

Connecting the “Dots” of the Tabernacle and Temple

Part 2

*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, **the tabernacle of God** is with men, and **he will dwell with them**, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* Revelation 21:3

The Sixth “dot” – The decline of the 1st Temple

In order to understand how the Israelites allowed their temple to decline physically and spiritually, we must think of any building in constant use by the public.

Churches need updating and repair and they typically are used about three times a week. The Temple was used every day.

But we also need to understand that in the ancient world, temples served as state treasuries – 2 Kings 12:4-6.

*⁴ And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD, ⁵ Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and **let them repair the breaches of the house**, wheresoever any breach shall be found. ⁶ But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash **the priests had not repaired the breaches** of the house.*

Clearly, the priests had failed in their leadership here in the material things, but with time, in the spiritual as well.

Jehoash reigned from 798 to 782 as king of the northern kingdom.

As to the wealth, we are told in 1 Kings 10:23 that:

So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

So just 130 years after Solomon and his wealth, the Temple needed the people to donate money to repair it.

Where had the money gone?

One reason is seen that shortly after Solomon’s reign the kingdom divided into north and south. King Rehoboam of the southern kingdom still had so much wealth that Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak came and raided the temple for its wealth – 1 Kings 14:26

So began a time for the enemies and allies to drain off the wealth through tribute or mercenaries, needed to protect Israel. King Asa (911-870 BC) of the southern kingdom used the treasure to pay his allies to deal with the northern kingdom king - 1 Kings 15:18, 19.

*¹⁸Then Asa took all the silver and the gold **that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD**, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants:*

and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, **king of Syria**, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, ¹⁹ There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

The spiritual decline is seen with Manasseh, for we read that he built additional altars, repaired high places and introduced the occult into the worship of Israel. 2 Kin 21:1-6; 23:1-12

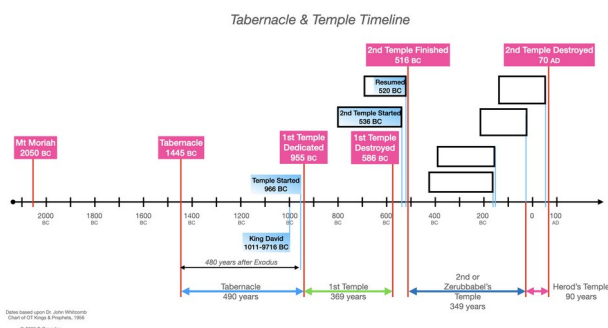
¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. ² And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. ³ For he **built up again the high places** which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. ⁴ And **he built altars in the house of the LORD**, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. ⁵ And he built altars for all the **host of heaven** in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the **LORD, to provoke him to anger.**

During these times, we see that **as the leaders of the people go, so will the people follow.**

As we saw in Ezekiel, in 586 God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to attack Jerusalem and destroy the temple.

The Seventh “Dot” – Building the 2nd Temple, also called Zerubbabel’s Temple – Ezra 5:1-2

¹ Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. ² Then rose up **Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God** which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.



During the Captivity, King Cyrus (550-530 BC) issued a decree to allow Jewish exiles to return to Israel to **rebuild the temple in 536 BC.**

Ezra tells us that the exiles were allowed to take back the vessels looted by Nebuchadnezzar as part of their return to rebuild the temple in 537 BC. Ezra 1:7-11

Ezra 2:64, 65 tells us that 42,360 exiles returned to

Israel along with servants and maids.

The rebuilding work came to a stop when adversaries of Judah (Ezra 4:1) spoke to the king. Work stopped until being renewed **in 520 BC**, some 16 years later.

Appeal was made to King Darius who checked the records and found the decree of Cyrus.

At that point, he permitted work to begin again and after 4 years **it was finished in 516 BC** (Ezra 6:1-3).

This work required the clearing of rubble from the site and then placing the altar upon the foundations – Ez 1: 3:2-3, 8-10

We have very few specifics about this 2nd Temple, but we do know its dimensions as given in Ezra 6:3.

Based upon these, we conclude it was about 1/3 greater in length and in width than Solomon’s Temple.

Certainly it is a reasonable assumption that it followed the design of Solomon’s temple, but according to Haggai (520 BC), it did not have the grandeur of Solomon’s.

According to the Talmud, a Hebrew commentary, this temple lacked five things that were in Solomon’s Temple.

- the ark – it had disappeared following the Exile and has never been found.

- the sacred fire

- the Shekinah Glory

- the Urim and Thummin

- The Holy of Holies was empty of the ark.

Further, a stone was set upon the spot in the Holy of Holies where the ark had been, and the high priest placed a sensor there for the day of atonement, a pathetic symbol for the Shekinah Glory.

In the holy Place, there was only one seven branched golden lamp stand[which replaced the ten stands of Solomon’s], one table of showbread, and the altar of incense (1 Macc. 1:21) The burnt offering altar was built of stone instead of brass (4:45).

All this shows the general downgrading of the Temple.

At this point, I would like to point out that the Tabernacle served Israel for approximately 490 years. Solomon’s temple served the Lord for 369 years.

This 2nd Temple would last a total of 439 years before being destroyed in 70 AD by the romans.

The Eighth “dot” the Temple’s Desecration by Antiochus and its Cleansing

By the 2nd century BC, Jerusalem was the center of political turmoil. The Greeks exercised a governorship over the land of Israel as part of the Greek Empire.



In 167 BC this turmoil enveloped the priesthood. The position of the High Priest was sought for personal financial gain and political power. By this time, the high priest office was open to whoever would pay the highest price to the governing officials.

Antiochus IV Epiphanies (175-163 bc), the Greek governor, came to Jerusalem to settle the tumultuous problems in 169 BC.

Following the death of Alexander the Great, the resulting division of the Greek Empire found Egypt ruled by Ptolemy, Syria by Seleucus, Macedonia by Cassander, and Thrace by Lysimachus. These four men were generals under Alexander. This division was prophesied by Daniel.

Antiochus was a descendant of Seleucus.

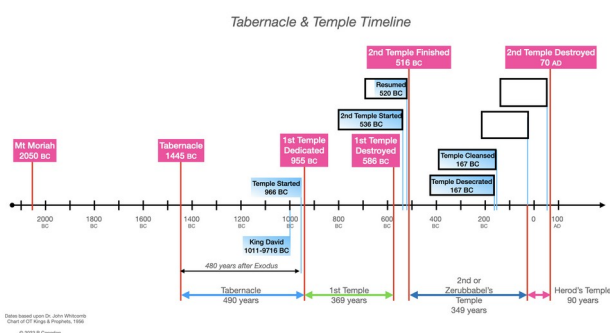
As ruler of Syria, including Israel, Antiochus carried out the general policy of the Greeks to Hellenize local cultures. This hellenization process was to stifle local traditional cultures and turn them to the Greek culture of the empire.

Hellenization created tension among the Jews that resulted in them rebelling against the Greek leadership. This rebellion was led by the priestly family of the Maccabees.

By 167 BC, Antiochus tried to quell the rebellion and destroy the Jewish culture, replacing it with the Greek influences.

One step he took in accomplishing Hellenization was to plunder the Temple's wealth by entering the Holy of Holies and carrying out the gold and silver.

Antiochus' next step was to end all sacrifices as he placed a Greek altar or statue in the Temple in



December of 167 BC (1 Maccabees 1:54).

As a consequence, the family of the Maccabees rose up in total rebellion and retook the Temple and **cleansed it in 167 BC** - 1 Maccabees 4:36-59. This is still celebrated today in the holiday of Hanukkah in December of each year.

The Maccabees then fortified the Temple mount to prevent further desecration.

The priestly Maccabees were part of the Hasmonean family.

It is important to note that they were not of the ruling tribe of Judah, nor were they of the High Priestly lineage. Yet, they ruled both the government and priesthood of Israel.

A hundred years later, in 64 BC, a civil war occurred between the Maccabean leaders. This war was headed by two brothers who each wanted to rule Israel.

Hyrchanus II turned to the Roman general, Pompey [pompee] (106-48 BC) to help him fight against his brother A-ris-t-o-bulus II. Aristobulus' army retreated to the Temple mount.

The Romans stormed it on the Day of Atonement, following a three month siege of the site. At this point, Rome took total control over Jerusalem and Israel.

I believe this is more than just history, for when we study this period in Israel, we get the background needed to understand much of the gospel events that took place as the Lord walked the earth.