

ROSE GUIDE TO THE TEMPLE



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HEROD'S TEMPLE

Herod's Plan for a Bigger, Better Temple

The Romans appointed over Judea a man named Antipater the Idumean or Edomite. (Idumeans were a non-Jewish Semitic group from the region between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.) Following Antipater's death, the Romans commissioned his son Herod to end further resistance from the Hasmonean rulers.

In 37 or 36 BC, Herod laid siege to Jerusalem and captured the Temple Mount, destroying a portion of the structure that stood in the way of his advance. Josephus' description says that the latest form of the Hasmonean Temple Mount had been adorned with porticoes (covered porches), an area that may be identified with "Solomon's Porch" (or "Colonnade") mentioned in the New Testament (John 10:23; Acts 3:11).¹⁷ Josephus' reference to Herod's burning of Solomon's Porch relates to a colonnaded structure built on the eastern side of the Hasmonean Temple Mount. The name "Solomon's Porch" was apparently attached to the site because Solomon had originally built on the east side of the steep rocky hill, however, the portico that existed at the time of Herod's attack may have been a later addition, most likely from the Hellenistic period. Herod does not seem to have destroyed the entire structure, but only the front row of porticos, although it was not rebuilt until the reign of Herod Agrippa II (AD 48–93).

Herod secured his position as the proxy Jewish ruler under Roman occupation, dubbing himself "King Herod." Herod knew that in order to rule the Jewish people he would have to conform to traditional Jewish practices, so he converted to Judaism to appease the priests, and in 20 BC he proposed a renovation of the existing temple of Zerubbabel on a more magnificent scale.

By the time of Herod, the second temple had suffered centuries of assault, repairs, and the general ravages of time. In making plans to reconstruct the temple, Herod had to follow the biblical design and legal requirements that governed the size of the building he could construct. However, Herod had other parties to please, and most important of these were the Roman authorities upon whom his right to rule depended. If his architectural projects could make Jerusalem a modern metropolis rivaling other Roman cities with a magnificent building that highlighted the classical tastes of the West, he could hope to retain Roman favor.

Because many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and other cities under Herod's rule were Hellenistic Jews, they were accustomed to classical culture that boasted temples and shrines on a massive scale. Therefore, Herod's motives in remodeling the temple were mixed at best, and history judges them as bittersweet. On one hand, rebuilding and enlarging the temple complex is considered one of Herod's major architectural accomplishments. On the other hand, Herod's intentions were to transform Jerusalem from a provincial Jewish community to a model of Hellenistic culture and to



THE HERODIAN DYNASTY

King Herod (73–4 BC) appears in the account of the Magi in Matthew 2, a time when the aged king was executing members of his family whom he feared might be plotting against him.

Upon King Herod's death, his son Archelaus inherited Judea. Herod Archelaus ruled Judea with an iron fist, quelling any disorder that broke out in Jerusalem. The Gospel of Matthew indicates that Archelaus's rule was the reason why, after leaving Egypt, Joseph and Mary settled in Nazareth in Galilee, and not Judea (Matthew 2:22).

King Herod's other son Antipas (shown above) was appointed ruler of Galilee. Herod Antipas is most often referred to in the Gospels simply as "Herod." He was responsible for John the Baptist's execution (John 6:14–26) and Jesus was sent to him to stand trial because Jesus was from Galilee (Luke 23:6–12).

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impress the Romans while appeasing the Jews. While the temple itself conformed to the divine design, other elements of the temple complex were clearly Greco-Roman in style, such as the Royal Stoa (Porch).

Even though Herod's rebuilding of the temple may have appeared to be an act of devotion to God, at this same time he also built a temple to the goddess Roma at Caesarea. His appointments to office of the high priest were also to suit his political aims. In 36 BC he named his 17-year-old son-in-law Aristobulus III as high priest (although murdering him the very next year), and in 23 BC he married the high priest Simon's daughter (his third wife, whom he also murdered).

When Roman custom and laws of Jewish sanctity came into conflict, Herod was quick to side with his Roman overlords. In one instance, he confiscated the high priest's vestments as a demonstration of superior (Roman) authority. In another show of loyalty to Rome, he installed a golden image of an eagle over the eastern entrance to the temple.¹⁸ As a bird of prey, the eagle symbolized the character of Rome, and it corrupted the character of the temple as a place of peace. Because of this desecration, a riot occurred in 4 BC led by High Priest Matthias. A group of about 40 Jews tore down the hated image and hacked it to pieces. This defiant act on the Temple Mount resulted in the high priest's removal and his coactivists being burned alive.

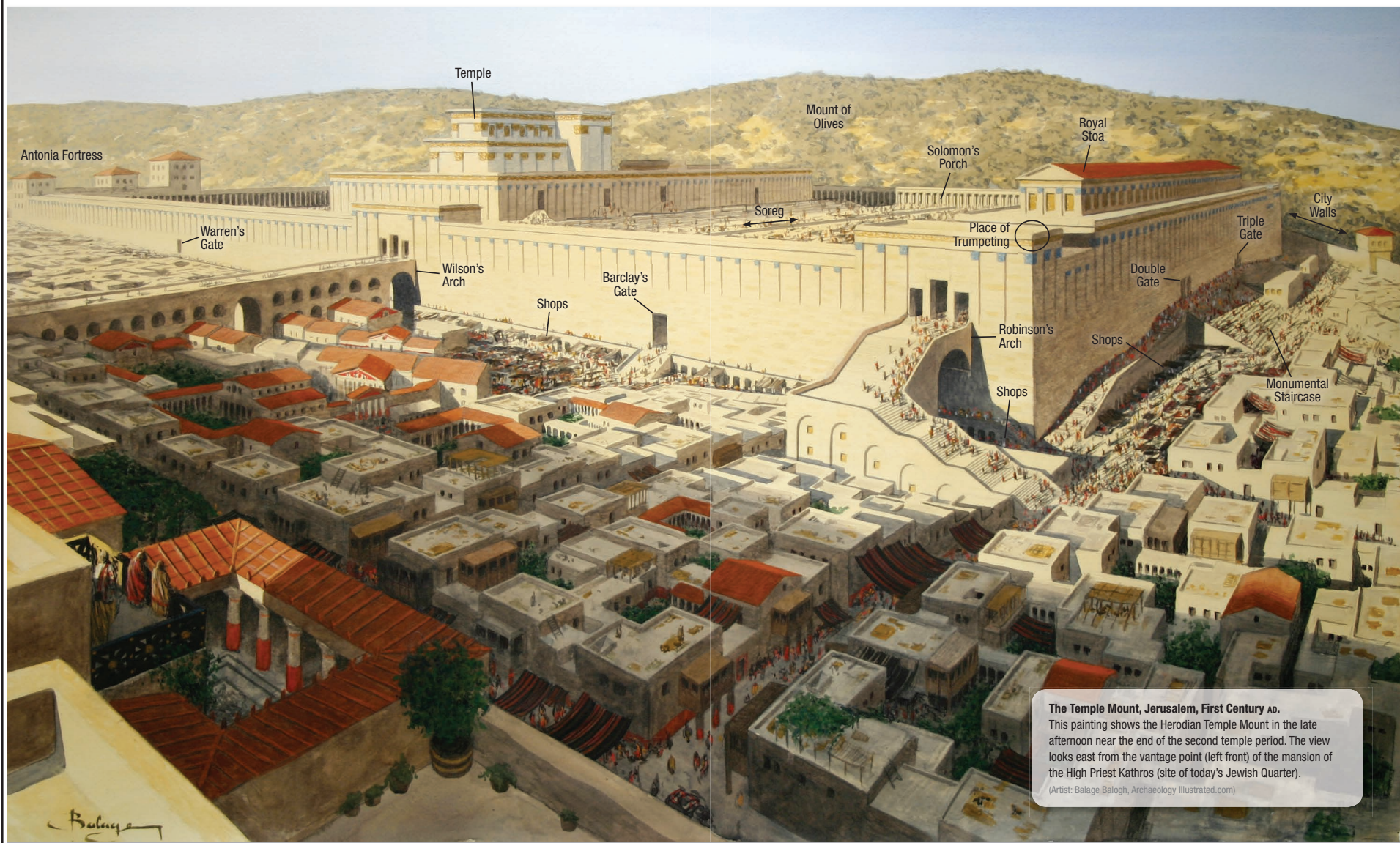
Herod's son Archelaus, the year after his father's death in 4 BC, slaughtered about 3,000 Jewish nationalists in the temple at Passover. In the same year Jewish nationalists rioted and burned the temple cloisters (covered walkways). In AD 28, Pontius Pilate, the Roman-appointed governor over Judea, also engaged in an attack on and in the temple, taking money from the temple treasuries to construct an aqueduct, and then in the temple courts during a protest he massacred a number of Galilean zealots (Jewish rebels who wanted to oust the Romans; see Luke 13:1–2).

HELLENISM

Toward the end of the fourth century BC Alexander the Great spread Greek civilization to the lands he conquered in an attempt to create a universal Greek culture. The land of Israel came under Greek rule and the influence of Hellenism (from *hellas*, the Greek word for Greece). Jews who adopted Greek culture or who mixed it with the religion and traditions of Judaism were called Hellenistic Jews. On the positive side this movement produced the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint, as well as Jewish apocryphal and apocalyptic literature which sought to develop Jewish



hopes and aspirations. However, orthodox Jewish sects opposed Hellenistic Jews, believing that the practice of Greek culture violated the Mosaic Law. This led in the second century BC to a revolt against Greek rule in Israel and to the formation of the Hasmonean Dynasty. Eventually, corruption in this rule coupled with a continued opposition to Hellenism led to Roman control of the country. Hellenistic Jews remained a part of the Jewish community, but were often ostracized by or disputed with by other Jewish groups, a problem faced by the early Jewish-Christian church (Acts 6:1; 9:29).



The Temple Mount, Jerusalem, First Century AD.
 This painting shows the Herodian Temple Mount in the late afternoon near the end of the second temple period. The view looks east from the vantage point (left front) of the mansion of the High Priest Kathros (site of today's Jewish Quarter).
 (Artist: Balage Balogh, Archaeology Illustrated.com)

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Herod's Construction

The condition of the second temple and Herod's plans for a much larger structure included the complete dismantling of the old temple.¹⁹ However, the priests did not trust Herod and feared that his call for a destruction of the existing structure was a ruse and that he was secretly staging an attack on the temple.²⁰ Therefore, Herod was required to prepare and transport all of the building stones for the new temple to the Temple Mount in the sight of the people before permission was given to touch a single stone of the previous structure.

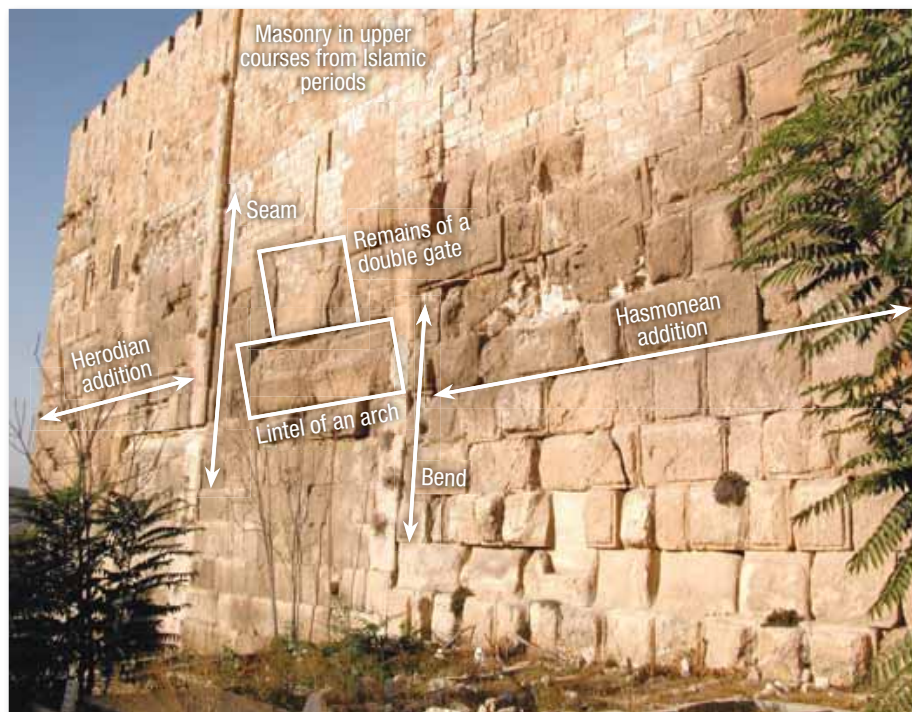
It is unclear exactly how long the construction of the temple and sacrificial area took. Josephus says that the temple took a year and a half to complete and the stoa and the outer courts took eight years.²¹ But also, according to the biblical record (John 2:20) and Josephus,²² the temple complex was a continual work-in-progress until the Jewish Revolt broke out in AD 66.

THE TEMPLE

Herod added new compartments and a second story above the innermost chambers of the temple. These additions doubled the temple building in height and width. However, the size of the Holy of Holies itself may not have been changed because these dimensions were given by divine command and because it may have had to conform to the rock that protruded within the building, which restricted any alteration by Herod.

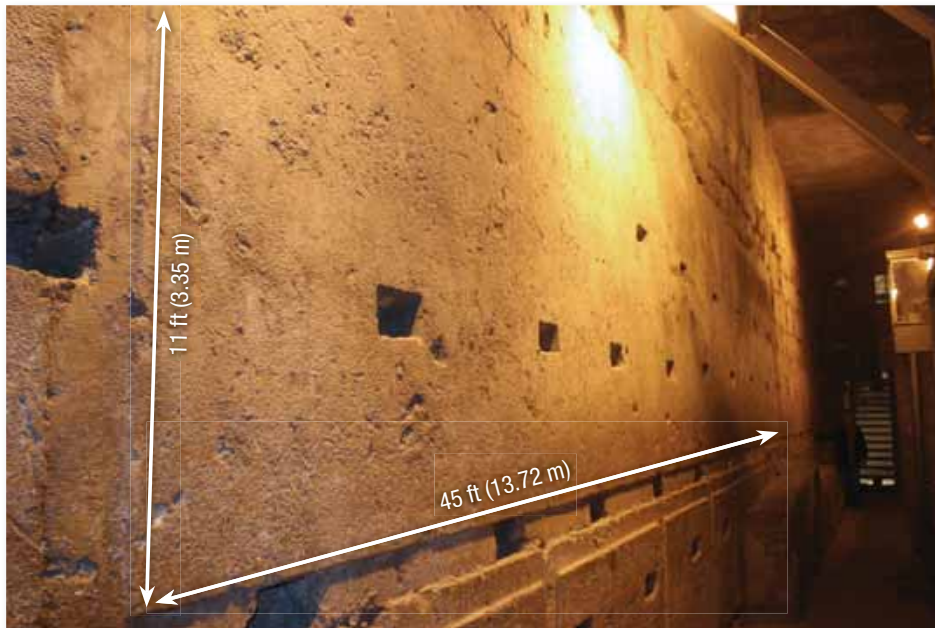
THE TEMPLE MOUNT

Herod also doubled the size of the Temple Mount and added massive new structures: the Antonia Fortress to the north of the Temple Mount and the Royal Stoa to the south. The Antonia Fortress served as military barracks for Roman soldiers. The Royal Stoa, the largest structure on the Temple Mount, was a common meeting place for those entering the temple complex. The Temple Mount, an extensive platform with huge retaining walls to



When Herod removed the old foundations of the second temple, he left the old eastern wall with its portico intact. This can be seen today on the outside of the eastern wall where a "seam" is visible near the southern corner. This seam (straight joint) separates the Hasmonean extension (53 ft; 16 m; stones to right of the seam) from the Herodian extension (105 ft; 32 m; stones to the left of the seam). The bend is the end of the eastern wall and the 500-cubit-square Temple Mount. In the middle is a long horizontal stone which is the remains of an arch. Just above it is a smaller stone which is the remains of an ancient double gate that led to Temple Mount storage vaults.

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In the 1990s a tunnel was opened alongside the underground course of stones so that visitors could see the full extent of the Herodian construction. In the course exposed in this tunnel is one of the most massive of the foundation stones yet discovered. Its measurements are 45 feet (13.72 m) by 11 feet (3.35 m) by 14–16 feet (4.27–4.88 m) and it weighs nearly 600 tons.

(Baker Photo Archive)

bear the weight of the fill and of the structures to be built above, was trapezoidal in shape.²³ The total area of this sacred precinct was 172,000 square yards (144,000 square meters; approximately 35 acres). This made the Temple Mount the largest site of its kind in the ancient world. Its sacred area was twice as large as the monumental Forum Romanum built by Trajan, and three and a half times larger than the combined temples of Jupiter and Astarte-Venus at Baalbek.

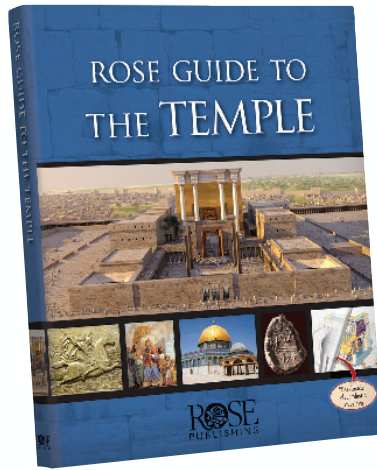
To accomplish this feat, Herod's engineers had to construct enormous retaining (supporting) walls, many 15 feet (4.57 m) thick, with some towering more than 150 feet (45.72 m) from their bedrock foundation that sloped upward from the south to the north. The most famous remnant of these retaining walls standing today is known as the Western Wall (Wailing Wall; Hebrew, *Kotel*). The exposed walls are more than 1,500 feet (457 m) in length (north to south) and 900 feet (274 m) in width (east to west). Their height is about 50 feet (15 m) above the modern plaza, yet the course of stones in the southern end continues down another 50 feet (15 m). (See *Western Wall* on page 101.)

THE WORKFORCE

The massive construction project required an equally massive workforce. For this Herod brought in 10,000 skilled workers. Since Jewish law required that only priests could construct the temple,²⁴ Herod employed 1,000 priests to serve as masons and carpenters. Herod also used the local population as workers; as they were under the supervision of the priests, they were made to conform to ritual regulations.



The Western Wall. The exposed portion of the Western Wall shown here is also called the “Wailing Wall” from the tradition that Jews came to this site to mourn the destruction of the temple. Today it is a special place of prayer for Jews and visitors to the Temple Mount.

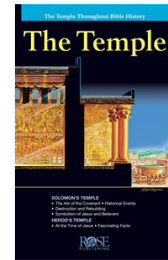


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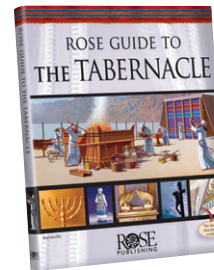


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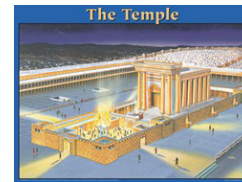


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