



## Second Chronicles - Chapter Three

### **II 1 Chronicles 10:1-2 Chronicles 9:31 - The United Kingdom of David and Solomon (continues)**

#### Summary of Chapter Three

The Chronicler's actual account of the construction of the temple is much briefer than his source of 1 Kings Chapter 6. The architectural details of 1 Kings 6:4-20a are passed over, as are the descriptions of the intricate carvings or stonework in 1 Kings 6:29-36. Instead, the Chronicler leads his readers in their imagination through the vestibule (v.4) into the ornate nave or Holy Place (vv.5-7), then on to the Most Holy Place (vv.8-13), partitioned off by the veil (v.14). The numerous references to gold (vv.4-10) and cherubim (v.7 and vv.10-14) highlight the splendour of the temple as the heavenly King's earthly palace. As its structure and furnishings indicate, it stood in continuity with the Mosaic tabernacle, at the same time exceeding it in beauty and opulence.

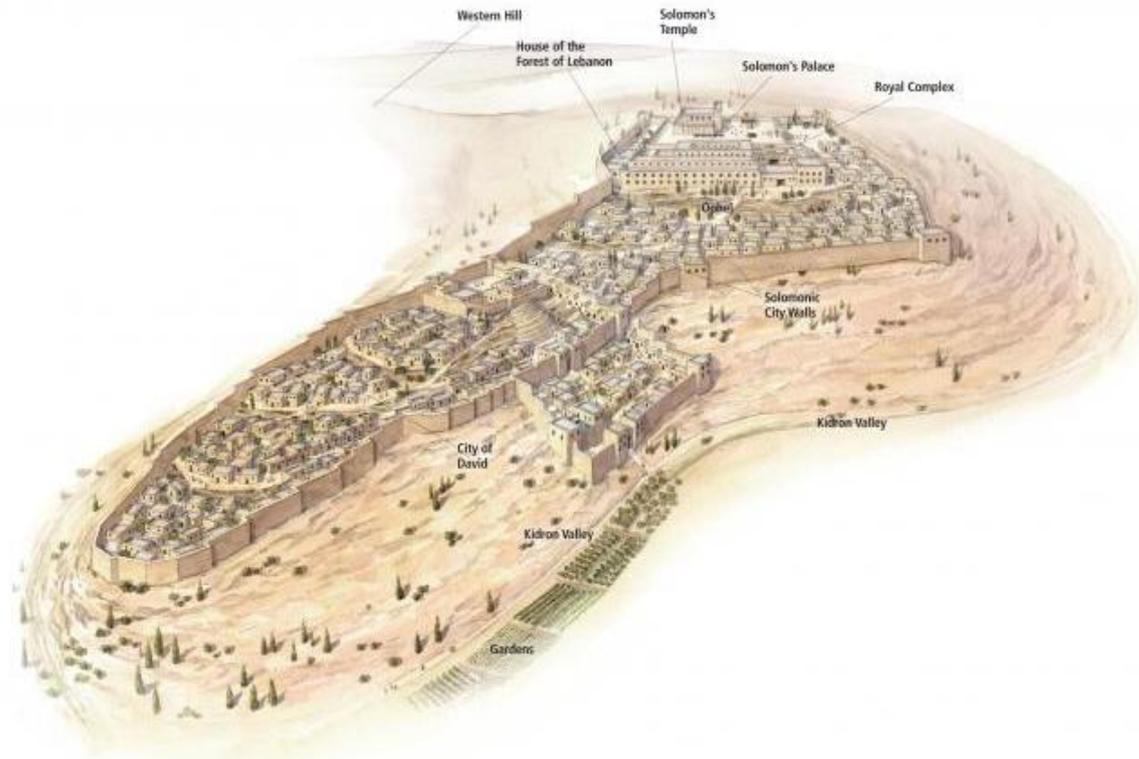
The temple measured about 90 feet by 30 feet or 27m by 9.1m, so it was not particularly large compared with many modern church buildings, and it did not function as a place of congregational worship. Only priests would have been admitted into the temple itself, and only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

#### **II.g 2 Chronicles 3:1-5:1 - Solomon's Building of the Temple**

The temple is to be a fit place for God to dwell among his people.

#### **II.g.i 2 Chronicles 3:1-17 - Solomon Builds the Temple**

Refer to the chapter summary above.

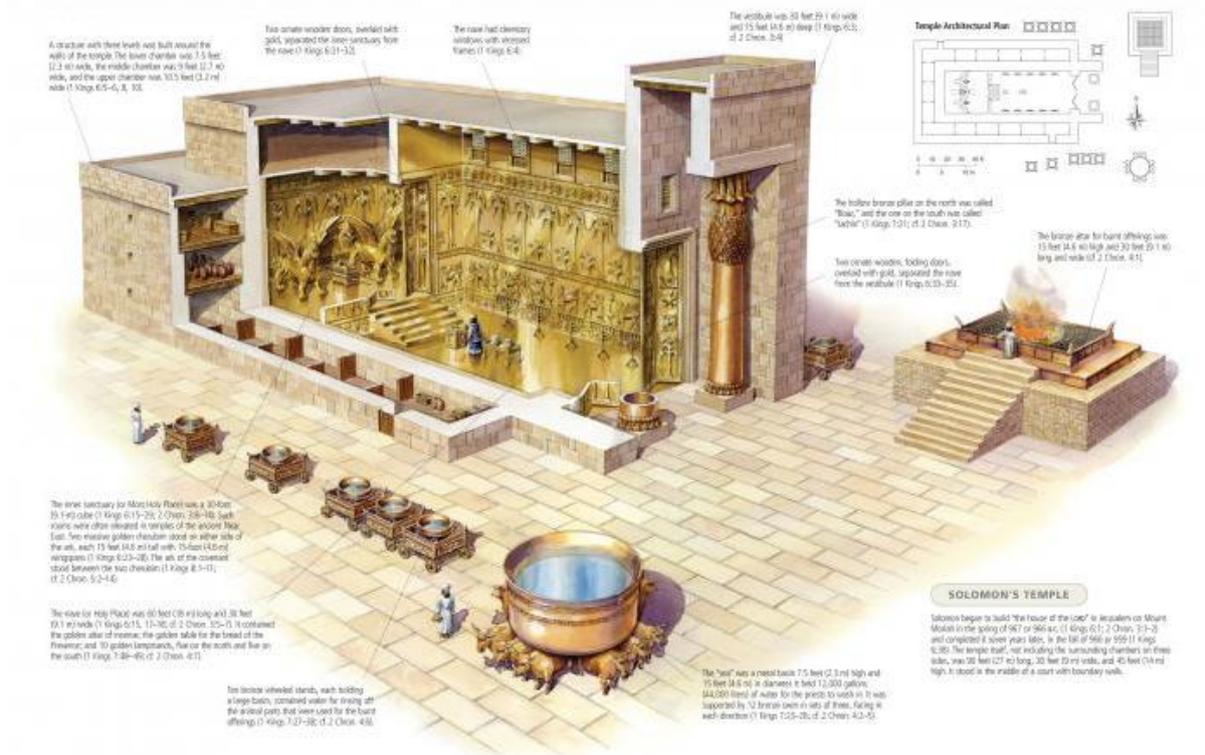


### Jerusalem in the Time of Solomon circa 970-930 BC

David commanded his son Solomon to build a new temple. This work took seven years, followed by thirteen years of building an adjacent royal complex; refer to 1 Kings 6:38 and 7:1. As this quarter was located outside and north of the original city of David, new city walls must have been built to connect the two areas.

Built on top of Mount Moriah, Solomon's temple was Israel's first permanent sanctuary. The royal complex was immediately to the south of the temple, refer to the image of Solomon's Temple and Palace Complex in Chapter 2, and consisted of Solomon's own palace and a smaller house for his Egyptian wife (1 Kings 7:8), an armoury called the House of the Forest of Lebanon, a Hall of Pillars, and a Hall of the Throne. A special Ascent connected this complex with the temple. The area between the temple complex and the city of David was called the Ophel.

Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah in the spring of 967 or 966 BC and completed it seven years later, in the fall of 960 or 959 BC. The temple itself, not including the surrounding chambers on three sides, was 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high or 27m x 9m x 14m. It stood in the middle of a court with boundary walls.



## Solomon's Temple

<sup>1</sup> Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had designated, on the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

### 2 Chronicles 3:1

This place had been previously identified as the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, who was also known as Araunah the Jebusite; it was the place where the Lord relented on the judgement of David's illegal census and where David sacrificed on an altar he had built to the Lord; refer to 2 Samuel 24:15-20. Mount Zion is identified here with Mount Moriah, where Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:2), and the same set of hills where Jesus would later die on the Cross (Genesis 22:14).

This was when the actual construction began. All David's prior plans and preparations anticipated the actual beginning of the work. One can plan and prepare endlessly and never begin to build, but Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem: <<*But it was Solomon who built a house for him*>> (Acts 7:47). Solomon's work was later acknowledged by those tasked with rebuilding it during the Chronicler's own time: <<*This was their reply to us: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished"*>> (Ezra 5:11).

<sup>2</sup> He began to build on the second day of the second month of the fourth year of his reign.

### 2 Chronicles 3:2

He began to build on the second day of the second month of the fourth year of his reign. The second month is Ziv (Preexilic) or Iyyar (Postexilic); therefore building began in late April. This was probably in the year 967 or 966 BC. Connecting this with 1 Kings 6:1, this reference point shows just how long Israel had lived in the Promised Land without a temple. The tabernacle had served the nation well for around four hundred and eighty years. The prompting to build the temple was more at the direction and will of God than out of absolute necessity.

In the fourth year of his reign does not mean that Solomon delayed his obedience for four years. He probably started to organise the work right away. There is some evidence that it took three years to prepare timber from Lebanon for use in building. If Solomon began the construction of the temple in the fourth year of his reign, he probably started organising the construction in the very first year of his reign.

<sup>3</sup> These are Solomon's measurements for building the house of God: the length, in cubits of the old standard, was sixty cubits, and the width twenty cubits. <sup>4</sup> The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long, across the width of the house; and its height was one hundred and twenty cubits. He overlaid it on the inside with pure gold. <sup>5</sup> The nave he lined with cypress, covered it with fine gold, and made palms and chains on it. <sup>6</sup> He adorned the house with settings of precious stones. The gold was gold from Parvaim. <sup>7</sup> So he lined the house with gold – its beams, its thresholds, its walls, and its doors; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

### 2 Chronicles 3:3-7

These are Solomon's measurements for building the house of God. This chapter will describe the building of the temple and its associated areas. There are four main structures described:

- The temple proper, divided into two rooms: the holy place and the most holy place.
- The vestibule or entrance hall on the east side of the temple proper: the vestibule in front of the nave of the house. It was thirty feet or 10m wide and fifteen feet or 5m deep, and the same height as the temple proper.
- The three-storied side chambers, described in 1 Kings 6:5, which surrounded the temple proper on the north, south and west sides.

- A large courtyard surrounding the whole structure, which was the inner court mentioned in 1 Kings 6:36.

Its height was one hundred and twenty cubits. The Septuagint and other ancient versions of the OT suggest that the vestibule was actually 20 cubits, i.e. 30 feet or 9.1 m high. The Hebrew text lacks the word cubits, so precise identification of the height is uncertain.

He adorned the house with settings of precious stones. This was after the pattern of the tabernacle, which had woven designs of cherubim on the inner covering. Therefore, when one entered the temple they saw cherubim all around, just as one would see in heaven: *<<Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh>>* (Psalms 80:1-2a), *<<O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth>>* (Isaiah 37:16), and: *<<Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house when the man went in; and a cloud filled the inner court>>* (Ezekiel 10:3). These angelic beings worship God perpetually in heaven.

Parvaim was possibly a place in north eastern Arabia.

<sup>8</sup> He made the most holy place; its length, corresponding to the width of the house, was twenty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits; he overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. <sup>9</sup> The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. He overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

### 2 Chronicles 3:8-9

He made the most holy place. Special attention was given to the Holy of Holies or Most Holy place. It was a 30 feet or 10m cube, completely overlaid with gold. It also had two large sculptures of cherubim 15 feet or 5m in height, which were overlaid with gold. It was the place in which the Ark of the Covenant would be finally deposited: *<<Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim>>* (2 Chronicles 5:7).

He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. There was gold everywhere in the temple, but especially in the Most Holy Place. The walls were covered with gold (1 Kings 6:20-22), the floor was covered with gold (1 Kings 6:30) and gold was hammered into the carvings on the doors (1 Kings 6:32). There was gold everywhere on the inside of the temple.

The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. Even the nails were of gold. This was a reminder of the gold hooks used to hang the curtain that protected the Most Holy Place: <<*Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases*>> (Exodus 26:32).

<sup>10</sup> In the most holy place he made two carved cherubim and overlaid them with gold. <sup>11</sup> The wings of the cherubim together extended twenty cubits: one wing of one, five cubits long, touched the wall of the house, and its other wing, five cubits long, touched the wing of the other cherub; <sup>12</sup> and of this cherub, one wing, five cubits long, touched the wall of the house, and the other wing, also five cubits long, was joined to the wing of the first cherub. <sup>13</sup> The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits; the cherubim stood on their feet, facing the nave. <sup>14</sup> And Solomon made the curtain of blue and purple and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and worked cherubim into it.

### 2 Chronicles 3:10-14

The two carved cherubim were angelic beings that combined human and animal features: <<*Each one had four faces: the first face was that of the cherub, the second face was that of a human being, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that of an eagle*>> (Ezekiel 10:14), and: <<*It was formed of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Each cherub had two faces: a human face turned towards the palm tree on one side, and the face of a young lion turned towards the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the whole temple all round*>> (Ezekiel 41:18-19), and served as throne guards to the ark. These two large sculptures inside the Most Holy Place faced the entrance to this inner room, so as soon as the High Priest entered he saw these giant guardians of the presence of God facing him.

For more information on the construction of the temple, refer to the comments made on 1 Kings 6:14-35.

The most holy place was separated from the rest of the sanctuary by a curtain or a veil as well as by doors: <<*As for the entrance to the temple: the inner doors to the most holy place and the doors of the nave of the temple were of gold*>> (2 Chronicles 4:22b). The inclusion of the veil signified the continuity of the temple with the Mosaic tabernacle; refer to Exodus 26:31-35. Herod's temple was similarly arranged: <<*At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split*>> (Matthew 27:51); the tearing of the veil at the death of Christ indicated that the 'shadow' of the Mosaic institutions had now given way to the final sacrifice of Christ, with all its benefits: <<*But when Christ came as a high priest of the good*

*things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption>> (Hebrews 9:11-12), and: <<Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach>> (Hebrews 10:1).*

Because of the curtain, to most Israelites the temple was an unseen world. God had drawn near to them, but the way to him was hedged around with many restrictions. By dying for the sins of all mankind, Jesus has opened the way to God for all who will believe in him.

<sup>15</sup> In front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high, with a capital of five cubits on the top of each. <sup>16</sup> He made encircling chains and put them on the tops of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains. <sup>17</sup> He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right, the other on the left; the one on the right he called Jachin, and the one on the left, Boaz.

### 2 Chronicles 3:15-17

In front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high. This is probably the combined heights of the pillars; see the comments made on 1 Kings 7:15-21 and 2 Kings 25:17. According to 1 Kings 7:15, these pillars were actually made of bronze; they were two very impressive adornments to the front of the temple and a reminder of one of the promises of Christ: *<<If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name>>* (Revelation 3:12).

Jachin means ‘he establishes’ and Boaz ‘in him is strength’. The names may signify that Yahweh establishes his covenant through the temple.

Every time someone came to the house of the Lord in the days of Solomon they said, “Look! There is ‘He Shall Establish.’ And there is ‘In Him Is Strength.’” It set them in the right frame of mind to worship the Lord. When the crowds gathered at the morning and evening sacrifice to worship the Lord, the Levites led the people standing in front of the temple with these two great, bronze pillars behind them. It was always before them: ‘He Shall Establish’ and ‘In Him Is Strength’. One could say that the house of God itself was Jachin and Boaz. That temple was established by God, and built by the strength of God. Every

time they looked at that temple, they knew that God liked to establish and strengthen things.

The house of God was a place where people experienced what the pillars were all about. At that house, people were established in their relationship with God. At that house, people were given strength from the Lord. From this building, it should go out to the whole community: 'Come here and get established. Come here and receive the strength of God.'