

are located at the upper and outer margin of the eye, and secrete when excess fluid is required, as for instance when a foreign body enters the eye or in response to the emotional state of weeping.

Tears drain from the eye surface through tiny openings towards the inner end of each eyelid. These are connected by narrow tubes to the lacrimal sacs, located in shallow depressions in the lacrimal bones, on either side of the nose. The action of blinking sucks excess fluid away from the eye and activates muscles which compress the lacrimal sacs. This forces the fluid in the sacs to drain through tiny ducts in the bone into the nose.

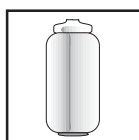
The whole lacrimal apparatus thus comprises many interconnected parts marvellously contrived to provide an automatic cleansing and preserving irrigation system for the vitally important functioning of the eye. It is merely an accessory to the eye, and yet without it the eye would be completely unable to operate. If the theory of evolution were true it would have been essential for both to have evolved simultaneously, which stretches credulity even further than believing that the eye itself was the chance product of mutation and natural selection. Further, it is difficult to imagine any selective pressure that would have led to the evolution in humans of additional glands for the purpose of allowing us to express our emotions by shedding tears. Lastly, it is amazing and humbling to remember that

this whole complex system grows and is assembled automatically in the womb, and is fully functional at birth.

God shall wipe away all tears

It should be abundantly obvious to the unprejudiced mind that the eye and its associated parts bear all the hallmarks of exquisite design by the all-wise Creator. In particular, He has provided the lacrimal system as a wonderfully practical solution to the protection of the eye and the preservation of our sight. But at the same time He has employed it as a graphic way of demonstrating grief and sorrow in a fallen world in which suffering and pain are prevalent. Never were tears more poignant than those of the penitent "woman in the city" who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair (Lk. 7:37,38).

However, the gospel of salvation in Jesus has been provided by the God of love, bearing the promise that, for those who overcome, the present time of weeping will give way to the glory of the Kingdom age to come, for "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:5,6). In that eagerly awaited day, "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17).



Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium

4. The temple

Geoff Cave

RETURNING TO Ezekiel's 'guided tour' of the sanctuary, the prophet is next shown the temple and its three main sections, the porch, the holy place and the most holy place. This article cannot examine every detail given in chapter 41, but it is important to consider the main dimensions of the holy place and most holy place as given in verses 1-4.

Regarding the holy place, verse 2 records: "and he measured the length thereof, forty cubits: and the breadth, twenty cubits". Regarding the most holy place, verse 4 reads: "So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, This is the most holy place". These dimensions are identical to those of Solomon's

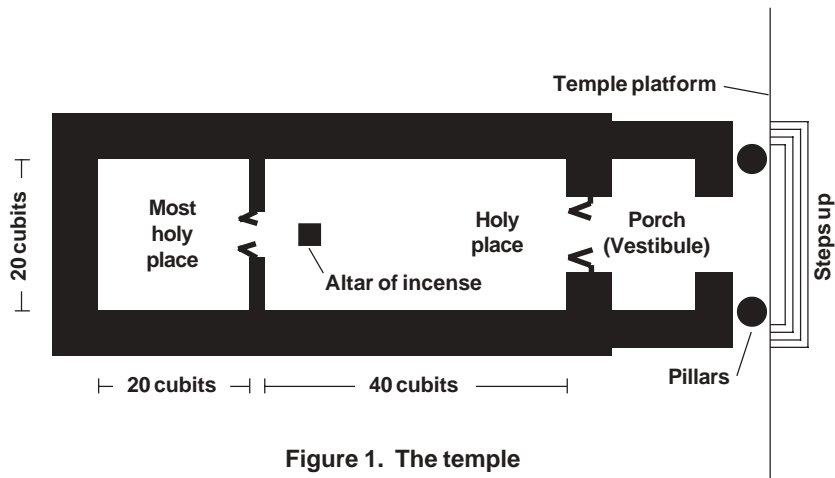


Figure 1. The temple

temple (1 Kgs. 6:2,16,17,20), and the proportions are identical to the tabernacle in the wilderness. This was the pattern shown to Moses in the mount (Ex. 25:9,40); see [Figure 2](#).

The side chambers

The temple seen by Ezekiel copies that of Solomon in another respect: it had chambers on ei-

ther side, in three stories, as shown. [Figure 3](#) overleaf shows a sectional view of the temple and the side chambers, viewed from the front of the temple.

It will be noted that the chambers in the upper level are larger than those in the lower level. The reason for this is given in Ezekiel 41:6: “but they had not hold in the wall of the house”; that

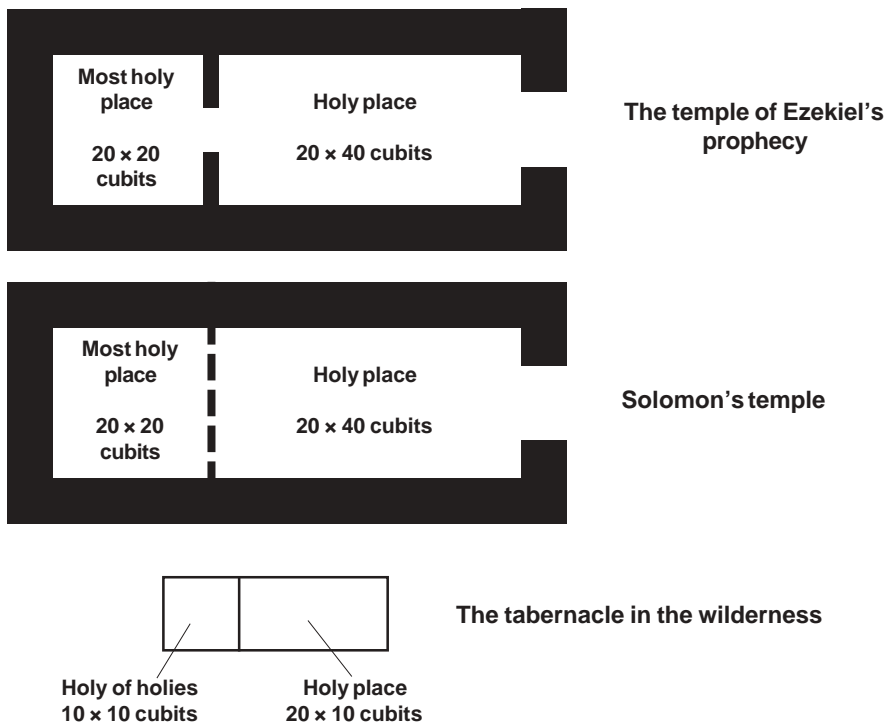


Figure 2. The tabernacle, Solomon's temple and Ezekiel's temple compared (the porch is not shown on the temple diagrams)

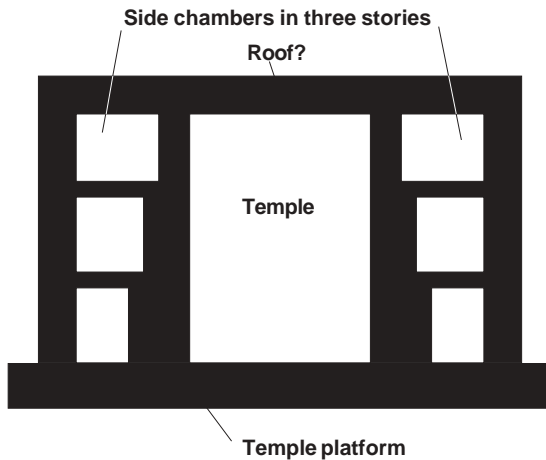


Figure 3. Cross section through the temple buildings, showing side chambers

is, the floors of the upper chambers were not supported by the wall of the temple. The temple seen by Ezekiel mirrors Solomon’s temple in this respect also: “the nethermost [lowest] chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house” (1 Kgs. 6:6).

Although [Figure 3](#) shows the roof of the building, no details are given in the text for the roof of any building in the sanctuary. This raises the question as to whether they will have roofs at all, and, if they do, what the construction will be.

The north and south holy chambers

“Then he led me out into the inner court, toward the north, and he brought me to the chambers which were opposite the temple yard and opposite the building on the north. The length of the building which was on the north side was a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty cubits . . . On the south also, opposite the yard and opposite the building, there were chambers with a passage in front of them; they were similar to the chambers on the north, of the same length and breadth” (Ezek. 42:1,2,10,11, RSV).

The purpose of these chambers is given in verses 13 and 14: “Then said he unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy. When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people”.

Ezekiel sees next what may be described as temple kitchens. 46:19,20 records: “After he brought me through the entry, which was at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there was a place on the two sides westward. Then said he unto me, This is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear them not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people”.

The last detail regarding the buildings of the sanctuary is given in 46:21-24. Ezekiel sees four courts, one in each corner of the outer courts. These are for boiling the sacrifices brought by the people.

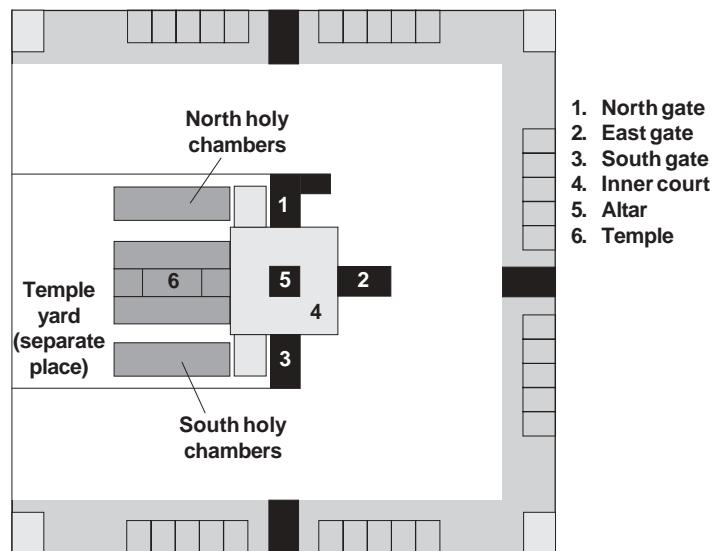


Figure 4. The temple complex showing the north and south holy chambers

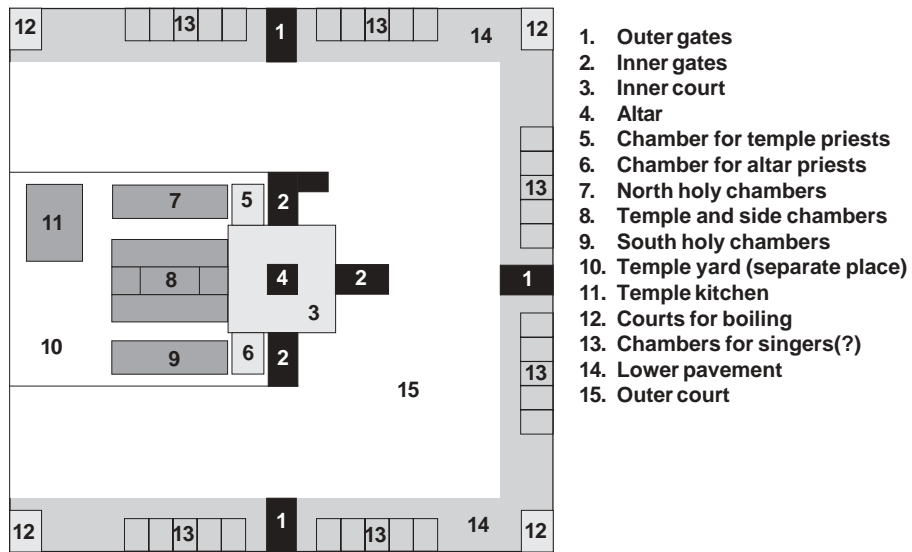


Figure 5. Overall view of the sanctuary

The waters

Having seen all the buildings of the sanctuary, the prophet then sees waters issuing from under the threshold of the temple. These waters become deeper as they move away from the sanctuary. They divide into two and run into the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea, healing the latter: “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end

of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me round on the outside to the outer gate, that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side” (47:1,2, RSV, see [Figure 6](#) below).

Reeds or cubits?

There is one passage where the AV and RSV appear to give a conflicting message concerning the unit of measurement. This passage is Ezekiel 42:15-17: “Now when he had made an end of

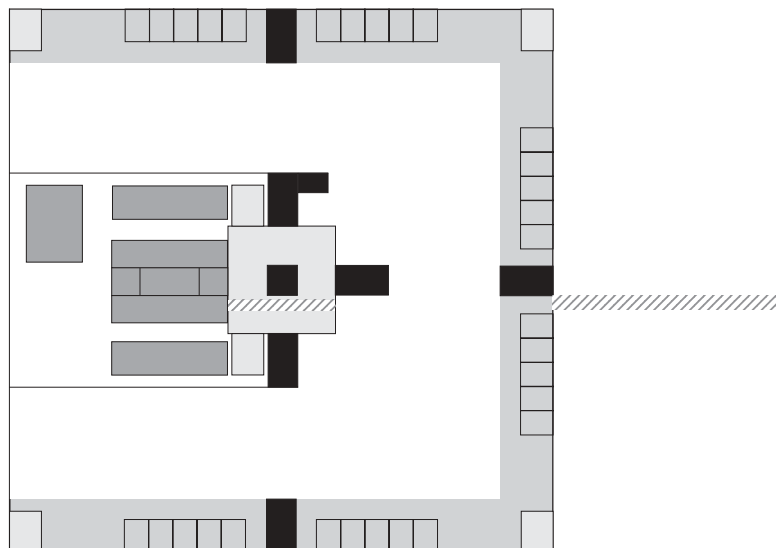


Figure 6. The waters flowing from under the sanctuary

measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about. He measured the east side with the measuring reed, *five hundred reeds*, with the measuring reed round about. He measured the north side, *five hundred reeds*, with the measuring reed round about". Each side is five hundred reeds in the AV, whereas the RSV gives these measurements in cubits. There are two possible explanations for this difficulty: either the Hebrew text has been corrupted, or the passage is describing another wall around the whole of the sanctuary (see [Figure 7](#)).

It must be stressed that this is the only occasion where the two versions are not in agreement as to the original text. In chapters 45 and 48 the AV gives the measurement of the holy oblation in reeds whereas the RSV gives cubits. It should be noted, however, that "reeds" is in italics in the AV; the word is not in the original.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

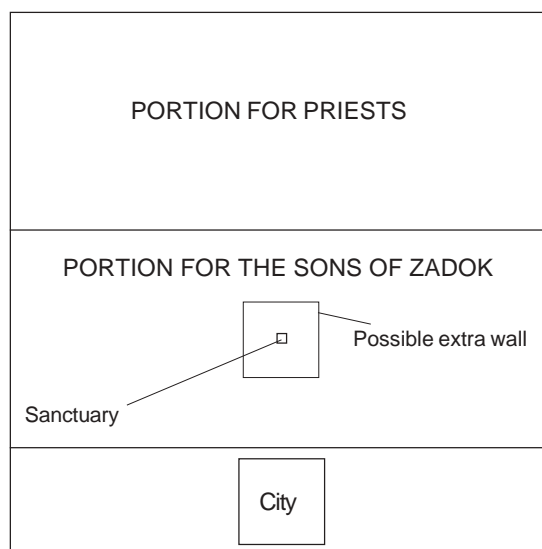


Figure 7. The holy oblation showing possible extra wall to separate the sanctuary from the priests' portion

Gleanings from the land

The festival of trees

Besides the three main feasts of the Law of Moses, Jews today celebrate a number of other feasts of less importance, not generally of Biblical origin. One such is Tu Bishvat, the Festival of Trees, celebrated on 15 Shebat, in mid-Winter. In 2002 it fell on 28 January in our calendar. This is at first sight a strange time to have a festival of trees, just when they appear most dead, though in fact at that time the almond trees of the hills are already coming out in blossom.

The particular emphasis of Tu Bishvat is in fact on trees as the producers of fruit. In Leviticus 19:23-25 the children of Israel were commanded not to eat the fruit of newly planted trees for the first three years. The fruit of the fourth year was to be holy to

God, and only in the fifth year could they eat the fruit themselves. Tu Bishvat was the day on which a tree was regarded under rabbinical tradition as becoming four and five years old respectively for the purpose of this commandment.

It was also a time when the spiritual significance of fruit was considered, that is, as signifying righteous deeds. This is, of course, a familiar concept in the Bible. For example: in the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7 the fruit which God looked for in vain in Israel was judgement and righteousness; Christ teaches that believers in him are branches of one vine bringing forth fruit to God (Jno. 15:1,2); and Paul writes in Galatians 5:22,23 of the various aspects of character which make up the fruits of the spirit.

During their exile from the land the Jews tended to concentrate upon the spiritual aspect of trees producing fruit; being shut up in ghettos provided very little opportunity to grow fruit trees of their own. Indeed, the feast tended to be rather neglected. For the Jews in Israel, however, the feast has become more significant, and Tu Bishvat has become a day for celebrating the re-forestation of the land, a day of planting trees. And indeed, God Himself promises that one day He will plant trees in the desert as part of the restoration of Israel (Isa. 41:19).

For some Israelis Tu Bishvat has recently taken on a new significance, as a day to remember environmental concerns, the destruction of trees that is go-