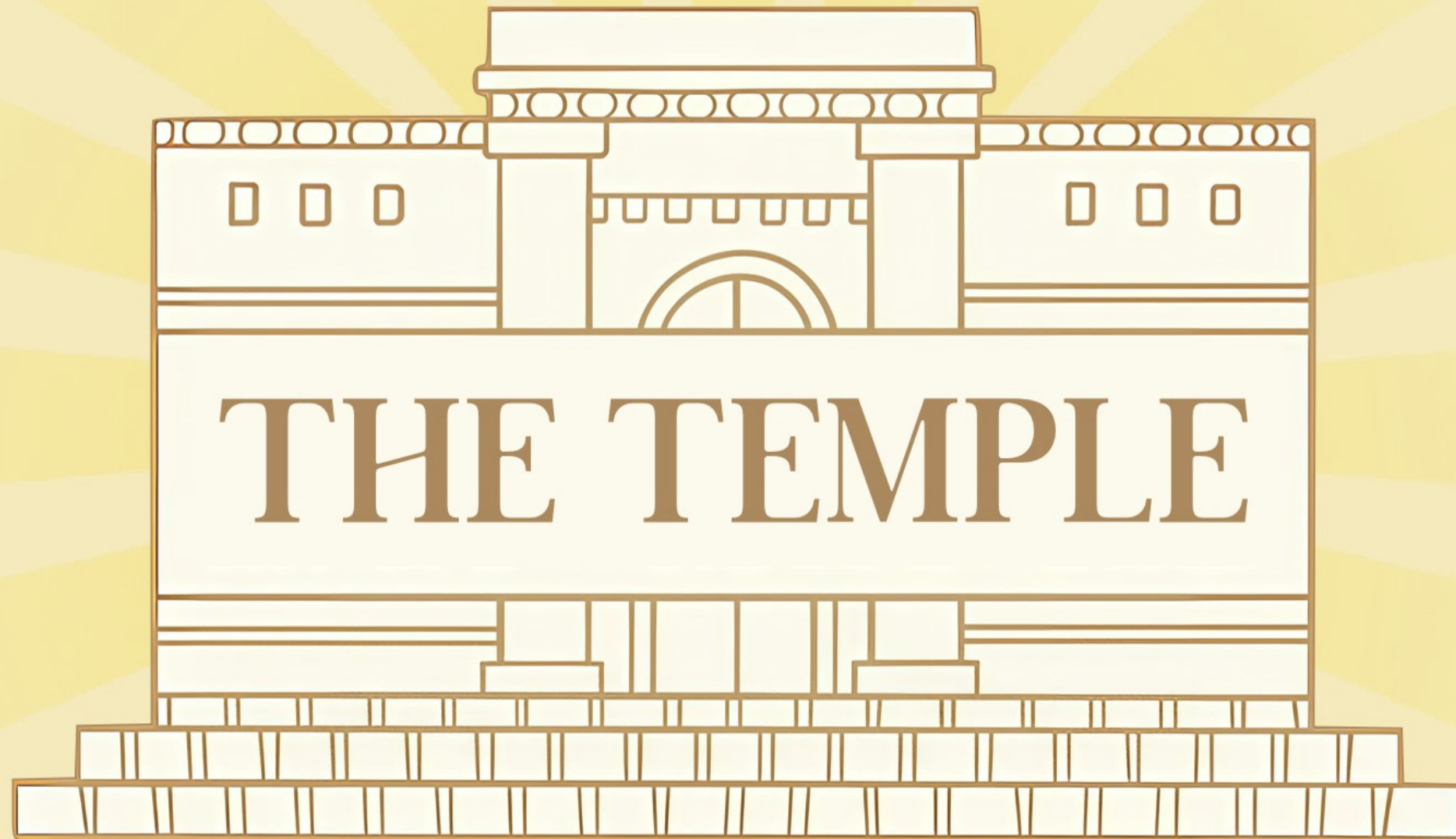
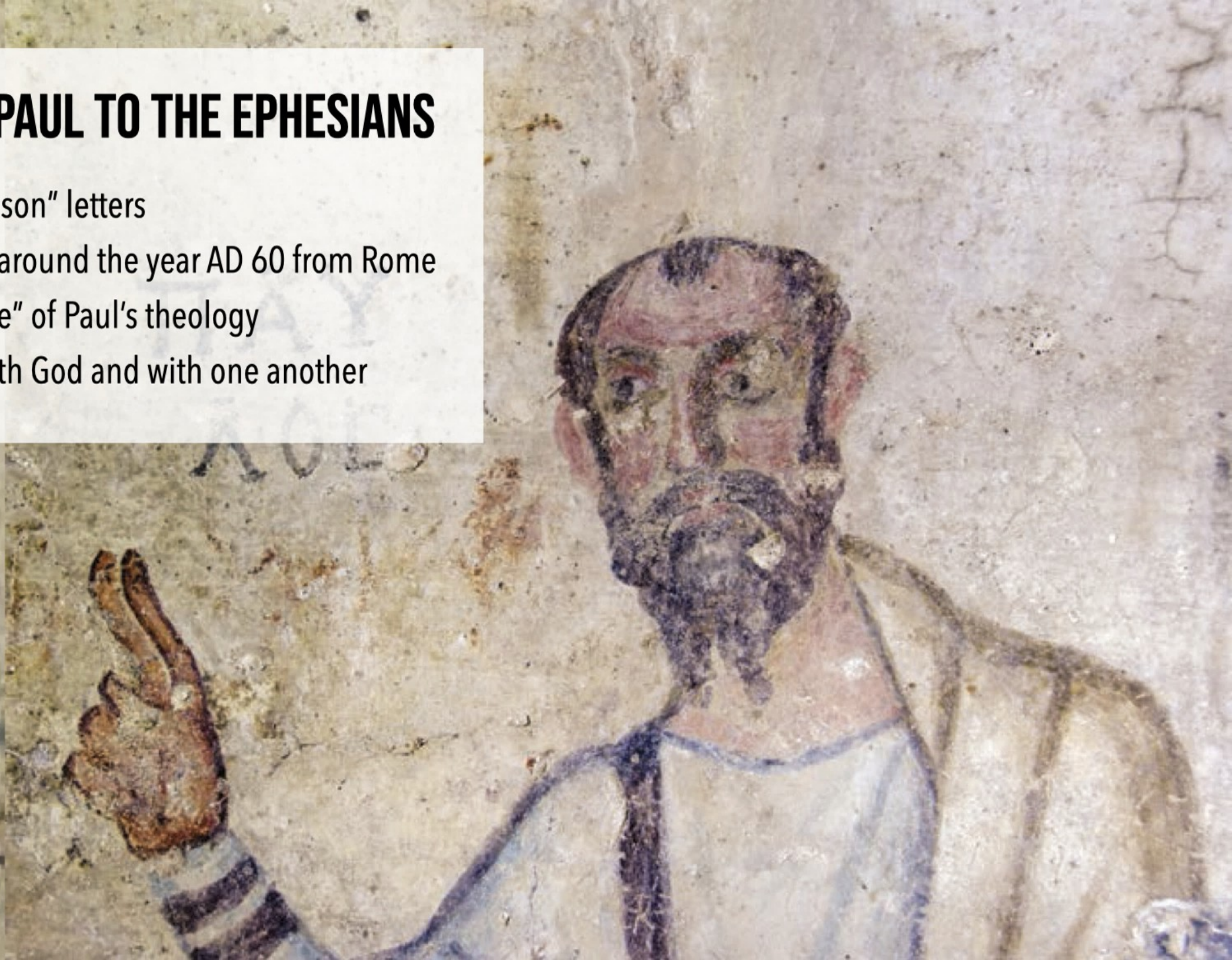




ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

- One of Paul's "prison" letters
- Probably written around the year AD 60 from Rome
- The "quintessence" of Paul's theology
- Reconciliation with God and with one another



Two cultural issues ... offer an explanation: patrilineal descent and identity in the community. (1) The concept of patrilineal descent resulted in males being considered the representatives of the clan and the ones through whom clan identity was preserved (as, e.g., the wife took on the tribal and clan identity of her husband). (2) Individuals found their identity more in the clan and the community than in a concept of self. Decisions and commitments were made by the family and clan more than by the individual. The rite of passage represented in circumcision marked each male as entering a clan committed to the covenant, a commitment that he would then have the responsibility to maintain. If this logic holds, circumcision would not focus on individual participation in the covenant as much as on continuing communal participation.

The community is structured around patrilineal descent, so the sign on the males marks the corporate commitment of the clan from generation to generation.

Keener, Craig S., and John H. Walton, eds. NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you, gentiles in the flesh, the ones being called “uncircumcision” by the so-called “circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands,¹² [remember] that you were at that time without Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and God-less in the cosmos.

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you, the ones formerly far off, have been brought near in the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, the one who made both groups into one, having destroyed the dividing wall of the barrier, the hostility between them, by his flesh...

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

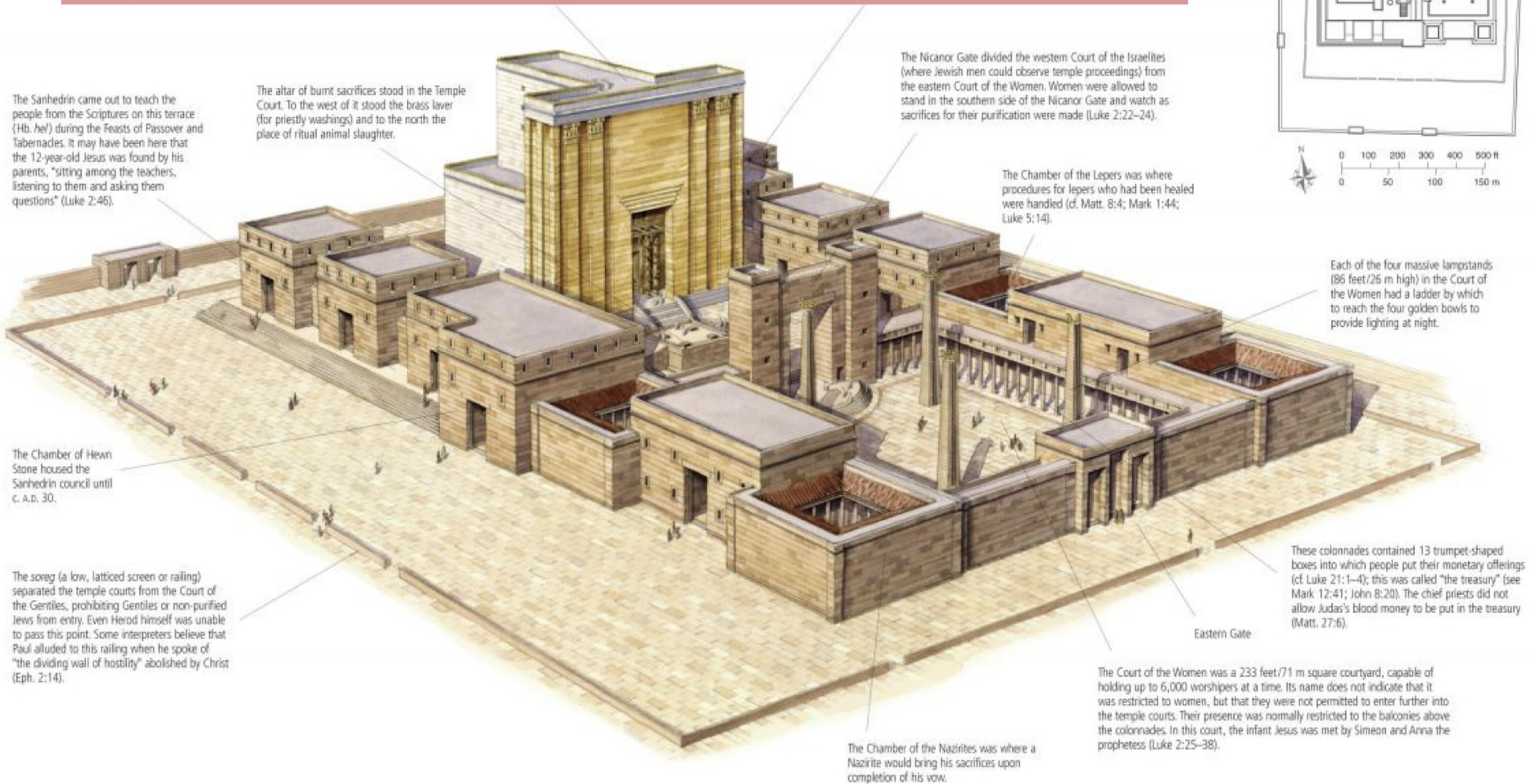
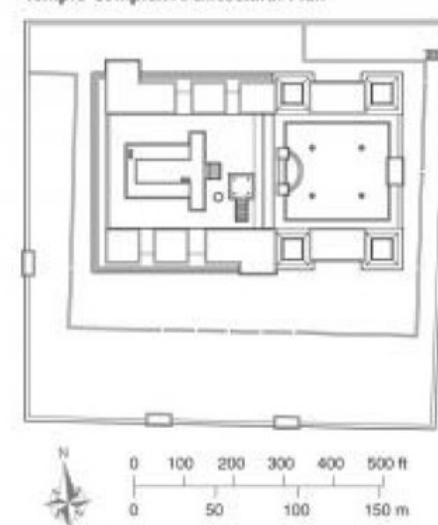
¹⁵ having invalidated the Law of commandments contained in decrees, so that in himself he might create the two groups into one new people, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶ and that he might reconcile both groups into one body to God through the cross, having killed the hostility in him [or by it—the cross].

EPHESIANS 2:11-22

¹⁷ [Quoting Isa 57:19] And having come, he heralded peace to you, the ones far off [gentiles], and peace to those who are near [Jews as well—the gospel is for both, Acts 15:10]; ¹⁸ so that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

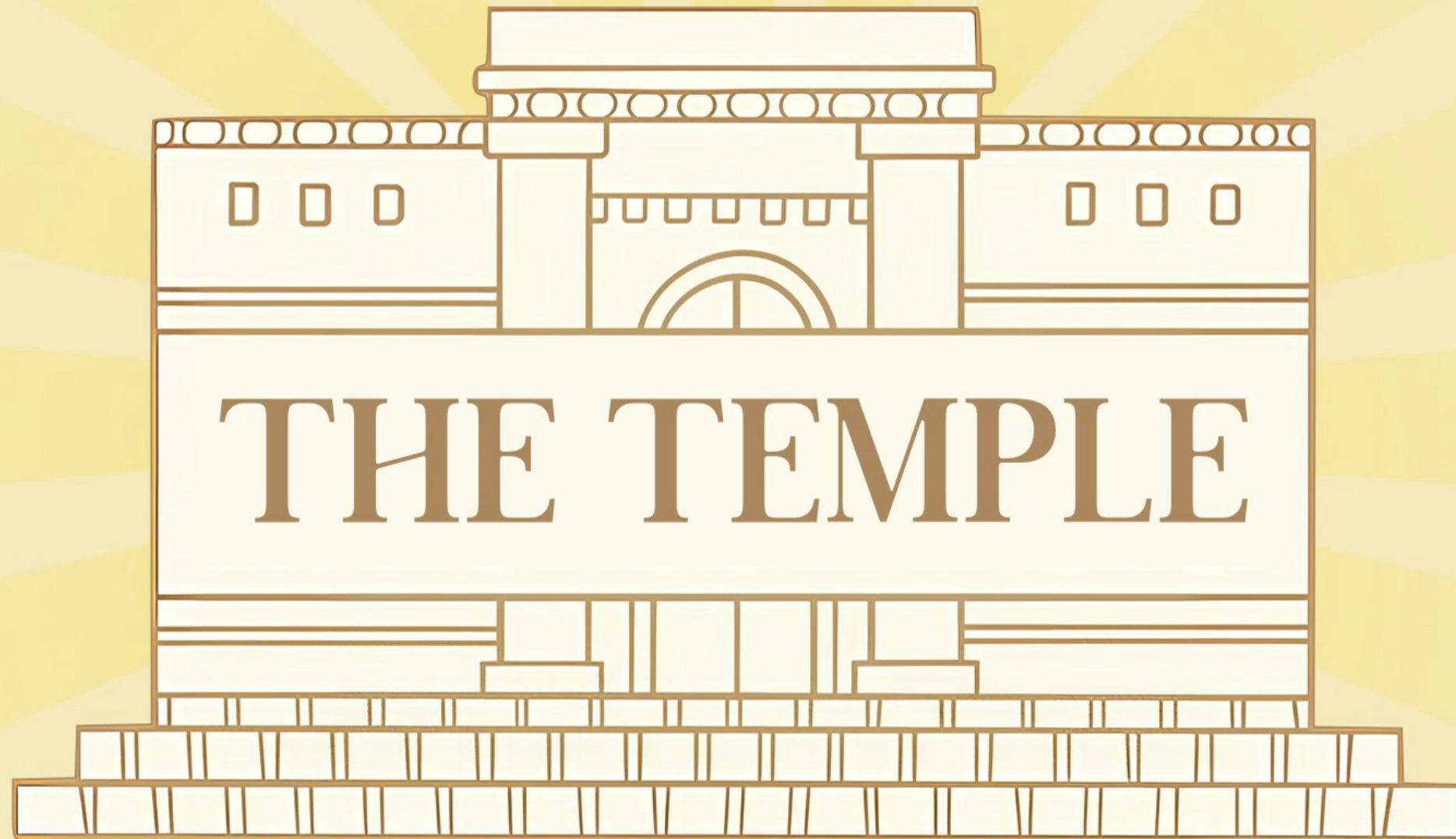
Eph. 2:19, So then, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are co-citizens of the saints and members of God's house,

Temple Complex Architectural Plan



EPHESIANS 2:11-22

²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,²¹ in whom the entire structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,²² in whom you also are being built together as a dwelling of God in the Spirit.



ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

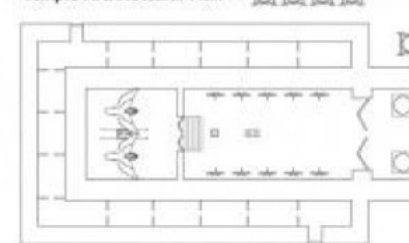
A structure with three levels was built around the walls of the temple. The lower chamber was 7.5 feet (2.3 m) wide, the middle chamber was 9 feet (2.7 m) wide, and the upper chamber was 10.5 feet (3.2 m) wide (1 Kings 6:5–6, 8, 10).

Two ornate wooden doors, overlaid with gold, separated the inner sanctuary from the nave (1 Kings 6:31–32).

The nave had clerestory windows with recessed frames (1 Kings 6:4).

The vestibule was 30 feet (9.1 m) wide and 15 feet (4.6 m) deep (1 Kings 6:3; cf. 2 Chron. 3:4).

Temple Architectural Plan



0 10 20 30 40 ft
0 5 10 m



The hollow bronze pillar on the north was called "Boaz," and the one on the south was called "Jachin" (1 Kings 7:21; cf. 2 Chron. 3:17).

Two ornate wooden, folding doors, overlaid with gold, separated the nave from the vestibule (1 Kings 6:33–35).

The bronze altar for burnt offerings was 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) long and wide (cf. 2 Chron. 4:1).

The inner sanctuary (or Most Holy Place) was a 30-foot (9.1-m) cube (1 Kings 6:15–29; 2 Chron. 3:8–14). Such rooms were often elevated in temples of the ancient Near East. Two massive golden cherubim stood on either side of the ark, each 15 feet (4.6 m) tall with 15-foot (4.6-m) wingspans (1 Kings 6:23–28). The ark of the covenant stood between the two cherubim (1 Kings 8:1–11; cf. 2 Chron. 5:2–14).

The nave (or Holy Place) was 60 feet (18 m) long and 30 feet (9.1 m) wide (1 Kings 6:15, 17–18; cf. 2 Chron. 3:5–7). It contained the golden altar of incense; the golden table for the bread of the Presence; and 10 golden lampstands, five on the north and five on the south (1 Kings 7:48–49; cf. 2 Chron. 4:7).

Ten bronze wheeled stands, each holding a large basin, contained water for rinsing off the animal parts that were used for the burnt offerings (1 Kings 7:27–38; cf. 2 Chron. 4:6).

The "sea" was a metal basin 7.5 feet (2.3 m) high and 15 feet (4.6 m) in diameter. It held 12,000 gallons (44,000 liters) of water for the priests to wash in. It was supported by 12 bronze oxen in sets of three, facing in each direction (1 Kings 7:23–26; cf. 2 Chron. 4:2–5).

ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ

ΕΞ ΕΛΛΗΝΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΚ

ΠΕΡΣΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΚ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ

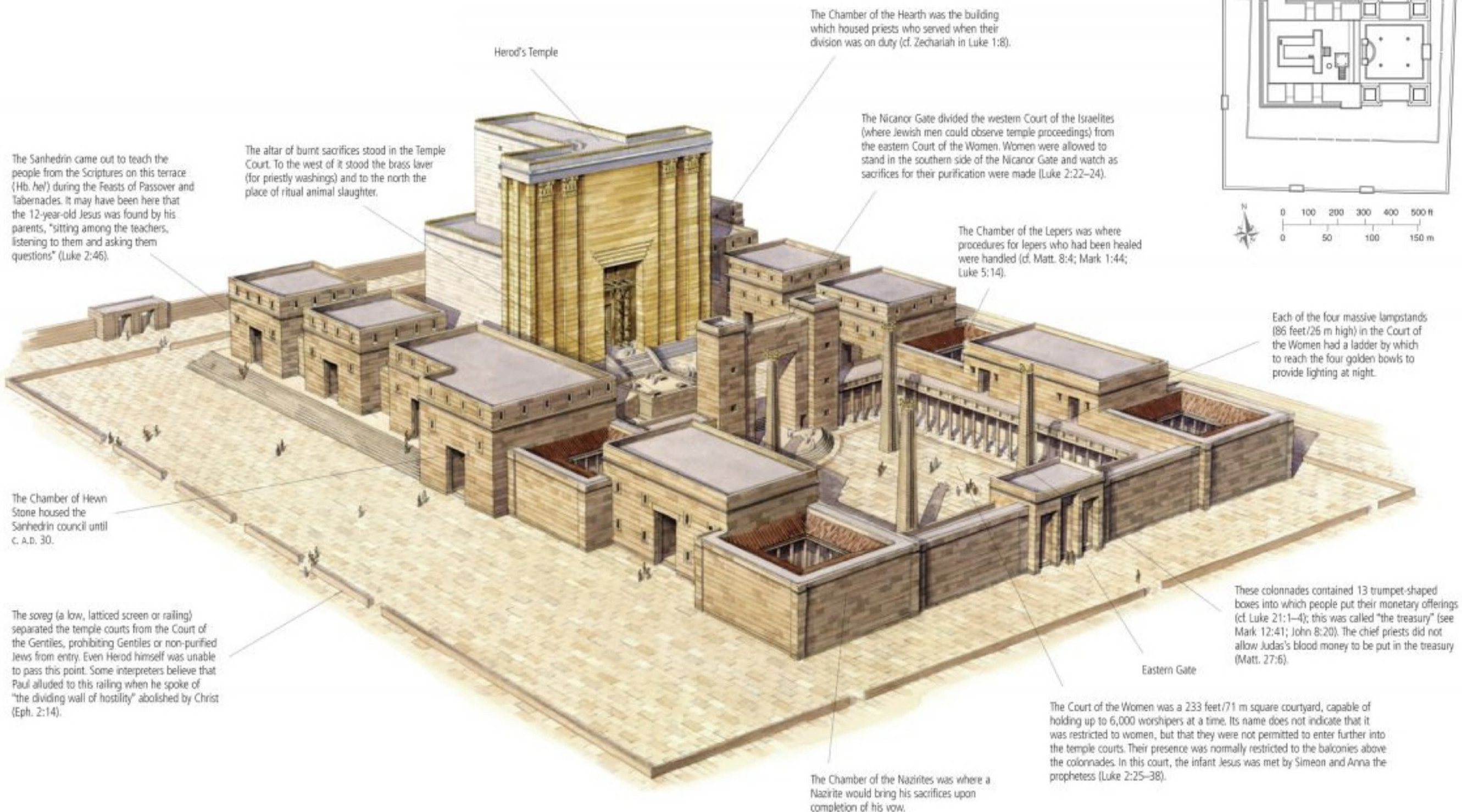
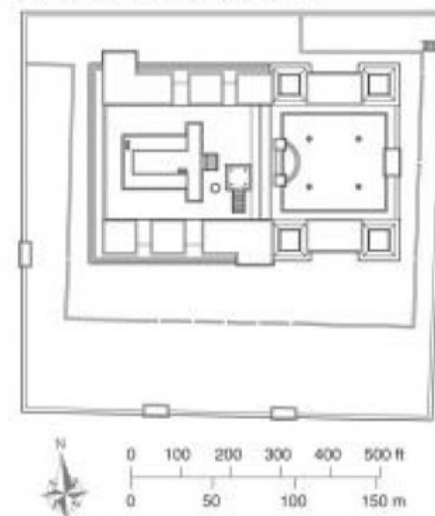
ΚΑΙ ΕΚ ΑΙΓΑΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΚ

ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΚ ΠΕΡΣΩΝ

ΚΑΙ ΕΚ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ

ΚΑΙ ΕΚ ΑΙΓΑΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΚ

Temple Complex Architectural Plan



Herod's Temple

The Chamber of the Hearth was the building which housed priests who served when their division was on duty (cf. Zechariah in Luke 1:8).

The Nicanor Gate divided the western Court of the Israelites (where Jewish men could observe temple proceedings) from the eastern Court of the Women. Women were allowed to stand in the southern side of the Nicanor Gate and watch as sacrifices for their purification were made (Luke 2:22-24).

The Chamber of the Lepers was where procedures for lepers who had been healed were handled (cf. Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14).

Each of the four massive lampstands (86 feet/26 m high) in the Court of the Women had a ladder by which to reach the four golden bowls to provide lighting at night.

Eastern Gate

These colonnades contained 13 trumpet-shaped boxes into which people put their monetary offerings (cf. Luke 21:1-4); this was called "the treasury" (see Mark 12:41; John 8:20). The chief priests did not allow Judas's blood money to be put in the treasury (Matt. 27:6).

The Court of the Women was a 233 feet/71 m square courtyard, capable of holding up to 6,000 worshipers at a time. Its name does not indicate that it was restricted to women, but that they were not permitted to enter further into the temple courts. Their presence was normally restricted to the balconies above the colonnades. In this court, the infant Jesus was met by Simeon and Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:25-38).

The Chamber of the Nazirites was where a Nazirite would bring his sacrifices upon completion of his vow.

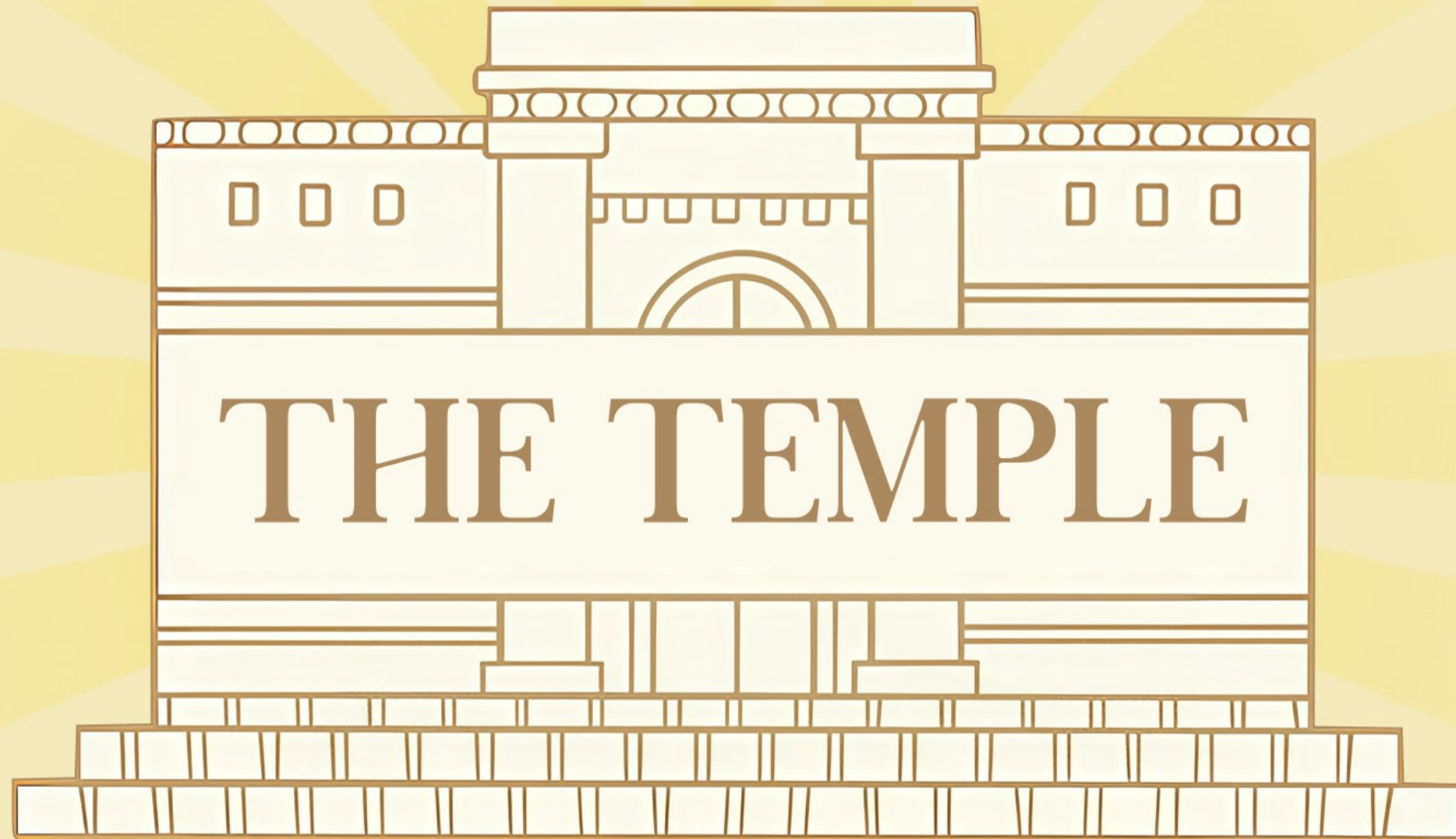
The altar of burnt sacrifices stood in the Temple Court. To the west of it stood the brass laver (for priestly washings) and to the north the place of ritual animal slaughter.

The Sanhedrin came out to teach the people from the Scriptures on this terrace (Hb. *he'l*) during the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles. It may have been here that the 12-year-old Jesus was found by his parents, "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46).

The Chamber of Hewn Stone housed the Sanhedrin council until c. A.D. 30.

The *soveg* (a low, latticed screen or railing) separated the temple courts from the Court of the Gentiles, prohibiting Gentiles or non-purified Jews from entry. Even Herod himself was unable to pass this point. Some interpreters believe that Paul alluded to this railing when he spoke of "the dividing wall of hostility" abolished by Christ (Eph. 2:14).

*“No alien may enter within
the balustrade around the
sanctuary and the enclosure.
Whoever is caught, on himself
shall he put blame for the
death which will ensue.”*



ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD