not out of a desire of human blood . . . nor was he willing that [Isaac] should be taken from . . . his father,” it was instead, to test Abraham's mind: would he be obedient to such a command? All was now resolved, God “was satisfied . . . he was delighted in having bestowed such blessings upon him; and his son should live to a very great age; and bequeath a large principality to his children, who should be good and legitimate.”<sup>12</sup> Josephus (37–100 CE) was a rabbi and a general. He lived through the most catastrophic event in Jewish-Roman history and managed to play on both sides of the conflict, which makes his major written works *The Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Wars of the Jews* highly valuable commentary on all the events that follow.

## The Ark of the Covenant

Modern scholarship dates the Hebrew persecution and flight from Egypt to around 3300 years ago, during the rule of Pharaoh Ramses II from 1304 to 1237 BCE.

The origin of the word “Hebrew” is not known with certainty. One theory is that it was derived from the word *eber*, or *ever*, a Hebrew word meaning the “other side,” a reference perhaps to a people who were not Egyptian. Another theory is that it was the name given to the semi-nomadic *Habiru*, recorded in the hieroglyphs of Ramses II.<sup>13</sup> From the way these are placed in the inscriptions, the designation *Habiru* is not thought to have had any ethnic or racial connotation, but rather describes a class of people providing casual labor where needed.<sup>14</sup> Exodus, the second book of the Old Testament, clearly states that this was the role of the children of Israel, “the Egyptians . . . made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigour.”<sup>15</sup>

The Egyptian economy was driven and shaped by the task of constructing monuments to ease the passage of the Pharaoh into the afterlife. It consumed vast numbers of conscripted laborers. Ramses II built cities and shrines, and expanded the temples and tombs of his predecessors along the Nile: on structures old and new, many still standing, he would cover the walls with texts that endlessly praised his victories and his divine nature.<sup>16</sup> Texts can still be read recording that the cities of *Pi Ramesse* and *Pi thom* were built for Ramses II by the *Hibaru*. This is repeated in Exodus, “And they built for Pharaoh store cities, *Pithom* and *Raamses*.”<sup>17</sup> Whether the *Habiru* were a mongrel group of migrant workers from across the lands controlled by Egypt or a unified tribal group, their lives and their labor would have been in the service of this prodigious builder: their persecution would have been the abuse of that labor.<sup>18</sup> That labor would also establish in their collective memory both the effective power of great building and the means for achieving it (Figure 1.1). It is within the intimate family of this god-king that the character of Moses was formed. The tale of the abandoned child being found in the bulrushes by a daughter of the Pharaoh Seti I has been so sweetened in the popular imagination that the significance of Moses’ relation to the court of the Pharaoh has been diminished. Consider that the same Moses, guiding prophet and teacher, who led the Hebrew people out of the slavery of Egypt, grew up as a privileged ward of the royal court.



**Figure 1.1** Karnak, the Hall of Columns, a temple complex greatly expanded by Ramses II. Francis Firth, 1856.

It was Moses who, in his twenties, attacked and murdered a court official for killing a Hebrew laborer, and then fled into the desert. It was Moses who, time and again, confronted Ramses II with the demand that he, and the people with whom he had kinship, be allowed to leave Egypt. It was to Moses that the true God of the Hebrew, *Yahweh*, was revealed. *Yahweh* in translation suggests “He Who Brings Into Existence Whatever Exists”<sup>19</sup> and it was *Yahweh* who had commanded him to lead this people out of Egypt.



**Figure 1.2** Moses alongside the Ark leads the twelve Hebrew tribes out of Egypt. Illustration from the biblical commentaries of Antoine Augustin Calmet (1672–1757).

And after arguments, threats, and signs of divine intervention Ramses II finally allowed Moses to leave and lead the great Exodus (Figure 1.2). Though the Exodus exists more as myth than fact, it is within the narrative that the ritual performance is defined that will be enshrined in the Temple.

Whether it was 600,000 people or 600 families, this vast and disorderly band is described as traveling eastwards out of Egypt and after three months coming to Mount Sinai,<sup>20</sup> the granite peak in the midst of the desert in the south-central Sinai Peninsula, close to the border of present day Israel. And Moses was summoned:

Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying . . . Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.<sup>21</sup>

To the blare of a ram's horn *Yahweh* then appeared on the mountaintop out of fire and smoke and revealed to Moses the divine laws that would



give moral order to the Hebrew. It would be the covenant between them and their God. As set down in Exodus, this covenant has both majesty and menace:

I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me;

This is certainly the God for whom Abraham would have killed his son:

and shewing mercy unto thousands, of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt do no murder.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.<sup>22</sup>

... the Ten Commandments. In Exodus this is followed with lists of many lesser, specific ordinances, moral precepts, and cultic regulations: "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by





himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him.”<sup>23</sup> On and on, in all exactly one hundred rules of social and religious behavior.

Far from being mysterious and theological, this most sacred of texts was, and still remains, a set of sensible, rational, and pragmatic laws for a civil society. Josephus noted that some “belong to our political state . . . concerning our common conversation and intercourse one with another.” Moses, in presenting the laws to the people emphasized their secular benefits, “I have . . . ordained you laws, by Divine suggestion, and a form of government, which are so good, that if you regularly observe them, you will be esteemed of all men the most happy.”<sup>24</sup>

After the laws came a description of how this God would be worshiped:

Ye shall not make other gods with me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen . . . And if thou make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.<sup>25</sup>

Moses reported back to his people, then was once again summoned to the mountain; this time with his elders, and God appeared walking above their heads:

and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness . . . And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them.<sup>26</sup>

Thus the law and commandments – the Covenant – which had previously been spoken by God, was inscribed in stone.

God then gave precise instructions for constructing the casket – the Ark – in which these most precious stones would be held, “And they shall make an ark of acacia wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.” (45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high, quite small and entirely covered in gold.) “And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.”

And with the protection of two strange creatures God would come to earth above this casket, “And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure



gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.” It would form the lid of the casket, and “I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim . . . of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”<sup>27</sup> Josephus explained that Cherubim, “are flying creatures, but their form is not like to that of any of the creatures which men have seen, though Moses said he had seen such beings near the throne of God.”<sup>28</sup> Moses would have seen their like in the tombs in the Valley of the Nile. In their most ancient form Cherubim were celestial beings and although their bodies were human, their heads, though sometimes human, could also be those of birds or dogs. These strange creatures recall the mysterious figures that spread their great wings over the coffins of the dead in the Egypt of Ramses II; they were the throne bearers of the deity.

Moses is recorded as being with God on the mountain for forty days and forty nights: too long an absence. He returned to find many gathered in the act of worshiping a golden calf, presumably the Egyptian bull god *Apis*. Outraged he had 3000 slaughtered, and smashed the tablets containing the Covenant: the dreadful consequence of not obeying the commandments. Moses would not be the one to incur the wrath of such a “jealous God.”

Such harsh measures and the theatrical hoopla around the divine appearances seem to reflect immense struggle to control and impose laws and a moral code on a disparate, displaced people as the Exodus moved northwards out of Egypt. It would be the laws of the Covenant, rather than racial kinship that would over time form the distinct character of the Hebrew people.

Yahweh was patient, and soon came to Moses again:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me on the top of the mount . . . [Then the warning] Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD, for it is a terrible thing that I do with thee . . . for thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:<sup>29</sup>





After the laws of the Covenant were again inscribed in the stone and the Ark built to hold them, Josephus records God offering Moses a glimpse of the Promised Land:

When you have possessed yourselves of the land of Canaan, and have leisure to enjoy the good things of it, and when you have afterward determined to build cities, if you will do what is pleasing to God, you will have a secure state of happiness. Let there be then one city of the land of Canaan, and this situate in the most agreeable place for its goodness, and very eminent in itself, and let it be that which God shall choose for himself by prophetic revelation.

Then a temple was imagined – only one temple:

Let there also be one temple therein, and one altar, not reared of hewn stones, but of such as you gather together at random; which stones, when they are whited over with mortar, will have a handsome appearance, and be beautiful to the sight. Let the ascent to it be not by steps but by an acclivity of raised earth. And let there be neither an altar nor a temple in any other city; for God is but one, and the nation of the Hebrews is but one.<sup>30</sup>

This comes from *Antiquities*; as Moses' life was ending he offers final instructions on law and order. Titled "The Polity Settled by Moses" it does not appear in the Old Testament, though Josephus would have drawn it from some source familiar in his time. The instruction continues – until such a city was found and a temple built, the Ark of the Covenant must have a home, albeit a tent. As with his instructions for the making of the casket to hold the Covenant, God was equally specific, not only as to the form this tent should take, but in selecting those who would build it:

Now when these things were brought together with great diligence he set architects over the works, and this by the command of God; they were significant enough to be named and remembered . . . Now their names are set down in writing in the sacred books; and they were these: *Besaleel*, the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah, *Aholiab*, son of *Ahisamach* the tribe of Dan . . . and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee.<sup>31</sup>

Then follows a list of the equipment with which to furnish this tent or tabernacle of the congregation:

and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the Tent; and the table and its vessels, and the pure candlestick



with all its vessels, and the altar of incense; and the altar of burnt offering with all its vessels, and the laver and its base; and the finely wrought garments, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office; and the anointing oil, and the incense of sweet spices for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.<sup>32</sup>

And all joined together to provide the precious materials from which it would be built:

HEREUPON the Israelites rejoiced at what they had seen and heard . . . they brought silver, and gold, and brass, and of the best sorts of wood, and such as would not at all decay by putrefaction; camels' hair also, and sheep-skins, some of them dyed of a blue color, and some of a scarlet; some brought the flower for the purple color, and others for white, with wool dyed by the flowers aforementioned; and fine linen and precious stones, which those that use costly ornaments set in ouches [clasps] of gold; they brought also a great quantity of spices; for of these materials did Moses build the tabernacle.<sup>33</sup>

Such sumptuous description compels the imagination. The Ark was placed in a tent, the "Tabernacle," which sat within a court 150 feet long by 75 feet wide (see Figure 1.3). This was formed by an extensive fabric wall, "a curtain of fine soft linen went round all the pillars, and hung down in a flowing and loose manner from their (capitals), and enclosed the whole space, and seemed not at all unlike to a wall about it." This covered three sides of the court. On the fourth the eastern face, was a gate 30 feet wide, screened by a curtain "composed of purple, and scarlet, and blue . . . and embroidered with many and divers sorts of figures, excepting the figures of animals." No animals and no human forms, it was so commanded, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them."<sup>34</sup> This God, unlike others, would assume no earthly form.

The Tabernacle containing the Ark sat at the western end of the court. It was 15 feet wide by 45 feet long, its sides formed from dense rows of twenty columns, which "had rings of gold affixed to their fronts outward . . . through which were inserted bars gilded over with gold." They formed a wall of gold such "that the tabernacle might not be shaken, either by the winds, or by any other means, but that it might preserve itself quiet





Figure 1.3 Constructing the wall of the Tabernacle: a bird's-eye view. *Physica Sacra: De constructie van de wanden van de tabernakel*. J. C. Scheuchzer, 1731–1735.

and immovable continually . . .” It would always face east “so that, when the sun arose, it might send its first rays upon it.” Inside it “Moses parted its length into three partitions.”

Now the whole temple was called The Holy Place: but that part which was within . . . and to which none were admitted, was called The Holy of Holies. This veil was very ornamental, and embroidered with all sorts of flowers



which the earth produces; and there were interwoven into it all sorts of variety that might be an ornament, excepting [once again] the forms of animals.<sup>35</sup>

And in front of the Holy of Holies was a table,<sup>36</sup> “Upon this table . . . were laid twelve unleavened loaves of bread” and nearby a candlestick of cast gold:

It was made with its knops, and lilies, and pomegranates, and bowls . . . by which means the shaft elevated itself on high from a single base, and spread itself into as many branches as there are planets, including the sun among them. It terminated in seven heads, in one row, all standing parallel to one another; and these branches carried seven lamps, one by one, in imitation of the number of the planets.<sup>37</sup>

An embroidered richly colored curtain covered the entrance, over which was a veil of linen of the same size that could be opened and closed. When open it gave a “view of the sanctuary, especially on solemn days . . . on other days, and especially when the weather was inclined to snow, it might be expanded, and afford a covering to the veil of divers colors.” Imagine this fragile assembly appearing through a sandstorm. The inner surface of the tent was fabric, the outer of animal skins, which “afforded covering and protection to those that were woven both in hot weather and when it rained. And great was the surprise of those who viewed these . . . at a distance, for they seemed not at all to differ from the color of the sky.” The skins must have been bleached white, dissolving into the sky in the intense light of the sun. Moses had set the stage not only to the rites and rituals demanded by this singular God, but the idea and form of the temple that would be built on Mount Moriah.

This long, low wall of fine cloth protecting the sacred tent against the rough desert landscape was always placed some distance from the encampment as the tribes moved toward Canaan. It would have become a compelling symbol of order and confidence on this restless journey. It was a rational structure; yet abstract (Figure 1.3). The wall of the veils that formed the long enclosure would have seemed to float above the landscape. With the decision to strike camp there would have been elaborate ritual; the removal and wrapping of all the instruments of sacrifice, the screening and protection of the divine chest and its winged guardians poised on the lid protecting the mercy-seat. Was it allowed to be seen or was it hidden even from the priests entrusted with carrying it? Taking down and folding the skins and fabrics; removing the hundred or more posts and placing them on wagons, would all have been performed with great solemnity. One can





assume that the procession of the wagons carrying the precious cargo was surrounded by priests, and, in the vanguard, heavily armed soldiers ready to defend to the last.

Moses did not live long enough to take his people into Canaan. After his death the task of leading the exodus fell to Joshua<sup>38</sup> and the journey continued. Joshua was named in Numbers as one of the twelve spies Moses sent out to survey the land ahead; he knew the way. And, as they marched, the Ark would have been more closely guarded, for it had become known to carry not only divine laws, but also destructive power; it had become a weapon of war. It was Joshua who captured Canaan and distributed its lands to the twelve tribes, and Joshua who set his army against Jericho. And it was the Ark – not the trumpets – that brought down the walls of Jericho:

so they went round the city again, the ark going before them, and the priests encouraging the people to be zealous in the work; and when they had gone round it seven times, and had stood still a little, the wall fell down, while no instruments of war, nor any other force, was applied to it by the Hebrews.<sup>39</sup>

These were restless times as the twelve tribes became insinuated into the land and culture of Canaan. Joshua chose as his base “the city of Shiloh . . . because of the beauty” of its situation and there gave the tents and veils of the Tabernacle a permanent setting until such times as “their affairs would permit them to build a temple.” Soon the power of the Ark was to be tested again. When a Hebrew town was attacked by the Philistines, the people called on the high priest in Shiloh to bring the Ark to their defense,

but when the battle was joined . . . they found that they had put their trust in the Ark in vain, for they were presently beaten as soon as they came to a close fight with their enemies, and lost about thirty thousand men, among whom were the sons of the high priest; but the Ark was carried away by the enemies.<sup>40</sup>

The Ark however, brought misery and disaster to its captors, the people of Askelon, who:

sent it away from themselves to others: nor did it stay among those others neither; for since they were pursued by the same disasters, they still sent it to the neighboring cities; so that the Ark went round, after this manner, to the five cities of the Philistines, as though it exacted these disasters as a tribute to be paid it for its coming among them.<sup>41</sup>



Eventually it was returned to Shiloh and there it would rest for two centuries.

## King David

In his years in power – c. 1000–c. 960 BCE – King David succeeded in uniting the tribes of Judea into a single nation. He captured the Canaanite city of Jerusalem<sup>42</sup> and made it his capital. He rededicated the sacred altar<sup>43</sup> of the Canaanites on Mount Zion<sup>44</sup> to Yahweh, and immediately arranged to bring the Ark and its Tabernacle from Shiloh. The presence of the Ark would confirm the divine authority of his rule.

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem proved to be fraught with danger. Josephus wrote of a great procession beginning well enough, “Before [the Ark] went the king and the whole multitude of the people with him singing hymns to God.” The book of Samuel added an orchestra “And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD with all manner of instruments made of fir wood, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with castanets, and with cymbals.”<sup>45</sup> Then disaster, someone touched the Ark’s golden surface and was instantly destroyed – by God. All were afraid, and the Ark was left outside Jerusalem for three months. Finally, confidence regained, King David once again led the Ark in procession the last few miles into the city.

He transferred the ark to his own house; the priests carrying it, while seven companies of singers . . . went before it, and while he himself played upon the harp, and joined in the music, insomuch, that when his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, who was our first king, saw him so doing, she laughed at him.”

This, from Josephus, suggests that Michal found the king’s performance ridiculous. The book of Samuel gives a distinctly different impression:

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And it was so, as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.<sup>46</sup>



Michal “despised him in her heart,” for leaping and dancing before the Lord. It must have been an extravagant show.

King David housed the Ark on Mount Zion in his version of the tent enclosure so carefully described in Exodus. The Ark within became the locus of all worship of the peoples of Judea, drawing pilgrims to Jerusalem on high days and holy days, at which time it would be carried in splendid procession through the city. The divine laws it contained confirmed that they were the chosen people of the one true God, Yahweh.

The book of Samuel reports that God told David he was tired of living in a tent and wanted a proper house:

Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. [there is wit in this God.] . . . And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David went up according to the saying of Gad, as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked forth, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD . . .<sup>47</sup>

Araunah offered to give David the land and the ploughs and the oxen, the king replied:

but I will verily buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God which cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.<sup>48</sup>

Though the desire was to build a Temple, the immediate reason for buying the land was to build an altar to receive sacrifice that would end a plague in the land. The threshing floor sat on the top of Mount Moriah just north of the city of David in Jerusalem. Josephus was in no doubt that this was the very place “that Abraham came and offered his son Isaac for a burnt-offering . . . and he resolved to call that entire place ‘The Altar of all the People,’ and to build a temple to God there.” Building the Temple over the place where Abraham had offered to sacrifice Isaac,



would marry Mount Moriah forever to the creation of the people of Israel. (However, there is no evidence even within the earliest forms of the Hebrew Bible of any connection between “Mount Moriah” and the “land of Moriah.”<sup>49</sup>)

David bought the land on which the Temple would rise, but God would not allow him to build. In Chronicles David spoke:

it was in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God; and I had made ready for the building. But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood . . . Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.<sup>50</sup>

His sin was to have shed the blood of his most trusted servant Uriah in his lust for Bathsheba. He was, however, allowed to set out the plans for the temple, order the materials, and hire the labor:

he appointed fourscore thousand to be hewers of stone, and the rest of the multitude to carry the stones . . . . He also prepared a great quantity of iron and brass for the work, with many (and those exceeding large) cedar trees . . . . And he told his friends that these things were now prepared, that he might leave materials ready for the building of the temple to his son, who was to reign after him, and that he might not have them to seek then, when he was very young, and by reason of his age unskillful in such matters<sup>51</sup>

Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper rooms thereof, and of the inner chambers thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat: and the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, for the courts of the house of the LORD, and for all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things.<sup>52</sup>

The second book of Chronicles states that Solomon began to build the Temple at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah “ . . . in the place that David had appointed, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”<sup>53</sup>

## **The Temple of Solomon**

Solomon was no less a warrior than his father David, and built an empire before building the Temple: an empire that produced wealth and led to



a vast building program to fortify its borders and cities.<sup>54</sup> He began by restoring the walls of Jerusalem, behind which he built his palace, “And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month *Ziv*, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.”<sup>55</sup> It would be the house of a powerful God and a symbol of a powerful king.

The Old Testament book of Kings offers a clear but rather basic description: the Temple, entered though a colonnade that ran its full width was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Josephus knew the biblical descriptions yet offered a grandly different description. He began by emphasizing the strength of the building: it had “to be so strong, in order to sustain with ease those vast superstructures and precious ornaments, whose own weight was to be not less than the weight of those other high and heavy buildings which the king designed to be very ornamental and magnificent.” He gave its height and length both as 60 cubits – 90 feet – then added that “There was another building erected over it, equal to it in its measures; so that the entire altitude of the temple was a hundred and twenty cubits.”<sup>56</sup> Between Josephus’ estimate of 180 feet and the more reasonable 45 feet in Kings it would seem wise to prefer the biblical evidence (Figure 1.4).

All was built in the white stone that marks Jerusalem into the present, and the perfection of the walls was such, Josephus wrote, “that there appeared to the spectators no sign of any hammer, or other instrument of architecture; but as if, without any use of them, the entire materials had naturally united themselves together.”

Into the Temple and into the Holy of Holies. In Kings “Solomon . . . prepared an oracle in the midst of the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. And within the oracle was a space of twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof [a 30-foot cube]; and he overlaid it with pure gold.” And surrounding the Ark “he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high (15 feet),” two giant golden figures standing guard on either side of the Ark, each stretching their wings to the full extent, meeting in the middle and touching the walls on either side – consuming the space: “And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.”<sup>57</sup>

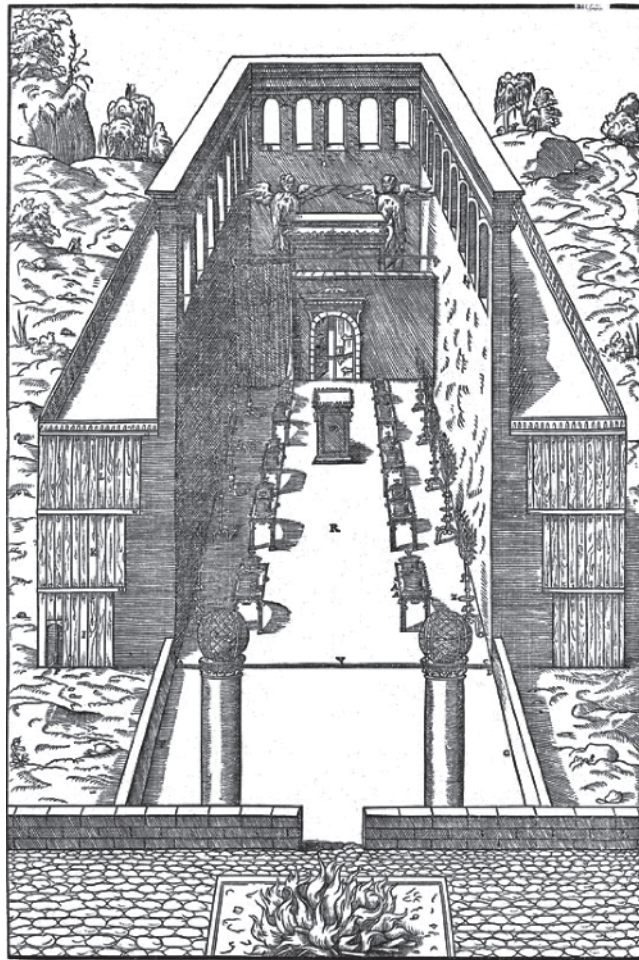


Figure 1.4 Bird's-eye view of the interior of Solomon's Temple. Franciscus Vatablus. From the Latin Estienne Bible, Paris 1540.

Into the same space with Josephus:

the most secret chamber; two cherubims of solid gold . . . Solomon set them up not far from each other, that with one wing they might touch the southern wall of the secret place, and with another the northern: their other wings, which joined to each other, were a covering to the ark.<sup>58</sup>

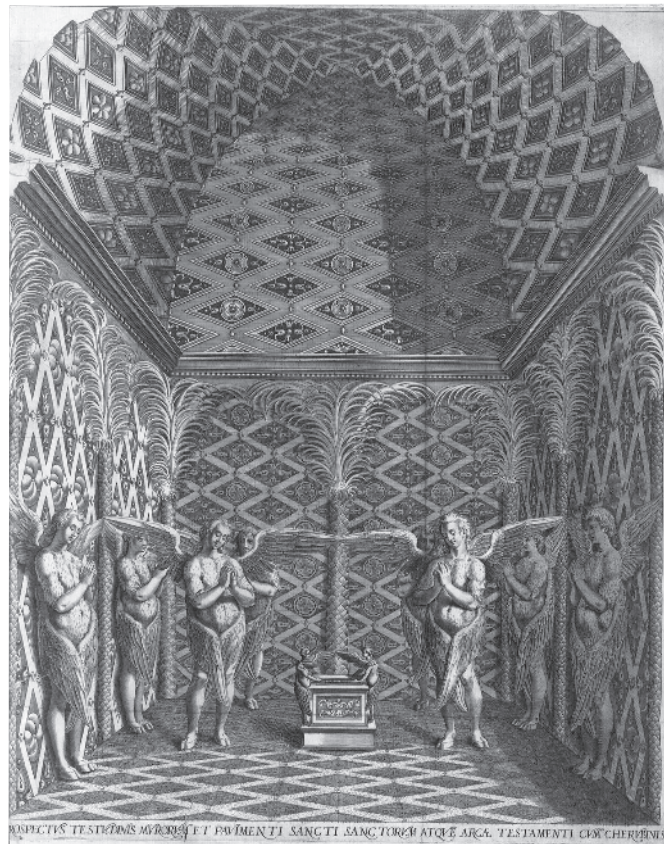


Figure 1.5 Cherubims, Guardians of the Ark, after *Descriptio seu ichnographia veteris urbis Hierusalem*. Bernard Lamy, Paris 1720. Universidad de Sevilla.

This most secret chamber was seen and known only through what the priests chose to tell. The two kneeling figures on the lid of the Ark from the Exodus had been transformed into two standing giants, 15 feet high, bisecting the space and looming over the priests, consuming the room above the golden surfaces of the simple box containing the Ark. The outstretched wings touched in the middle and stretched from wall to wall, two fearsome creatures (Figure 1.5). As with the Cherubim that guarded the Ark for Moses, these also seem to owe much to the art of the Pharaohs. Standing winged figures appeared in frescoes and bas-reliefs from Egypt in the centuries before Solomon built the temple, often guarding tombs. Their





presence does raise the question of how they avoided God's injunction against making "for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath." This could explain the disclaimer in the writing of Josephus, who was rabbi and would have been sensitive to this issue, where he notes "that nobody can tell, or even conjecture what was the shape of these cherubims." Imagine these angelic giants, throne-bearers of the deity with the heads of birds. And the holy chamber was furnished exactly as it had been prescribed by Moses; the candlestick of gold, the table for the bread, and, in between, the golden altar.

The sanctuary occupying the remaining 60 feet was dressed in "veils of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and the brightest and softest linen, with the most curious flowers wrought upon them." Josephus and the authors of Kings both praised and named the woods used and the metal workers who fashioned the decoration on the capitals that crowned the columns. Capitals with luscious decoration "round about which there was net-work interwoven with small palms, made of brass, and covered the lily-work. To this also were hung two hundred pomegranates, in two rows."

Josephus wrote of the equipment in the court in front of the sanctuary, the baths for cleansing, the altar for the burnt sacrifice, and, at the center, the vast basin in brass carried on the backs of twelve crouching oxen, surrounded by smaller basins which gave the appearance of being on wheels, all for washing the hands and the feet of the priests before they ascended to the altar. Dominating all was the great brazen altar, 30 feet square – the width of the temple – raised 15 feet above the ground, to receive and burn the offerings for sacrifice.

The building complete, the Ark was carried in procession by the priests on long wooden staves, out of the Tabernacle on Mount Zion, into the valley below, and up the steep slope to Mount Moriah.

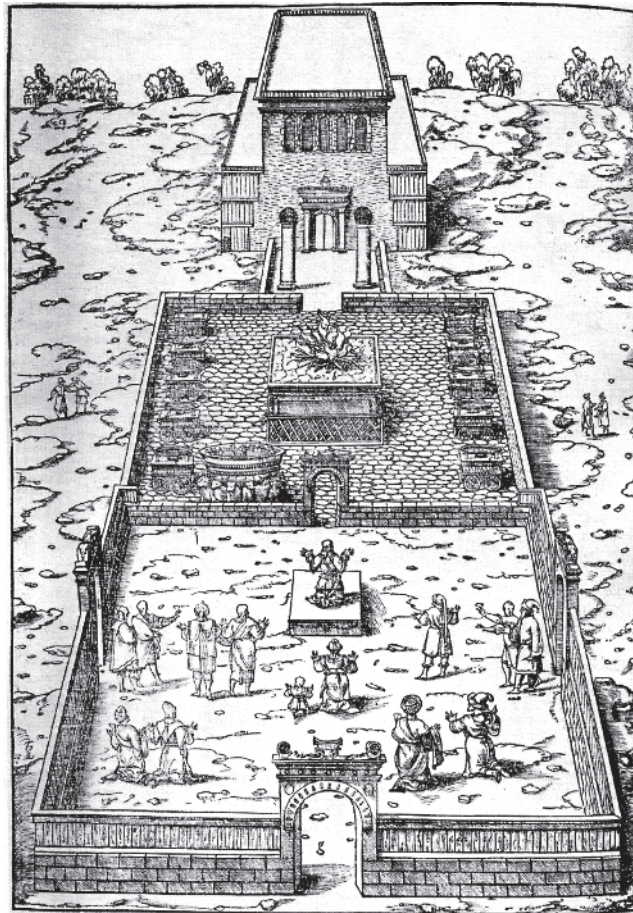
And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent . . . And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark . . . There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at *Horeb*, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.<sup>59</sup>





Writing almost a thousand years later, Josephus imagined the scene “the whole temple shined, and dazzled the eyes of such as entered, by the splendor of the gold that was on every side of them”. It was the largest and most majestic object in Judea and it could have borne comparison with the temples of Egypt, or the more ancient structures of Mesopotamia.

As with the tents of Moses' Tabernacle, this was a rational structure, its power coming from the perfection and the scale of its massive walls (Figure 1.6). Two elements helped in giving clarity to its character, the first the exceptional color and quality of the white stone of Jerusalem, the other,



**Figure 1.6** Solomon's Temple. Franciscus Vatablus. From the Latin Estienne Bible Paris 1540.



though more tenuous, its derivation from the highly systemized temporary structures of Moses' Tabernacle. This series of lightweight structures would have been refined over centuries of assembly and disassembly; rational by necessity, abstract by never being tied to any one place.

The prophetic writings collected under the name of Isaiah were composed from the eighth to the sixth century BCE, and perhaps even later. They arose out of the moral decline of the people and the real threat of invasion from the east. They are in three distinct parts: the first predicts the destruction of Jerusalem: "your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate."<sup>60</sup> However, the second offers a vision of renewal: "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it . . . for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations."<sup>61</sup> Both fears would be realized.<sup>62</sup> The third section is thought to be from a later period and offers more commentary that prophecy, including the claim that God has no need of a temple because "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"<sup>63</sup>

By the seventh century BCE the dynasty created by David and Solomon had faded; the religion had become corrupted. Solomon's temple to Yahweh had been converted to the worship of Baal, (Lord of the Earth and god of fertility), a favorite of the Canaanites. Baal demanded burnt sacrifices, sometimes human, and some kind of sexual performance, while the priests danced around the altars, chanting frantically and cutting themselves with knives, attracting divine attention and compassion. But the Ark had not been entirely forgotten. Around the year 600 BCE a copy of the Covenant was mysteriously found in the Temple and the priests used the laws to reform the social and religious life of Judah:

And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.<sup>64</sup>

After spreading the word, the Temple itself had to be cleansed:

And the king commanded *Hilkiah* the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the Asherah, and for



all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, [the valley below Temple Mount] and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense . . . unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven . . . And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah.<sup>65</sup>

All to no avail as the weakness of the nation attracted enemies (Figure 1.7).

### Nebuchadnezzar II

Soon after, in 597 BCE, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar II<sup>66</sup> attacked Judah, captured Jerusalem, and deported King Jehoiachin, the last royal descendant of David.

At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came unto the city, while his servants were besieging it; and Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon . . . and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD.<sup>67</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar again laid siege in 587 and 586 BCE, and this time city and Temple were completely destroyed. From Josephus:

Accordingly, he came to Jerusalem in the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, and pillaged the temple, and carried out the vessels of God, both gold and silver, and particularly that large laver which Solomon dedicated, as also the pillars of brass, and their chapters, [capitals] with the golden tables and the candlesticks; and when he had carried these off, he set fire to the temple . . . and in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar: he also burnt the palace, and overthrew the city. Now the temple was burnt four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days after it was built. But the general of the Babylonian king now overthrew the city to the very foundations, and removed all the people, and took for prisoners the high priest . . . and the rulers that guarded the temple.<sup>68</sup>

All were taken into exile to Babylon.

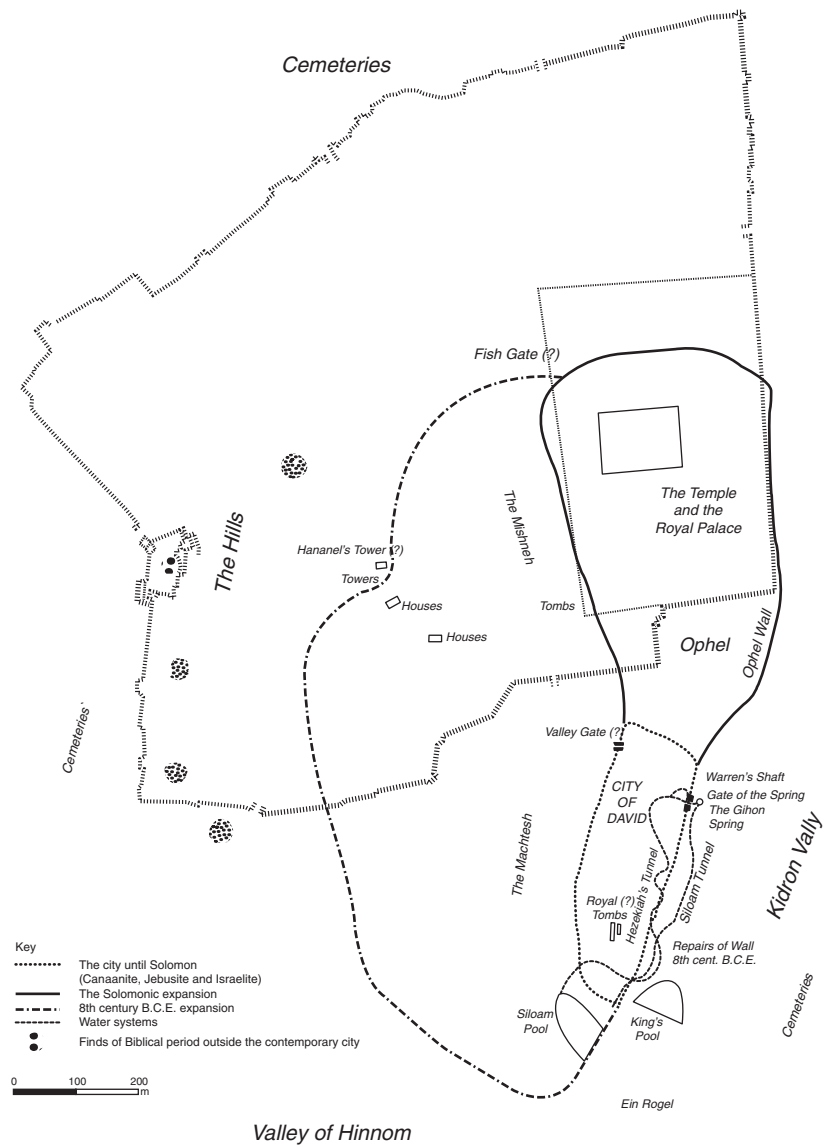


Figure 1.7 Jerusalem in the time of the First Temple. Maps © Carta Jerusalem, redrawn by permission.

Unmentioned here or in any other record of the Babylonian invasion is the one aspect of these events that has come to dominate the historical memory – the removal and the subsequent disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark disappeared from the historical record long before the Babylonians invaded.

The prophet Ezekiel gave an intimate sense of the despair of exile. He is presumed to have been a priest of the Temple and was among those deported to Babylon in the first invasion. In his earliest writings he railed against Judea and foresaw God passing harsh judgment on Jerusalem for the worship of Baal and the monstrous practices still being performed in the courts of the Temple. To him Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Temple was God's punishment.<sup>69</sup> From exile Ezekiel prophesied that there would be an act of divine grace and all would one day return to the city. He imagined God carrying him into the land of Israel and setting him upon a very high mountain from which he could look down on a city. He is then introduced to a strange poetic device, a brass figure of a man who is holding a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed. This figure proceeded to describe the Temple in all its exact dimensions and decorations: "on the doors of the temple, cherubim and palm trees, like as were made upon the walls."<sup>70</sup> Nowhere, it should be noted, in this careful instruction that was intended to inspire the rebuilding of the Temple was there mention of the Ark of the Covenant. Then God spoke directly to Ezekiel:

Thou, son of man, shew the house [the Temple] to the house [people] of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof . . . and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight: that they may keep the whole form thereof . . . This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy [Mount Moriah]. Behold, this is the law of the house.<sup>71</sup>

This is both a prophecy and a call for the people of Israel to return and rebuild and be governed from the Temple.

The Babylonian exile ended in 538 BCE when the Persian King Cyrus freed the Jews and actively encouraged their return to Judea. On which Josephus wrote:

In the first year of the reign of Cyrus which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon, God



commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people, according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the prophet, before the destruction of the city, that after they had served Nebuchadnezzar and his posterity, and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity . . . He called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices.<sup>72</sup>

In a letter which survives from *Antiquities*, Cyrus wrote to neighboring rulers to support his cause and added: "Moreover, I have also sent the vessels which king Nebuchadnezzar pillaged out of the temple . . . that they may have them carried to Jerusalem, and may restore them to the temple of God." There was no indication of what such vessels were; no mention of the Ark.

The Temple would have been reconstructed soon after the return. It is recalled in the book of Ezra:

And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.<sup>73</sup>

This wailing came from the elders who had seen and known the great Temple of Solomon. For them this rebuilding was a monument to decline. This was the second Temple. Yet, sixty or so years after rebuilding the Temple, the city remained in ruins and sparsely populated – its walls collapsed, and it was defenseless. The book of Nehemiah offers the most poignant report of the state of Jerusalem around 440 BCE, a hundred years after the return. He wrote:

certain men out of Judah [came]; and I asked them concerning the Jews . . . which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And



they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept.<sup>74</sup>

Nehemiah, though Jewish, was the cupbearer to the Persian king<sup>75</sup> with whom he shared his sadness about the fate of Jerusalem. The Persian king was moved and ordered Nehemiah to visit the city and give aid where possible. And he found the city as desolate as he had been told:

Ye see the evil case that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. And I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also of the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build.<sup>76</sup>

And it was rebuilt and Nehemiah gives line after line the names of all those who helped and the parts of the city they reconstructed.

The high priest Ezra<sup>77</sup> continued rebuilding and reforming not only the city but all aspects of Jewish society to accord with the Torah. It was he who made religious law the unifying force in Jewish culture. He encouraged all into solemn covenant before God, to comply with the demands of the law forbidding mixed marriages, it was feared that intermarriage with foreigners would result in the loss of Jewish identity. He banned work on the Sabbath, and made all subscribe to an annual tax for the support of the Temple. Much later he was hailed as a second Moses. After Ezra nothing much is known of Palestine or of its southernmost district, Judea, until the coming of the Greeks.

In 167 BCE, Antiochus IV, also called Epiphanes the Mad, King of Syria, entered the city:

the king came up to Jerusalem, and, pretending peace, he got possession of the city by treachery; at which time he spared not so much as those that admitted him into it, on account of the riches that lay in the temple; but, led by his covetous inclination . . . and in order to plunder its wealth, he ventured to break the league he had made.

He left the temple bare, and took away the golden candlesticks, and the golden altar [of incense], and table [of shew-bread<sup>78</sup>], and the altar [of burnt-offering]; and did not abstain from even the veils, which were made of fine linen and scarlet. He also emptied it of its secret treasures, and left nothing at



all remaining; and by this means cast the Jews into great lamentation, for he forbade them to offer those daily sacrifices which they used to offer to God, according to the law.

And when the king had built an idol altar upon God's altar, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship which they paid their own God, and to adore those whom he took to be gods; and made them build temples, and raise idol altars in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day. He also commanded them not to circumcise their sons, and threatened to punish any that should be found to have transgressed his injunction.<sup>79</sup>

The Syrian invasion came eight centuries after the building of Solomon's Temple; centuries during which it had been destroyed and poorly rebuilt, and faith in this once supreme God had been weakened.

The Syria of Antiochus was a strongly Hellenized culture, and the very visible and physical gods of the Greeks would have immediately posed a threat to the unseen God of the Jews. The Greek gods played endless capricious games across the heavens in a divine league far from the secular and pragmatic concerns of this God of the Jews. Apart from sacrifice, the God of the Jews demanded few complex rituals, made no mysterious promises, no mention of an afterlife and had never been given human form. Was this God too opaque to compete with the pantheon of spectacular gods that had been nurtured to perfection in the Greek imagination – gods able and ready to maintain the cosmos in perfect order if they were properly respected?

With the coming of Herod the struggle between the gods and the philosophies of Judaism and Hellenism changes the reality of Jerusalem and the nature of the Temple.

## Notes

1. Genesis 12: 1–2. The patriarchal history of the Jewish people is a compilation of ancient oral and written traditions believed to have been first brought together almost 3000 years ago.
2. He was Samarian or Mesopotamian.
3. Where still stands ruined the ziggurat dedicated to the moon god *Nanna (Sin)*, the patron deity, the divine king.
4. Abram "The Father [or God] Is Exalted", who is later named Abraham "The Father of Many Nations."

5. Genesis 13: 17–18.
6. Twentieth-century archeology has uncovered enough evidence of Abraham's journey from Ur to suggest that he may have settled in Hebron 600 miles to the west. It was a journey made some 3800 years ago. This land has now several names: Israel, Palestine, Gaza, West Bank, Jordan.
7. Only legitimate son according to Jews and Christians, but Abraham already had a son, Ishmael, from his marriage to his servant Hagar.
8. Genesis 22: 2.
9. Genesis 22.
10. Genesis 22: 17–18.
11. Abraham came from a culture that worshiped many gods; in Canaan he would have experienced monolatry, the one supreme god El, among many who evolved the qualities of transcendence, power, and knowledge to become the "God of our fathers."
12. Josephus (Titus Flavius Josephus 37–100 CE) *Antiquities of the Jews* I 13:4 All the quotations from Josephus' *Antiquities*, and his *Wars of the Jews*, in this and succeeding chapters are from William Whiston's translations of 1737. Whiston (1667–1752) was a student of Newton, succeeding him as Lucasian Professor of mathematics at Cambridge, until removed for heresy for Arianism (not accepting that God was in three persons). His interest in the writings of Josephus grew out of his concern to understand the early church.  

There are several websites offering the complete works of Josephus: the Project Gutenberg site, produced by David Widger and David Reed is by far the most accessible ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)). The Loeb Classical Library has a much more recent translation, but the Whiston texts remain vivid. For more on Josephus see note 41 of Chapter II.
13. A name recorded in Egyptian inscriptions of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries.
14. All tribes in Egypt and beyond were racially one.
15. Exodus 1: 13–14.
16. The most dramatic and ambitious monument was to his favored queen Nefertari, Abu Simbel. It is carved out of a vast rock escarpment rising along the Nile, its façade formed from ten vast figures in two groups, six standing and four seated – colossal images of Ramses II enthroned.
17. Exodus 1: 11.
18. Their success in creating an everlasting presence is most clearly seen in the presence of Tutankhamen in the world's imagination. An insignificant young man, who died at the age of 19, perhaps after a fall from a chariot, has been immortalized by the power of the ritualized reality of Egypt after the discovery of his tomb.
19. This is one possible translation for a word that must have existed long before Moses.

20. Mountain of Moses, or Mount Hareh; Hebrew *Har Sinai*, Arabic *Jabal Musa*.
21. Exodus 19: 3–6.
22. Exodus 20: 2–17.
23. Exodus 21: 2.
24. *Antiquities* IV: 8.
25. Exodus 20: 23.
26. Exodus 24: 10–12.
27. Exodus 25: 10–22.
28. *Antiquities* III: 5.
29. Exodus 34: 1–14.
30. *Antiquities* IV: 8, 5
31. *Antiquities* III: 6, 1.
32. Exodus 31: 7–11.
33. *Antiquities* III: 6, 1.
34. Exodus 20: 4.
35. *Antiquities* III: 6, 4.
36. Josephus wrote that “it is like those at Delphi”: a surprisingly anachronistic reference to the Greek oracle.
37. *Antiquities* III: 6, 7
38. *Yehoshua* meaning “Yahweh Is Deliverance,” from the end of the twelfth century BCE.
39. *Antiquities*-V: 1, 27.
40. *Antiquities*-V: 11, 2.
41. *Antiquities* VI: 1, 2.
42. From the word *Jebusite* a mixture of peoples.
43. *El* was the principal deity of the Canaanites.
44. In Isaiah 8: 18, Psalms 2: 6 and Psalms 74: 2: Mount Zion where Yahweh, the God of Israel, installed his king, David. Josephus placed Mount Zion on the west of the city but in the last century it has been identified as being the eastern hill – modern Ophel.
45. II Samuel 6: 5.
46. II Samuel 6: 15–17.
47. II Samuel 7: 5–6 and 24: 18–21.
48. II Samuel 24: 24–25.
49. In Hebrew *Moriah* has the meaning “Ordained by God,” and in the King James translation of the Bible the name appears twice; yet nowhere is there any explicit connection between them. It appears first in Genesis 22:2 as an instruction to Abraham “And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of *Moriah*; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Then again in II Chronicles 3: 1: “Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount *Moriah*, where the LORD appeared unto David

his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.” Furthermore, in the oldest translations from Hebrew into the Greek there is no mention of Moriah in Genesis and in Chronicles the reference is to Mount *Amoria*. Thus the textual evidence is of no help in confirming that Solomon built his Temple in the place of Abraham’s sacrifice.

50. I Chronicles 28: 2–6.
51. *Antiquities* VII: 14, 1
52. I Chronicles 28: 11–12.
53. II Chronicles 3: 1.
54. At first the laborers were the Canaanites, but eventually all the men of the nation gave one month in three to the task.
55. Kings 6: 1.
56. *Antiquities* VIII: 3, 2.
57. I Kings 6: 19–29.
58. *Antiquities* VIII: 3, 3.
59. I Kings 8: 4–7, 9.
60. Isaiah 1: 7.
61. Isaiah 2: 2–3. It continues with the immortal passage “and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”
62. Some of these writings are not prophecies, but written after the fact.
63. Isaiah 66: 1–2.
64. II Chronicles: 34, 30.
65. II Kings 23: 4–7.
66. The greatest of the kings of Babylonia, who reigned c. 605–c. 561 BCE.
67. II Kings 24: 10–13.
68. *Antiquities* X: 8, 5.
69. Despite the destruction and exile, Nebuchadnezzar viewed is with some favor in Jewish history.
70. Ezekiel 41: 25.
71. Ezekiel 43: 10–12.
72. *Antiquities* XI: 1, 1–2.
73. Ezra 3: 11–13.
74. Nehemiah 1: 2–4.
75. Judea was under Persian administration.
76. Nehemiah 2: 17.
77. Though the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are linked in the Bible, they were not contemporaries. Nehemiah is believed to have preceded Ezra by some 30 or 40 years.
78. Literally, shew-bread, the “showbread,” is *lechem ha’panim*, that is, “bread of the face” – or, “bread of the Presence (of God).”
79. *Antiquities* XII: 5, 4.