

God with us - the temple

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[0:00] Amen. So please turn to 1 Kings chapter 6. And as I said, we're going to have to be really brave this morning because we're going to do chapter 7 as well.!

Or in our thinking this morning, I would like you to go away impressed. I don't think you remember all the details, but I would like you to go away and think, wow!

Okay, so if there was even a bit of wow, then I think that would be the right response to what we're thinking about. So let me begin by asking you, what is the most impressive sight you've ever seen? So has anybody here been to the Grand Canyon, for example? Was it impressive? Impressive, amazing.

Okay. Well, I was just thinking what you might have seen. I think mountains are impressive. So those of you who live in Switzerland, you think mountains are two a penny.

[1:23] Mountain. I go and look at some mountains. Wow! Oh, look at that. And there's another one. And there's a whole lot of them. Oh, it's amazing. So I'm so amazed that I used pictures of it on my computer wallpaper.

Because I think mountains are amazing. Anybody else like mountains? Yeah. Good. Okay. So lakes. The Lake District.

Has anybody been to the Lake District? Yeah. It's amazing, isn't it? Do you not agree? It's fantastic. Forests. I like forests. Yeah.

Well, actually, you get all of those with the temple. You get all of those with the temple. Mountains, lakes, and forests. I'd like to demonstrate that to you.

What we're talking about is things that are perhaps dazzling or awesome. I think awesomeness is the thing about mountains. That's grandeur, isn't it? It makes us feel small, but not in a despairing way, but in a sort of wondering way.

[2:35] Would you agree with that response? Sense of beauty. So I don't think that evolutionary science has got the faintest idea how to account for what we know to be absolutely real, that we appreciate beauty.

We do, don't we? That's beautiful. That's amazing. If evolutionary scientists tell us that they've got the answer to everything, they haven't.

Just that simple thing. They can't answer that. Things that make us with a sense of beauty and a sense of something beyond this world. I think that's what we get, isn't it?

When I look down on lofty mountain grandeur, then sings my soul, my saviour God, to thee, how great thou art. That's a hymn. And there's a word numinous, and I don't know whether that's an old word or a made-up word, but it means the sense of God.

It means that the sense when you go to a place that God is there. I have to say that some architecture of church buildings in the last century particularly was designed to produce that.

[3:47] So St. Bartholomew's around the corner was designed to give you that sense of, wow, I think mountains do it better, actually. Well, the Jerusalem temple, which is what we're looking at, would have given you all of that.

Do you remember the disciples right towards the end of Jesus' ministry? That's exactly what they said. They were sitting down looking over at the temple, and the disciples said, Do you see that? Wow.

Look at that. The architecture of it. What massive stones. What magnificent buildings. And interestingly, Jesus, though he didn't say no, he said, I'll tell you the truth, it's had its day.

Not one stone will be left standing on another, sadly. And another thing that Jesus said, very, very remarkably was, one point he said, I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.

Talking about himself. So if we look at the temple this morning, we think, wow. Then Jesus is saying, well, I'm bigger than that. And if you really understood me, you'd say, wow, about Jesus.

[4:59] So it's indirectly, in that sense, about Jesus this morning. So I'd like us to go on a guided tour. And I'll try not to get us bogged down. You need to have your Bible open in front of you. Because although I'm going to do the pictures, the Bible isn't actually written in pictures, it's written in words.

And it's quite interesting that it's done in that way. I have a feeling I've got these the wrong way around. But let's tell you what, let's clap.

Yeah, I think this is the side I meant to do next. There's a lot of detail. And the writer obviously loves the detail. So we'll respect him by listening to it and going, oh, I'm impressed.

He does do it in words. Now, isn't it interesting that what we don't have is technical drawings. What we don't have is, you know, nice lines and details of the joints and how it all fitted together.

So, David, if you were doing something architectural and they simply said there's going to be 20 cubits of this and 12 cubits of that, I think your instinct would be, could you draw that for me?

[6:14] But, I mean, I'm going to give some drawings. But the real thing is the words. And I think the writer means to impress us. And I think what he's doing is giving us architecture, but he's teaching us theology.

He's teaching us about God through this architecture. And I also want to say that the temple that we're going to look at, we need to digest it. We're not going to do all the digesting today. But it's there in the Bible as a thing with many levels of meaning.

And it shines out and radiates out in lots of different ways. I'll touch on some of them, but I won't do the whole thing. But just bear that in mind. There's more to it than we think.

And also to say that the story of the Jerusalem temple, Solomon's temple, this story is in fact a story of failure.

The temple is grand and glorious, and it stands for grand and glorious things. But the temple in Jerusalem could not fulfill all the things that it was meant to live up to.

[7:20] And the fulfillment of all of it is in Jesus Christ. As it's connected to him, and as it's to do with him, that we find the real meaning fulfilled.

Okay, I'm going to go back one slide, because I think I put them out of order. So this is what we're going to look at. We're going to do a guided tour. Chapter 6, chapter 7. Chapter 6 is about building. So it says in 6, 1, in the 480th year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord.

So that's when it begins. And in chapter 6, verse 14, it talks about completing it, but it actually tells us the full completion in verse 37.

The foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid in the fourth year in the month of Ziv, in the 11th year in the month of Baal, the eighth month the temple was finished. So that chapter goes from the beginning to the finishing of the temple.

[8:27] All the seven years of work involved. So I don't know how the calendar works out, but he obviously does. And he says, I want you to know it took seven years to do all that. It's finished in its details and according to its specifications, in all its things.

And he actually uses this word, mishpat, which means law, which means order. All the orderly things of the temple were finished. And it talks about the outside of the temple, verses 2 to 10. It talks about the maker's instructions, verses 11 to 13. And then the inside of the temple. Then it goes on to the courtyard. Then the other buildings in chapter 7, because there was a complex of buildings.

And then it focuses us on this metal master, Hiram from Tyre and his product. So that's where we're going to go. Let me just skip through this one. And let's look at the outside.

Right, it says, temple that King Solomon built was 60 cubits long, 20 wide and 30 high. So I've given it a base and some steps to go up to it, because that just seems neat.

[9:32] And the shape of it is like a box. And it is 60 by 20 by 30. So those are the measurements there. And it has a portico.

In my understanding, that's a sort of porch at the front. Oh, I should say that the tabernacle, the tent in which God used to live, was much smaller than this. So we've gone grander, bigger.

I'm not sure that it's exactly double, but it's certainly much bigger. So the porch, the portico, goes on the front, and it has two huge bronze pillars, which we'll come back to in a moment.

So they would have been a wonder of technology. Have you seen the I-360? Have you seen the pictures of the I-360 being built, this tower that they're building down on the seafront? I am impressed by that sort of engineering.

They're putting in these sort of tin cans, huge tin cans, and then shoveling them up and pushing another one in and bolting it together. And I think, wow, that's pretty amazing. Well, they would have been at least as amazed at the technology of these bronze pillars in the portico.

[10:42] There are some windows that go somewhere up at the top. So however we pronounce it, there are windows up at the top. And there are surrounding rooms on three floors around the outside.

So let's just see what it says. It says, verse 3, The portico in front of the main hall of the temple extended the width of the temple, that is 20 cubits, projected 10 cubits from the front of the temple. He made narrow windows in the temple.

Against the walls of the main hall and the inner sanctuary, he built a structure around the building in which there were side rooms. The lowest floor was 5 cubits wide, the middle 6 cubits, the third floor 7.

He made offset ledges around the outside of the temple so that nothing would be inserted into the temple wall. So let's try and get the hang of that. Here is the main outline of the temple. And it says in verse 7, In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.

So it's interesting that they respected the temple in the sense that they didn't want people hammering away. Oh, you got that hammer chisel down there? They wanted it sort of respectful.

[11:56] It was a beautiful place when the site was being built. If you wanted to get the hang of those outside walls, the three supported floors and no holes in the main wall.

So I think it's something like this. So that's the inside of the temple. And the walls, how would you describe that? They're thicker at the bottom. And as you go at the top, they're thinner.

And that produces ledges like that. So what happens is when you've got the wall of the outside, this is this bit around here, you can then put timber on the top.

So you don't have to make a hole in anything to put the timber at the top. And you can put timber on those ledges like that. So the top room is seven, this room is six, and this room is five because of the way it's stepped.

Does that make sense? So, and the point being, they didn't want to break through the wall to put the timber into the wall. That would be the normal way of supporting the timber.

[12:59] So again, it's to do with respect for this structure. They don't want a lot of noise, and they don't want, oh, there's some steps there as well. I think the battery on this is running out.

Respect for the integrity of the building. Can you read that to the tiny writing? So that's an interesting thing about it. Respect for the things of God is something that even Christians aren't that good at these days.

We are quite big on joy and perhaps on peace, but on respect, I think. And the sort of respect that merges into what the Bible says is the beginning of wisdom, which is the fear of the Lord, I think we're painfully short on that.

They respected this building. We are told that there's an application of this to Christian people.

And it says, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And that you ought to have a respect and a certain almost fearfulness of how you connect your body, what you do with your body, seeing as it's the temple of the Holy Spirit.

[14:17] And one of the specific applications of this is a sexual application. That's sex outside heterosexual marriage.

He says that's incompatible with your body being a holy place, the temple of the Spirit. And I suppose you could extend that to things that damage the body.

It's disrespecting the place where God lives. Let's move on. Let's go to the next section, which is in verse 11 to 13. The word of the Lord came to Solomon.

As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, let's just see, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations, keep my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David, your father, and I will live among the Israelites and not abandon my people Israel. So it's an interesting, in the middle of the architectural description, he puts this moral teaching, this relational teaching.

[15:21] You'd be very surprised to find that on an architectural plan, wouldn't you? Make sure that there are two number beams. Oh, and by the way, always keep your promises.

You know, strange thing to put inside a modern piece of architecture, but here, this is put in about what it is for God to live amongst his people.

And it's addressed, really, to Solomon the king. So I've done a clunky translation. The word walk crops up. If you walk in my decrees, and if you do my mishpat, my order, and if you keep my commands, and if you walk in them, then I will raise up the word I gave to David, your father. I will live among my people, and I will not abandon or forsake. And that's embedded right in the middle of this description.

There's a conditional promise. And of course, there's a whole lot of thinking about that. Because of course, the people did abandon God.

[16:39] And if you read on the story, they did tell, God, who had given them so much, they forgot him, they received from him, but they thanked other gods, they were shown what he was like, but they said, now I've got a better idea of what God's like, and I've got a better idea of his standards, and they made idols, that's what making an idol is, and they abandoned the Lord, and in the end, he left them, or, well, they left him first, and then he left them.

We have this shocking thought that God's temple could be abandoned and destroyed, which is of course what happened, the destruction of the temple.

But God did not forget his plans and promises, and in the New Testament we have a little subtlety on this, because when God comes to live with Christians, true believers, he says, my spirit will abide with you.

I will not take away my Holy Spirit from true believers. Notice the subtlety of it, but he does say, well, it doesn't matter how you live then, it doesn't matter what you believe, it doesn't matter how you carry on.

It does say that he will make himself known to those that walk with him. So if we're claiming to be Christians, but we're walking, we're living as if, well, no different from anybody else, don't expect God to make himself particularly known to you.

[18:18] It's to those who walk with him that he makes himself known. not saying that we have to be perfect, the temple doesn't say we have to be perfect, the temple is a place where sacrifices are made.

But there is such a thing as walking with the Lord, coming back quickly when we've confessed, when we've sinned. Let's carry on with the architecture.

Verse 14, so Solomon built the temple and completed it. He lined its interior walls with cedar boards, panelling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling, covered the floor of the temple with planks of pine.

He partitioned off 20 cubits at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from floor to ceiling to form within the temple and in a sanctuary the most holy place. So it's panelled, there's no stone seen, and he partitions off 40, 20, so the whole length is 60, 40 is the first room, and then the most holy place is the last 20.

Now what am I getting ahead of myself? It says the inside of the temple, verse 20, was cedar carved with goods and open flowers.

[19:38] Everything was cedar, no stone was to be seen. So we won't tell Chris about this text because the idea, suppose we did this in here and just carved flowers and gourds, all the way through here.

So the whole thing was solidly everywhere, flowers, gourds, all decorated. It would be, I think it would be a bit intense actually, I think it would be a bit distracting.

But the idea of it being decorated with flowers and fruits, flowers, it's a bit like going into a garden, isn't it?

It's a little bit like going into a forest. We'll see something this in a moment. The inner part was 20 by 20 by 20.

What's the name of a shape that's 20 by 20 by 20? I was just testing you. Oh, it's the wrong, no, it's that sort of battery unfortunately. Okay. Triple A.

[20:53] Yeah, it's a cube. We went to the Alcazar Palace in Seville. Did we go there? Yes, we did. And there was a holy place there and it was called a kaba, an Islamic holy place and it was a cube.

I wonder if kaba and cube are related words. An interesting thought, isn't it? But here we have from the ancient world a holy place has this symmetry of 20 by 20 by 20.

So I've drawn it there and I've put it yellow to tell us that it was all covered with gold. Verse 19, he prepared the inner sanctuary within the temple to set the ark of the covenant of the Lord there.

The inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, 20 wide and 20 high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold.

He also overlaid the altar of cedar. Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold.

He extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary which was overlaid with gold. So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.

[22:03] Did anybody pick up any hint of what metal was used? Because it was gold. What a fantastic, just imagine you go into and everything is gold.

The furniture is gold, the walls are gold, the floor is gold, everything is gold. You go, wow. That's what it was. Now the 20 by 20 by 20, so somewhere we've lost 10 cubits because the whole thing is 30 high, but this room is 20 high, so we've lost 10 somewhere.

Well either it's got a false ceiling or you go up some steps at 10 cubits. A cubit is about half a meter, so wow, that would be 5 meters, wouldn't it?

That's quite a long way to go up. So 20 cubits is 10 meters. How high is it from there to there? Any suggestions?

One, two, three, four, five, six, six and a half meters. 20, 20, oh, big isn't it?

[23:12] 20 cubits, 10 meters. It's a cube. The New Jerusalem is a cube. Let's go inside. So I'm doing this as a guided tour.

Nobody would do this. You're not allowed to go right on the inside unless you're the high priest once a year. So this is a very privileged thing that he tells us about.

Verse 23, in the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood. Each cherub was five cubits long. Five cubits long. Let's see. So that's two and a half meters. One, two, up to there, something like that.

Where are we? Each, one wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, the other five cubits, ten cubits from wingtip to wingtip. The second cherub also measured ten cubits for the height of each cherub was ten cubits, about five meters.

He placed the cherubim on the innermost room of the temple with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, the wing of another touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room.

[24:20] He overlaid the cherubim with gold. On the walls all around the temple, on the inner and outer rooms he carved cherubim, palm trees, open flowers.

He also covered the floors of both the gold. Well, so let's look inside then if we can. Just notice it's all gold.

The whole thing is covered with gold. The Ark of the Covenant is a box, sort of this sort of size I'm thinking, so quite small in comparison.

And does he mention it? I don't know whether he actually mentioned it, but that's what this room is for, it's for this box. And we have the cherubim.

I think they would have been quite fearsome looking people, animals, beasts. If you look on Google, you can see Assyrian versions of cherubim.

[25:26] There's some in the Louvre, I think there's some in the British Museum. So they're sort of animal things with human faces and wings. I don't know what the cherubim in this temple looked like, but I'm guessing not too dissimilar.

They're sort of guardian creatures, quite fierce and big and strong. And we have all the decoration, palm trees and flowers. Do you see what I say?

It's like being in a forest, because there's palm trees and flowers, and the wall is decorated with cherubim as well. Does it remind you of anywhere where there are trees and flowers and cherubim? Another place in the Bible? The Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden is trees and flowers and the cherubim were there, in fact, in the end, to keep people out.

And the doors, well, the doors are described in verse 31 and onward, and there's things about, a bit difficult to be able to have translation there. I mean, let's be honest, if you had an architectural drawing in English, most of us wouldn't be able to understand it, would we?

[26:40] So this is translated from Hebrew, you know, cut a chase into the rebate following the return on the wall. Anybody got the faintest idea what that means? I mean, a builder would understand that.

A chase is a channel. So this has got architectural terms in Hebrew that I think people don't necessarily know what they mean. But in generally speaking, we've got this room with doors at the front, and we have cherubs, palm trees, open flowers, it's all overlaid with gold, that's verse 35. And we've got, it seems to me, our impression would be, there are golden doors doors, into the golden garden. I think that's what you'd think.

It's a golden garden. And the doors through which we would have to go, as we see the cherubim there, and the ark of the covenant, it's like a golden garden.

There was a hippie song back in the 70s, which said, and I don't think I can get the tune for you. We are stardust, and it goes up very high.

[28:02] We are golden, and we've got to get ourselves back into the garden. I think that's the aspiration of humankind, whether you're a hippie or not.

We've got to get ourselves back into the garden, the garden of Eden. How can we get back into a place where nature is beautiful, it's not spoiled, where relationships are beautiful and not spoiled, where God is amongst us?

That's what happens in the garden of Eden. And the temple here is strongly reminiscent of this golden garden. And how can we get in to the golden garden?

Joni Mitchell sang, we've got to get ourselves back into the garden, and that's what the temple is saying. Well, here's a way, and this is what it's like. Let's go outside. It says in verse 36, he built the inner courtyard of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams.

So I think it's stone, beam, stone, beam, stone. So I think the beams are acting as a sort of cushion between the courses of stones.

[29:14] I think that's what it's doing. Apparently that's helpful in terms of earthquakes. The walls don't fall down so easily. So there's the temple, and here he talks about the inner courtyard.

I've just put face there because one of the things that the temple has is faces, it has sides, and it has shoulders. They get translated as walls and corners and things, but in Hebrew it has faces and ribs shoulders.

A bit like a body actually, the terms that are used. Anyway, there it is, there's the temple, and here's the wall around it, a courtyard. You see, it's not so easy to get back into the garden.

And there's almost certainly an outer barrier too. So one of the lessons here is there is this golden garden, there is a doorway, but it's really quite difficult to get there.

You've got to go through one barrier, another barrier, another door, and then another door through a door or a curtain, and it's not, there is a way, but it's not an easy way.

[30:29] It's not easy. It's not easy to approach the God of Israel. You have this tension in the Old Testament that God says, I want to be with my people, and yet it is not so easy to approach him.

But in the New Testament, the curtain, the curtain that divides that last section, when Jesus died, the curtain was torn in two.

Meaning that through Jesus Christ the way is open into the golden garden, which is amazing. We have access, Christian people have access into the most holy place through the blood of Jesus, through a new and living way.

What a privilege that is. If you put it in the context of this, hardly anybody could get that far through these barriers in those days, into the golden garden, but Christians, through the blood of Jesus, we have a way to the holiest place of all.

It's amazing. Let's look at, so now we're going into chapter 7, and there are a number of other buildings.

[31:54] I wasn't quite clear on how they were all set out, but here's a suggestion. There's a house for the Lord, okay, so that's there in its own courtyard, and there was, I'm suggesting, another courtyard, and the house for the king, it took Solomon 13 years, however, to complete the construction of his own house, so he builds a house, and he builds a throne hall, verse 7, and a hall of justice, and also a house for one of his wives, I dare, he had lots and lots of wives, I don't know whether he built a house for all of them, but in verse 8 it says he also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.

Now the book in which I got this diagram, makes it like this, that's Solomon's house, and his bride has this house tacked on the back, I don't know whether she would have been too happy with that, I could imagine her saying with an Egyptian accent, what are you talking about Solomon, you got this massive great house, and I've just got this titchy little house, you know, you put all your tools out in that one, your drill, and all your hobby stuff, and I've got no room at all in this, anyway.

That's the house that, that was the suggestion on the map that I saw, and there's another house for justice, and perhaps another house yet for, what does it say, the house of, lost it, verse 7, the throne hall, the hall of justice where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling, so I got a bit confused with these, but I've put what I got off the internet there, and if you had been a visitor, you would have come to, you know, this place, a bit like going to the houses of parliament, or Buckingham Palace, you know, like you would go to London to see these places, go to Jerusalem to see the house of the Lord, and the house of the king, and the house of his bride, and the house of his, where he does justice and judgment, and that you'd come to a point where there'd be a signpost which would say, house of the Lord that way, house of the king that way, house of the bride that way, house of justice that way, and you'd have to plan out your afternoon if you were going to visit all of them.

Interestingly, in Christianity, it's all brought together, because the place where the Lord lives is the place where the king lives, is the place where the bride lives, is the place where God judges. Jesus Christ is all of those. Do you see what I mean? He's the king, he's the husband, he's the savior, he's the friend, he's the judge, he's all of those things together.

[34:59] You don't have to have different places to go. Jesus is all of them, which I think makes him rather remarkable. Let's move on now, so I said I'd try and keep up a pace here.

We've gone now to verse 13. I'd like you to meet Hiram. So we're in chapter 7, verse 13. King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram, whose mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, whose father was a man of Tyre and a craftsman in bronze.

Hiram was highly skilled and experienced in all kinds of bronze work. He came to King Solomon and did all the work assigned to him. Has anybody been to Ironbridge in Shropshire?

It's near where I was built. Anybody? Hands up. Ironbridge. The first Iron Bridge was made there, that's why it's called Iron Bridge, by the people for whom who were really getting into that technology of iron smelting.

They had to have transport, so that area of the black country, what do we call it the black country? That area was really a hotbed for iron technology.

[36:07] The people who did it were called the iron masters, the iron masters of Ironbridge. They could make iron span across a river.

I think Hiram was a bronze master, he was a metal master. He, and that's him doing his stuff, they probably made the bronze things using a lost wax process.

So you make wax in the shape of whatever you want to end up with finely. You pack it all round with clay and wait for it to solidify. So you see the clay forms a shape round the wax.

And then when you pour in something hot, like hot metal, the wax will melt, you make a place for it to run away, and the metal will stay in the shape that the wax used to have. So that would be quite a technological tour de force to do that. And it tells you later on that that's the sort of thing he did.

[37:11] It's in verse 46. They were cast in clay molds in the plain of Jordan. Anyway, there's Hiram. His father is a non-Jew.

His mother is a Jew. He's highly skilled. He uses technology and artistry and craftsmanship. And when this was done in the book of Exodus, it was said of, was it Bezalel?

Bezalel. The spirit had filled him in order to produce this technology. And it's an interesting thought that craftsmanship and artistry is not something that God says, oh, it's nothing to do with me.

That too, in a way, is a gift of the Holy Spirit. So if you have that gift, be thankful to God for being able to use technology and artistry and craftsmanship.

And it's an interesting thing about workers on the temple. In Zechariah chapter 1, referring now to the rebuilding of the temple when it had been destroyed, the prophet is shown the opponents of God's purpose.

[38:32] The four horns that come to oppose the work. And God says, have you seen the craftsmen that are working on the temple? And God says, these terrify the adversaries.

It's an interesting thought, isn't it? Here's God's terrorism. What terrifies the enemy? Answer, the craftsmen getting on with the work of God.

Well, this is what, did you understand that point? Anybody awake? Not quite. I'll carry on anyway. Workers getting on with the work of God are like God's secret weapon.

Shall we look at the things that he made? He made the two bronze pillars. It's in verse 15. Two bronze pillars, 18 cubits high, 12 cubits round. And they're very, very complicated.

So let's not get too bogged down with those. They're very, very complicated, very, very finely decorated. That's in verses 15 to 22. And then he makes this thing called a sea.

[39:41] So it's a huge bowl made of cast metal measuring 10 cubits. So that's 5 meters rim to rim and 5 cubits. That's 2.5 meters high.

It took a line of 30 cubits to measure round it. And here's an example of the Bible using round numbers because if it is in fact 10 cubits from rim to rim, what would be the exact circumference? Anybody know? 31.42 or something like that. So those of you who know maths, the exact formula for the circumference of the circle is $2\pi r$.

And pi is this number 3.142 dum dum dum dum dum dum dum. And it never ends. And so they made it. And rather than give us some mathematics which wasn't invented till late, he says it's 30 cubits.

It wasn't exactly that. But the Bible uses round numbers. Let's not get too bogged down with that. The sea is supported on 12 balls, 23 to 26.

[40:53] And there are also these huge stands for bowls of water. And it describes them verses 27 on to 37. They're sort of rectangular stands, highly decorated.

They have wheels, although I should think to move them would have been very difficult. They'd have been very heavy. And they have their own bowls on top of them. And this is in verse 38.

10 bronze basins. So the place is sloshing with water. And he made lots of other stuff which are detailed there.

Gold altar, lamp stands, dishes, and all the stuff you would need for running a temple. You've got sacrifices being made. You need shovels.

You need things to get rid of the ash. You need things to look after the flames of the lamps and so on and so on and so on.

[41:51] Interestingly, the Bible says that we are like items for use in a house. Vessels.

In 2 Timothy 2 verse 20 he says, in a house there are many different implements for use. Some for noble uses, some for ignoble uses.

And if you purify yourself you can be used for noble uses. It's an interesting little metaphor, isn't it? To be ready to be used by God.

To be in a usable condition for God. So let's conclude our guided tour by doing an imaginary journey right into the center of, right into the heart of this temple.

Okay, that's what we're going to do. So, should we stop for a moment? Would you like to stand up and then sit down again just to make sure that you've got some blood flowing? Please do that. Just stand up.

[42:57] And then sit down again. Right? It's quite warm in here. We don't have much in the way of ventilation so we've got to compensate somewhere. Let's make this almost impossible journey to the throne.

So there's an outer courtyard. And somewhere, I'm not exactly sure where, are these water containers. So as you enter, you would say, oh, look at all this water.

Amazing here. And then, it's not mentioned here, there would be an altar where animals were sacrificed. They'd be killed, their blood would be dealt with in various ways, and they'd be, the first thing you'd see then is the altar.

And it reminds every visitor that you need your sin dealt with. Without the shedding of blood, there is no putting away of sin.

That's the first thing you'd notice as you made your journey. And then you would go past this sea, this massive cleansing water for washing.

[43:59] And then you'd go to the portico and you'd see these huge pillars and you'd think, wow, gosh, fancy them making these huge pillars out of bronze, for goodness sake.

They're amazing. And you'd stop and wonder at that. And then you'd go into the holy place with, I don't know whether, because it isn't drawn for us, I'm guessing here.

Did they have the lights? They had ten lamps. Were they in a row here? So as you enter, you've got little windows up at the top, you've got lamps, you have an altar of incense.

So as you enter, it smells quite different to the rest of the world. You've got a fragrance, which you really actually associate with heaven, and only with heaven. In you go.

And then there would be the table where the showbread, and I think that's literally the bread of the face. So you'd go in, and there's bread, there's fresh bread. They put fresh bread there every day.

[44:57] Has anybody been to Brighton Museum? Anybody been to Brighton? No, what am I talking about? Brighton Pavilion. Anybody been to Brighton Pavilion? Okay, Brighton Pavilion. Have you been in the kitchens there?

That's the last thing before they usher you through the gift shop. Did you look at the bread, and the fruit, and the hams that they have there? Did you look at them? They're all made of something, aren't they?

Plastic? Plaster? Something imitation. And you think, ah, nobody really works here. Because it's just, it's not real food. You go into the tabernacle, and there's real bread there.

They made it their business to put fresh bread there every day. It's an interesting thought, isn't it?

The lights are on, the bread's there. Looks as though somebody's home. Does, doesn't it?

See fresh food somewhere. You go into somebody's kitchen, see fresh food. You know somebody's around. You, so we've, we've gone into the holy place, and now we're going to go, and nobody would do this apart from the high priest once a year, in trembling probably.

[46:02] We go in, and we see the, we go into this, the golden garden as it were. I had imagined this would be quite dark.

And you've got these two enormous cherubim sort of saying, what are you doing here? You better behave. And there is the Ark of the Covenant through the door into the place where God is enthroned.

And what do you see? Well actually, it's dark, and it's awesome. It's guarded, and it's fearsome. And in a sense, it's empty.

The conquering armies were really surprised when they destroyed the temple. There's no, there's no, you know, Jupiter, God Mercury, the goddess Diana, you can see pictures of all of them, can't you?

In their temples, there'd be, there'd be a statue, you know. You know, you go into there, and there's an emptiness.

[47:13] There's no visible representation of God himself. And here's a sort of conundrum, really. All this trouble that you've gone to, and you

get there, and the lights are left on, because you've got lamps burning, and there's food left out, but in a funny sort of way, there seems to be no one at home.

It's an interesting thing, isn't it? I know the temple wasn't always visibly uninhabited. Sometimes there were distinct signs of God's overwhelming presence, but in normal running, I think you would say, this God, the God of Israel, is different to the other gods.

You can't contain him. You can't picture him. There's something, even this wonderful temple, can't capture about God.

Well, that was the trip. So it's popped up on the screen. We would really value your feedback on this trip. So rather than just close it, shall we do the feedback form?

Let's do the feedback form. So was it impressive? Were you impressed? I think it's terribly impressive if you think about it. We've done it quite quickly this morning, but read it again. Think about it.

[48:35] I think it's terribly impressive. I think I would be with the disciples saying, look at this master. What beautiful buildings. What a magnificent place. And then, are you more impressed with Jesus?

Because he's greater than this fabulous temple. Did you, on your trip, enter the holiest place or were you stopped at the various barriers?

I think probably most of us would have been stopped at the barriers. But, as a Christian, you can, we can, enter the holiest place through the blood of Jesus.

Well, it's an amazing privilege, isn't it? You can go and talk to the God who is not absent, but he's there. Did you see the occupant on your trip? Was it like going to Buckingham Palace where the Queen is not in residence?

No, the number of times I've been to London and the Queen has entirely failed to text me, not invited me for a cup of tea, been past her door, you know. The question is to whether God, in what sense he was there.

[49:51] But I can tell you that in Jesus Christ God is permanently present. We have an access to a real person who is really there when we pray.

Did you see the occupant? Did you go past the altar? Or did you miss that bit on your trip? Were you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

That's the proper way to enter the holy place. And Christians have made that into a song, haven't they? Are you washed? Are you washed in the soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb?

Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Would you say that for yourself? Would you say in the Christian sense I've got all this.

This is my, the reality of my Christian life. I've, I know what it is to go to that altar and to benefit from it and then to go on into the holy place.

[50:52] Did you see the light? It's a standard Christian caricature, isn't it? Have you seen the light, brother? But in the temple, did you go in?

Did you see the lights? Jesus was at the temple once and he said, they had a light, lighting ceremony and he said, forget all that.

He said, I am the light of the world. He who comes to me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life. And he said that in the full knowledge of all the lights that were going on in the temple. I'm the light of the world, says Jesus. And with all that water sloshing around in the temple, he says, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

For whoever believes in me, oh, I've forgotten to do the text, living water will flow from within him. And that's what he said on one of the great temple feast days when the place was sloshing with water.

[51:57] Did you drink of the healing streams? There is a river the streams of which make glad the city of God. When Jesus died on the cross, what came from his wounded side was blood and water, suggestively enough.

Have you drunk the living water? And would you want to go back again? Would you say, a day in your courts is worth 10,000 in the courts of tents of wickedness.

Would you like to be in the place where God is? Would you like to be there forever? Because that's what Christianity is about. It's saying, that visit that we just did was temporary and although it's a fantastic place, it's nothing compared to the real thing. And one day, through Jesus Christ, we'll go there, we'll see his face and we'll be there forever. We're going to sing. Whoops. What are we going to sing?