

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Intertestamental Period Seminar

Sheldon Greaves, Ph.D.

2016



What is a Temple?

- The single most critical unifying factor in ancient Near Eastern nations
- A representation of life, prosperity, and fertility, and was believed to be the source of these
- Primordial landscape/sacred space
- Loss is seen as fatal to a community

Temple Cosmos

- Highly schematic picture of the cosmos
- Temple was often built to mimic that cosmos
- Often aligned with the heavenly luminaries



Temples and the Law

- Law and judgments were made, disseminated, or pronounced at temples
- National treaties and ordinary business contracts were kept at temples





Role of the Levites

- Source of all priests in Israel.
- Replaced dedication of all firstborn as priests prior to Mosaic Law
- No land allocation; lived among all other tribes
- Supported by offerings
- Required to live higher standards of purity
- Functioned as “lightning rod” for divine wrath.

Levites vs. Priests

- All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests
- Levites could assist the priest in the Temple, had access to certain parts off-limits to regular Israelites
- Levites were forbidden from the altar on pain of death.
- Deuteronomy does not recognize the division of duties.



Levitical Duties

- Removal and transport of the tabernacle
- Guarding the sanctuary and the sancta from encroachment
- Assisted priests, but their work was never done by priests.
- Teachers, interpreters of the Law.



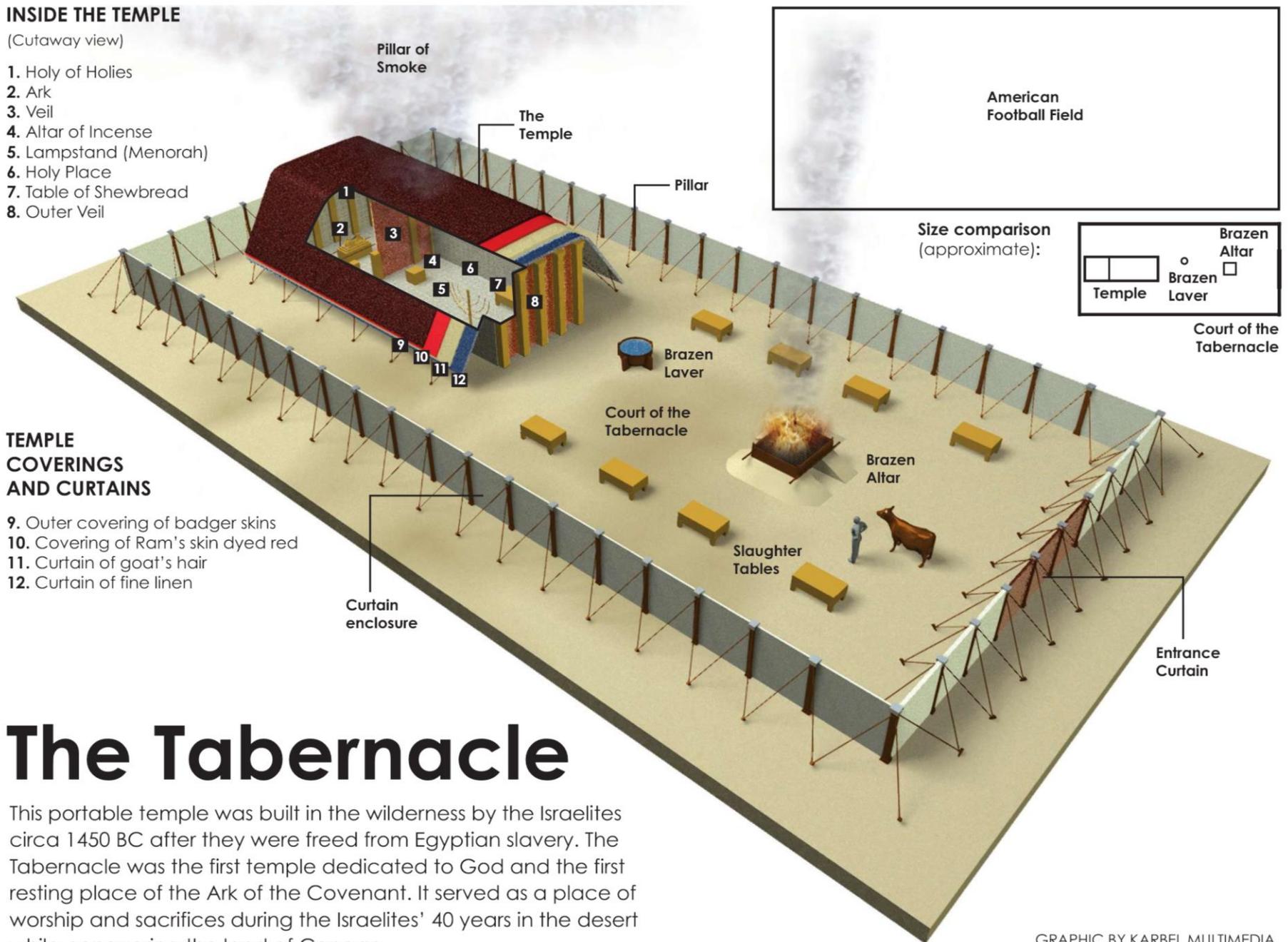
INSIDE THE TEMPLE

(Cutaway view)

1. Holy of Holies
2. Ark
3. Veil
4. Altar of Incense
5. Lampstand (Menorah)
6. Holy Place
7. Table of Shewbread
8. Outer Veil

TEMPLE COVERINGS AND CURTAINS

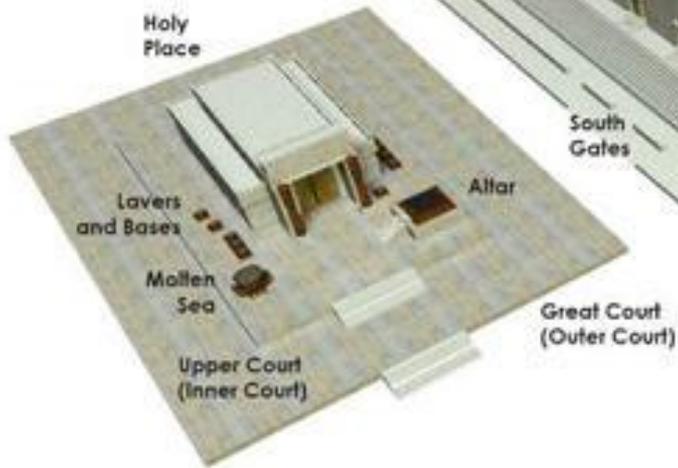
9. Outer covering of badger skins
10. Covering of Ram's skin dyed red
11. Curtain of goat's hair
12. Curtain of fine linen



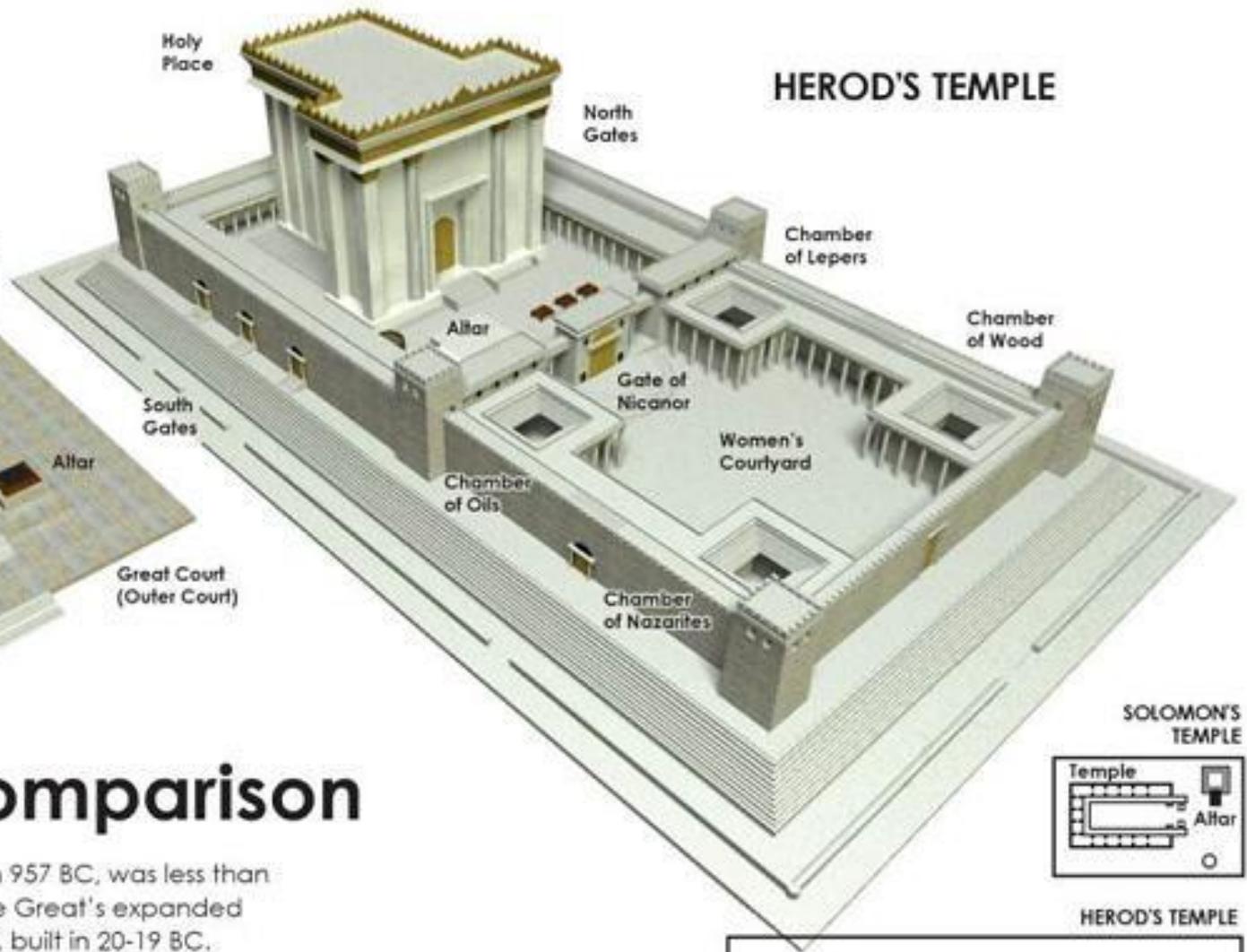
The Tabernacle

This portable temple was built in the wilderness by the Israelites circa 1450 BC after they were freed from Egyptian slavery. The Tabernacle was the first temple dedicated to God and the first resting place of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as a place of worship and sacrifices during the Israelites' 40 years in the desert while conquering the land of Canaan.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

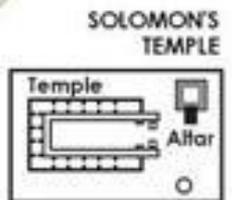


HEROD'S TEMPLE

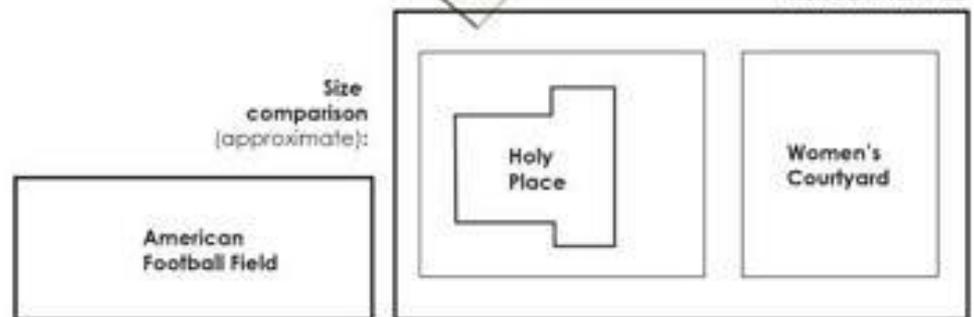


Temple Comparison

Solomon's Temple, finished in 957 BC, was less than one-half the size of Herod the Great's expanded Second Temple in Jerusalem, built in 20-19 BC.



HEROD'S TEMPLE





Instructions for Sinai

Exodus 19:10-11:

... the LORD said to Moses: 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and prepare for the third day, because on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.'

Instructions for Sinai, continued

Exodus 19:14-15:

So Moses went down from the mountain to the people. He consecrated the people, and they washed their clothes.¹⁵ And he said to the people, 'Prepare for the third day; do not go near a woman.'

Essene “Objectives”

- Ritual bathing and washing
- Laundering of clothing
- No sex
- *Maintain level of purity equal to that of the Sinai encampment*



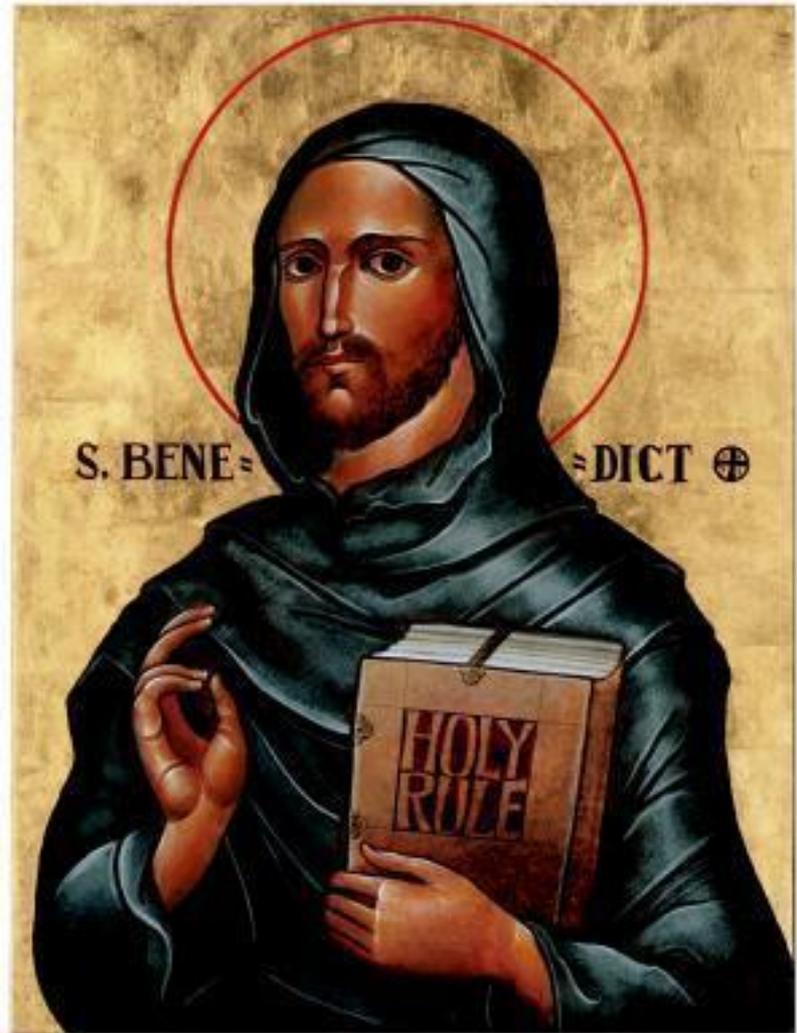
Josephus on Essenes

“Moreover, they are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day; for they not only get their food ready the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not remove any vessel out of its place, nor go to stool thereon. “

— *Wars of the Jews*, II, vii, 9

Essene Roots of Christian Aceticism?

- Celibacy
- Acetic lifestyle
- Removal from the mundane
- Place of the temple?
- Christian envy of the Temple?



The Scroll

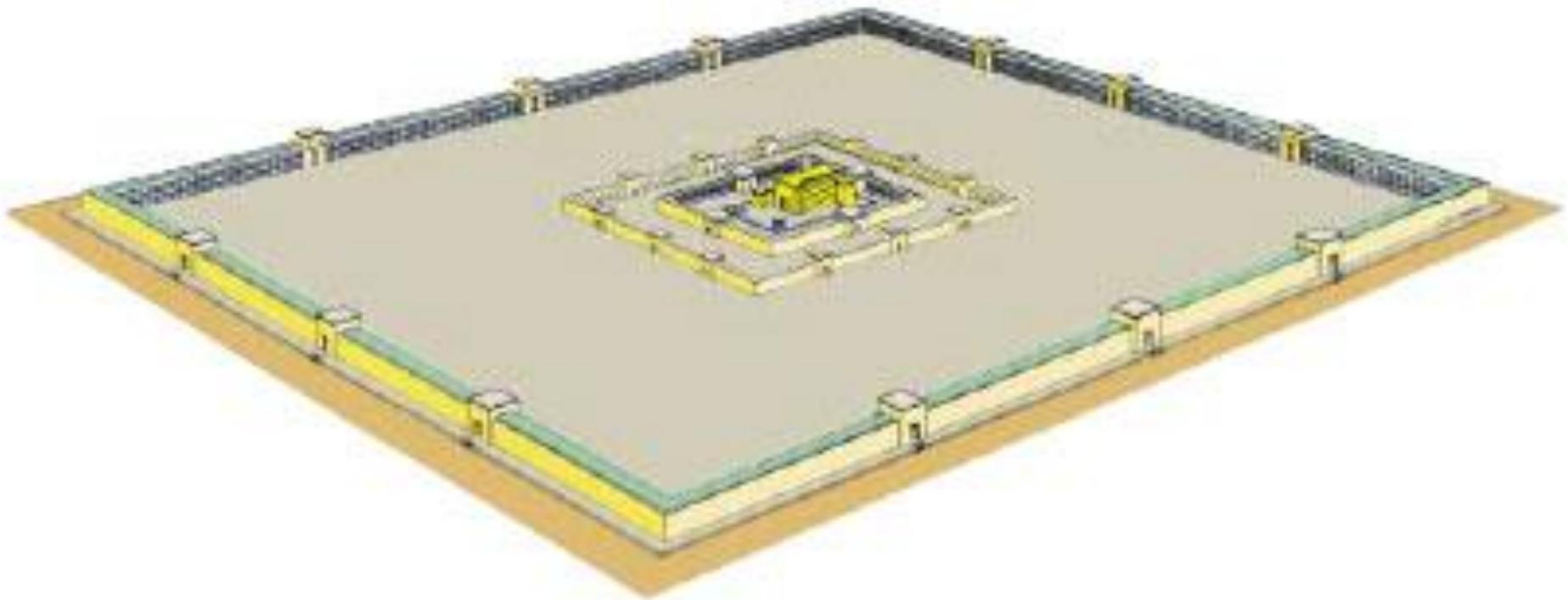


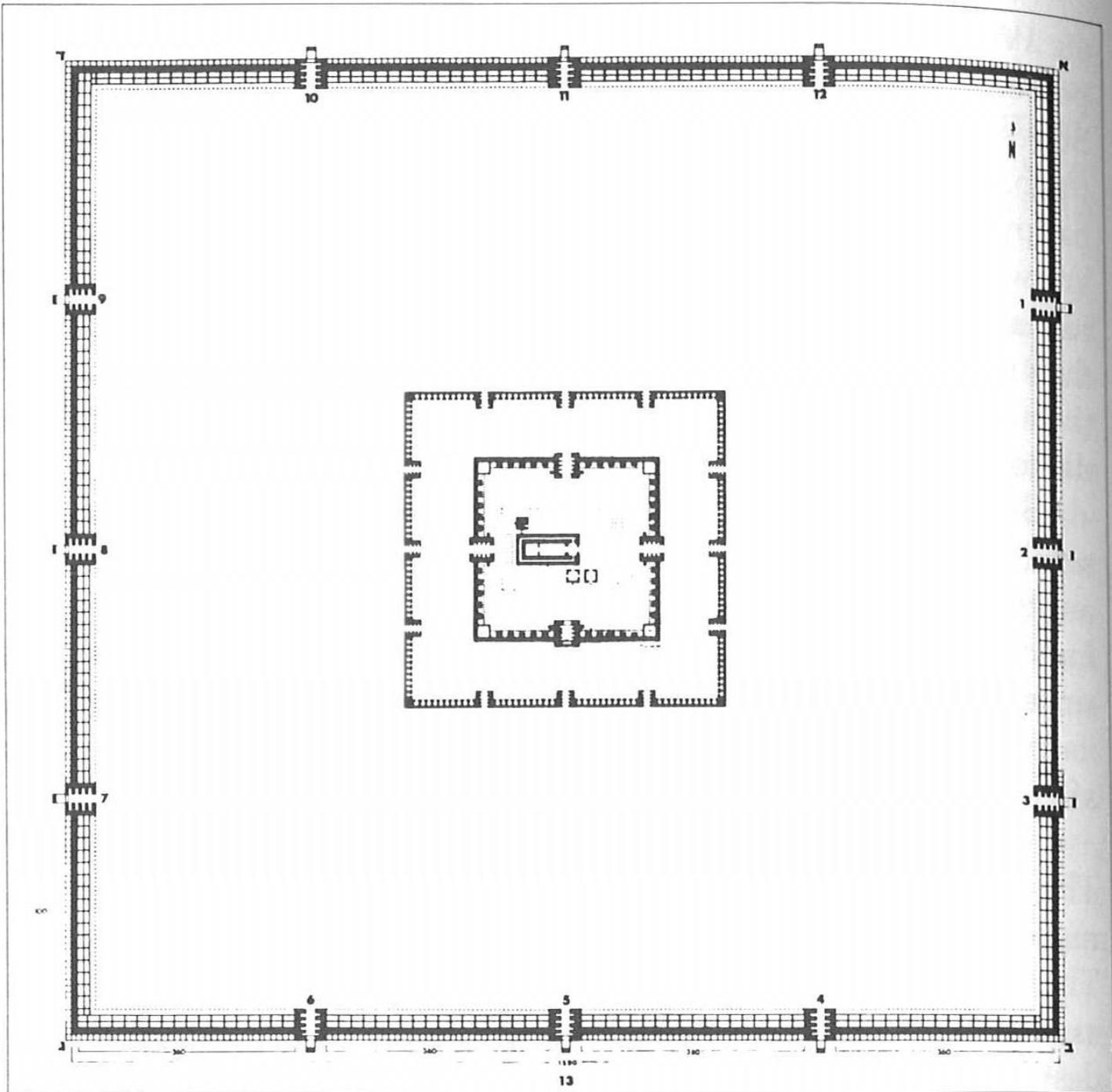
Innovations of the Temple Scroll

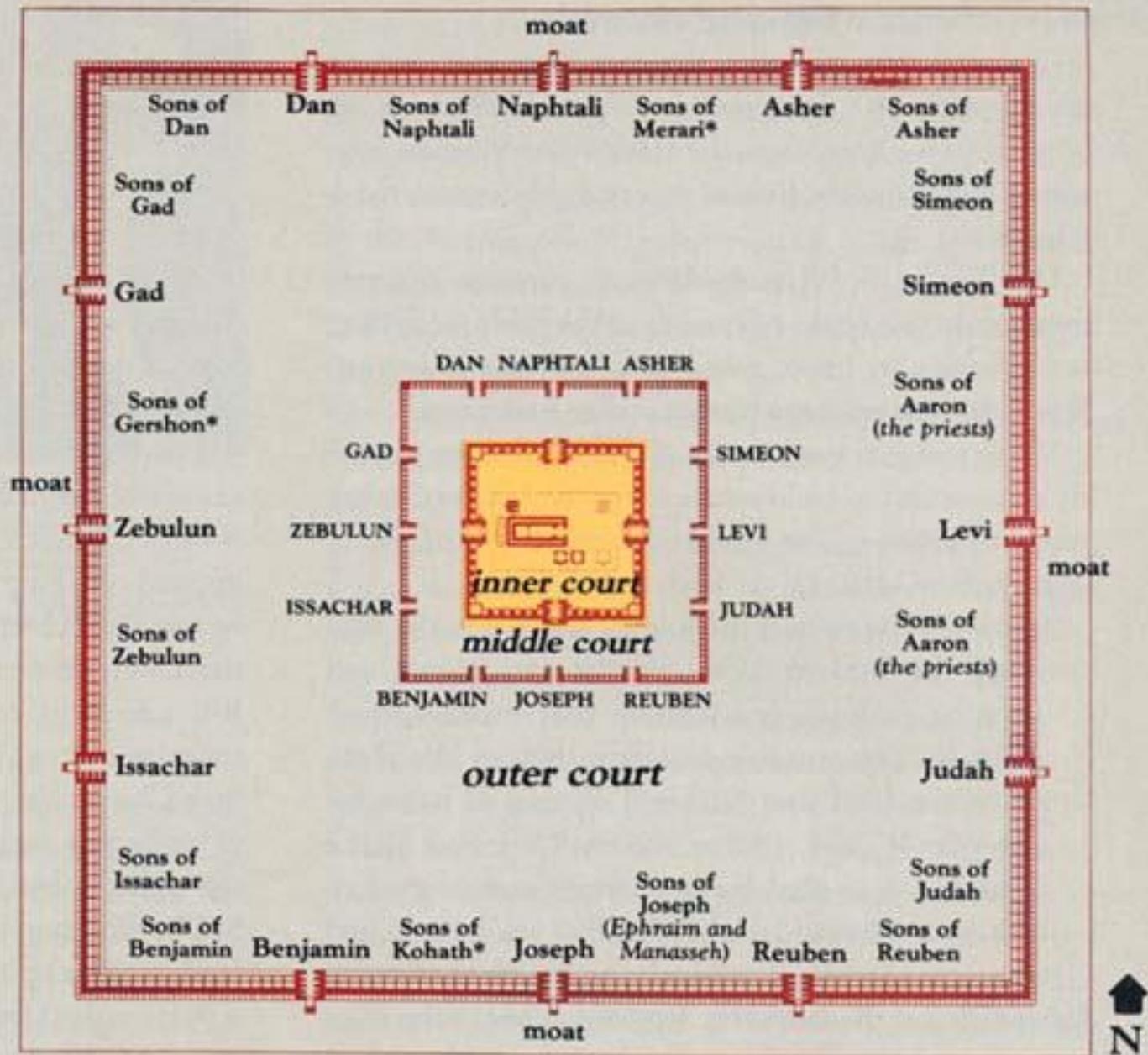
- Greatly expanded role of the Levites
- Restoration of offerings that had been diverted to the Hasmonean priesthood.
- Two previously unknown harvest festivals, grain and new wine.



The Essene Temple



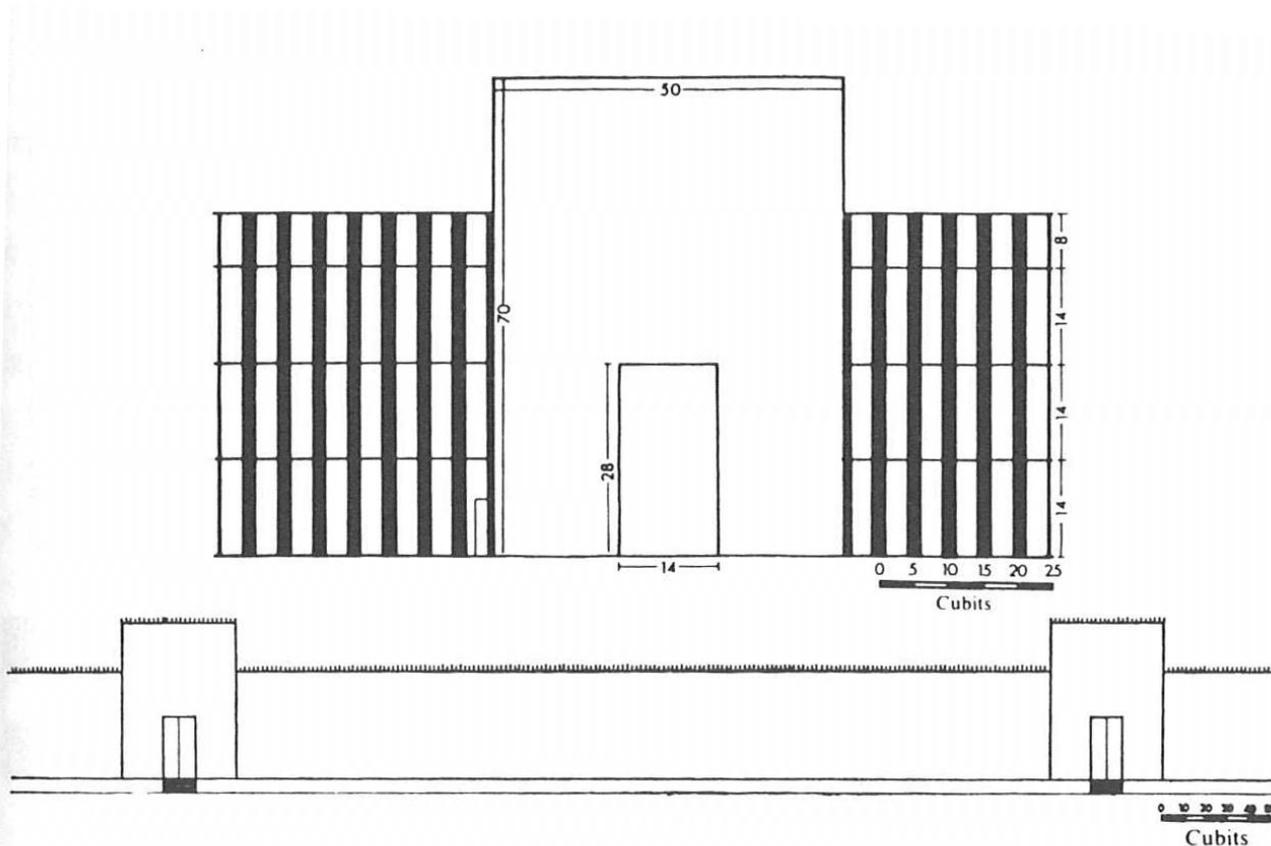




*Levitical families (sons of Levi)

0 200 cubits

Essene Temple Gates and Towers



Top: Plan showing the dimensions of the gates and the three stories of stoa^e and chambers along the court's walls for the tribes, priests, and Levites.

Bottom: Drawing showing the spikes, set atop the walls and gates of the outer court, to prevent impure birds from polluting the Temple complex.

Essene Temple: Inner Court

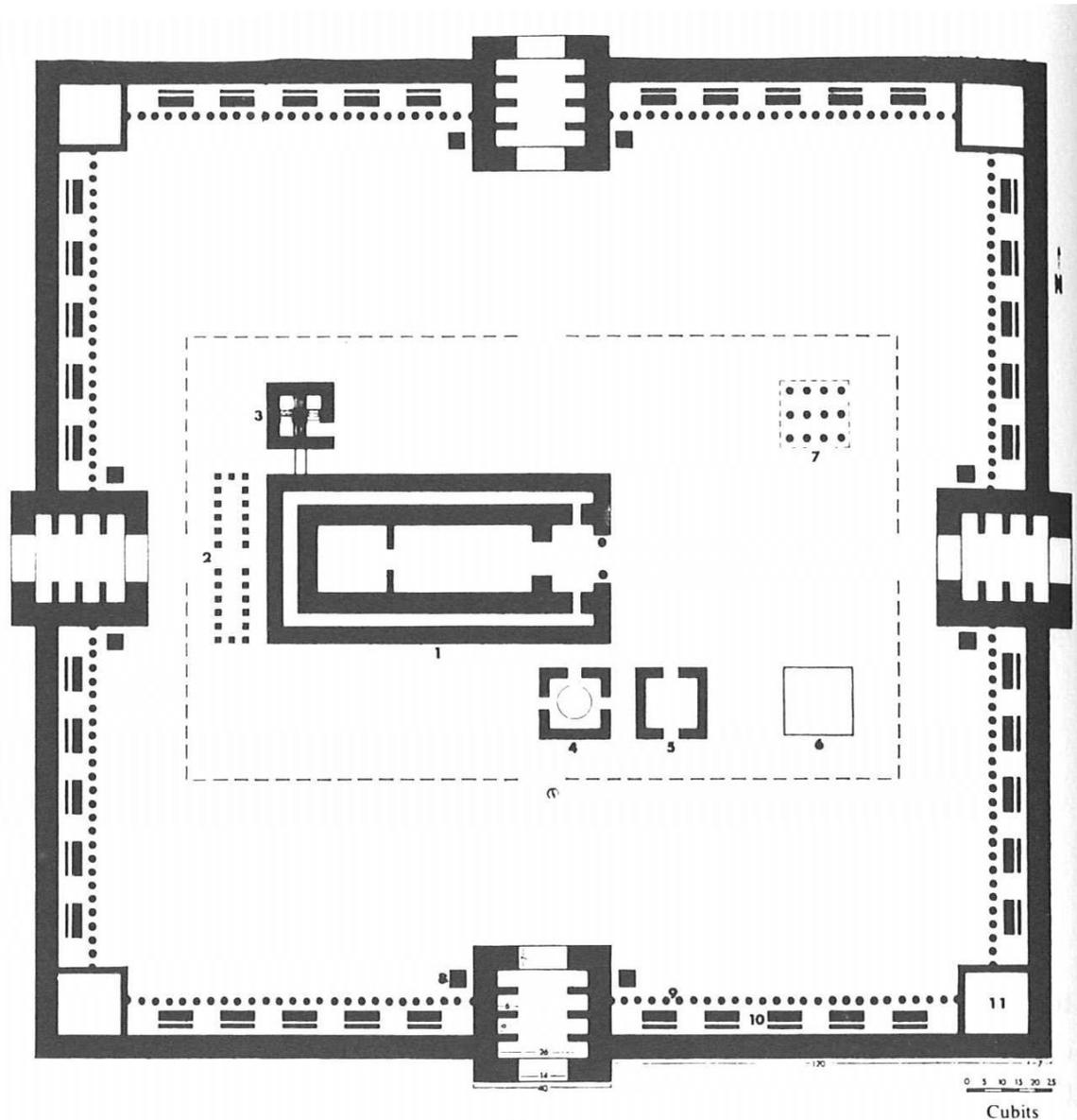


Fig. 3



“They thought that by insulating themselves at the Dead Sea they would escape the holocaust to come. They were wrong. When the Roman wave engulfed their land, it swept them away, too. This, perhaps, is the abiding lesson of the Dead Sea community. It is a warning to us today, lest we too insulate ourselves in our own ivory towers and spiritual ghettos, be they our campuses, clubs, synagogues, churches, or homes, deluding ourselves that therein we can escape the storms that rage outside.”

— Rabbi Jacob Milgrom