

Discipleship Foundations

L-3 The Walls and Gates

Instructions: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal insights and application. Read as a group, underline, and then share what stood out to you and why.

“And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD” (1 Kings 8:10-11).

The temple is one of the most important structures in human history. It was set apart as the special place where God dwelt and interacted with mankind. Generation after generation would go to the temple to worship, sacrifice, and seek God.

The glory of the Lord, also known as the Shekinah Glory, is a physical manifestation of God’s presence, displayed as a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. We see God’s glory manifested when Israel crossed through the Red Sea, in the Tabernacle and in Solomon’s Temple. God’s people knew He was with them because His glory was evident.

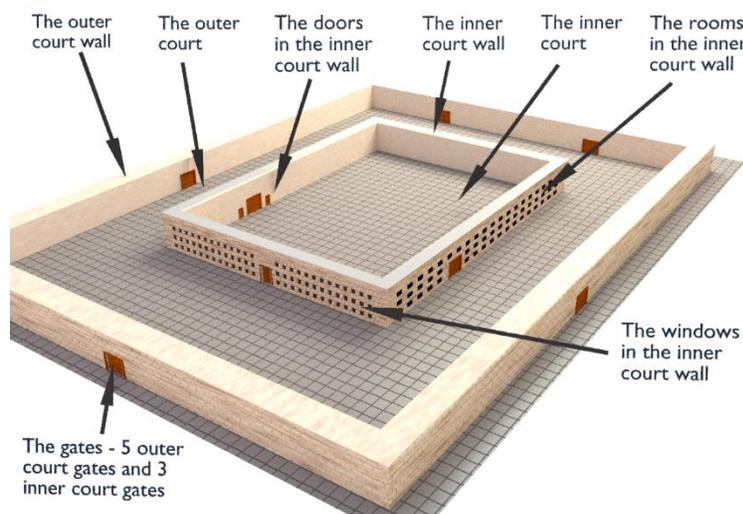
Like Solomon’s Temple, King Herod’s Temple, which stood during Jesus’s time on earth, was destroyed. We should keep in mind that another temple will be built and will play a vital role in the end times. Also consider that the earthly temples, such as Solomon’s, were mere copies of what exists in heaven. *

The Apostle Paul’s words, put in this context, become far more meaningful to us: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you” (1 Cor. 3:16)?

As God’s temple, each Christian is designed to show His glory to the world around us. After Moses met with God, his face shown with the glory of the Lord. Moses covered his face because the people could not look at him due to it. Paul discusses this in 2 Cor. 3:7-18 and explains that we, too, display the glory of the Lord.

Does God’s glory shine forth from us? Do we represent places of worship where others can come and encounter the living God? We should be able to answer *yes* since each of us is God’s dwelling place on earth! This gives insight into the meaning and purpose of our lives.

The temple had three primary areas: the Outer Court, the Inner Court, and the Main Temple structure. Each holds important keys to understanding ourselves and learning how to function as God designed us. Begin by looking at the walls and gates in the Outer Court and the Inner Court.



The Outer Court consists of the outermost wall of the temple, its five gates, and the area inside. The large Outer Court was used to pray, worship, and seek the Lord. People would also bring sacrifices into the temple here, and the priests would then offer them in the Inner Court.

The Outer Court correlates to the physical body. It represents our God-given, natural abilities and boundaries with which we interact with the world. The five gates correlate with our five senses, which allow a measure of control over what is brought in and out. This protective mechanism is a gift which we must use wisely.

The next wall created a separate area known as the Inner Court. The Inner Court wall was three stories high and had rooms in each level. The rooms in the wall were where the priests lived for a week during their normal rotation of temple service.

Only three gates allowed entrance from the Outer Court to the Inner Court. Each of these gates also had guards to limit what was allowed in. Notice a very specific detail that is easily missed in the diagram: two small doors on the inner side of the wall allowed access to the rooms inside the wall. The design of the small doors and windows allowed the priests to view what was happening in the Outer Court without allowing access to the Inner Court, though there was no entrance to these rooms from the Outer Court.

Each of the gates correlates to one of the main areas of the soul. The main gate, located at the bottom middle of the Inner Court wall, lines up best with the will. While the gate on the left side lines up with the mind, the gate on the right lines up with the emotions. The gates are not the mind, will, and emotions, but they do represent each of these areas having access to the Outer Court and, ultimately, to the outside world. The main functions of the mind, will, and emotions are inside the Inner Court which represents the soul.

What we allow into our temples (bodies) today is just as important as what the priests allowed into Solomon's Temple. The first set of gates give us a measure of control over influences from our environment. We are in control of what we watch and listen to, with whom we interact, and what we let in. The second set of gates, with their guards, gives us additional power over what comes into the soul.

I learned the importance of this authority when the Lord saved me and delivered me from addiction. Not only did I need to cut certain substances from my life, but I also needed to change friends, music, and a host of other factors. Not doing so would have taken me back into addiction and bondage. As I grew in faith, I came to understand the power of the second set of gates. When I could not control the environment, I could control what entered my soul through the second set of gates, and I could control my response.

The second set of gates shows that the soul can observe what is coming into the temple without becoming totally vulnerable. For example, it gives the mind the opportunity to evaluate if something is good or bad before fully admitting it into the thought process. Evaluating and limiting what we allow in helps us take every thought captive.

Are we aware of what we bring in through our gates? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything we are allowing in that does not please Him.

Also consider what we bring out of the temple. The Jewish people would come away from the temple, not with new clothes or household items like those found at a shopping center, but with things for the inner being. They would come away with forgiveness, a clear conscience, and a right relationship with their Creator. When people came out of the temple, they had a deeper relationship with God. They felt peace, love, and acceptance from God.

We can also receive from God. For example, He desires to give us the fruit of the Spirit in abundance, so we are satisfied and have something to share. Love, joy, peace, and the other fruit of the Spirit should lead to outward expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and worship. They should also be expressed in our daily lives so others can experience the goodness of God. Withholding these is like hoarding desperately needed food.

When the fruit of the Spirit is manifested in tangible ways it prepares our hearts and allows the gospel seed to find good soil. **Are we planting the seed of the gospel with the fruit of the Spirit?**

Unfortunately, there are times when our fruit is of the flesh, not the spirit. When we identify something ungodly, sinful, or destructive coming out of our temples, we know we have a larger problem which needs to be resolved.

Do we guard what is coming out of our temples, as well as what we let in?

THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT GOD

God is Spirit. He uses stories, parables, types, antitypes, and analogies to communicate spiritual truth to us, such as when Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. Additionally, scripture tells us that what the Jews lived out is an example for us. The Apostle Paul told us, "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. 10:11, NASB). There are things in our lives which serve as an example for others. God uses parts of our lives that we would not suspect. "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4, NASB).

GOING DEEPER

Find additional resources for each lesson such as scripture references, videos, and teachings at: <https://experienceordination.org/training-courses/>

* Heb. 8:5; 9:9-10, 21-25. Rev. 7:15; 14:17; 16:17. Exod. 24:9-10. Ps. 11:4; 23:6; 27:4-6; 138:2. 1 Kgs. 22:19. Isa. 6:1-6. Ezek. 1:1-28.