

Herod the Great



We Start with Antipater

DANIEL

- Rome names Hyrcanus II ethnarch and High Priest, but the real power behind the throne is an Idumaeen named Antipater.
- The Jews resented his presence almost as much as Rome's because the idea of being subject to an Idumaeen (a son of Edom) was reprehensible.



After Caesar's Assassination DANIEL

- Antipater and his son, Herod, showed their loyalty to the new regime of Brutus and Cassius by zealously collecting tribute.
- Herod was given the title “Procurator of Judea,” with the promise that he would one day be named king.
- Well, they chose the wrong side...

Battle of Philippi (42 B.C.)

DANIEL

When Antony and Octavius defeat Brutus and Cassius, a new regime comes to power.

Herod, ever the opportunist, quickly changes his loyalties and bribed his way to favor with Antony.



In 41 B.C.

DANIEL

- The Parthians attack and take Jerusalem, and they make Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus II, king and High Priest.
- **Herod is forced to flee to Rome.**
- There, he won the favor of Antony, who bestowed upon him the title, “King of the Jews,” which would only have meaning after the Parthians were driven out of Judea.

By 37 B.C.

DANIEL

- Herod is king; he would rule until his death in 1 B.C.
- We know him best from the Christmas story in Matthew 2 from his interaction with the Magi and his decree to murder all male children two years and under in Bethlehem.

Herod the Politician



When He Takes Jerusalem

DANIEL

- Hyrcanus II returns from Parthian exile, but because of disfigurement suffered there, he could not operate as High Priest.
- So, Herod appoints Hananiel of Babylon as High Priest.
- Not being a Jew, Herod dared not take the high priesthood, so he names Hananiel, a Zadokite descendant of Aaron.

In the Meantime

DANIEL

- Herod marries Mariamne, a Hasmonean princess, thus strengthening his claim to the throne.
- Her mother, Alexandra, resented Herod and determined to have her son (another Aristobulus) as High Priest.
- She even communicated with Cleopatra so she would influence Antony who would in turn put pressure on Herod.

She Was Successful!

DANIEL

Contrary to Jewish law, Hananiah was removed and Aristobulus was named High Priest.

However...



Herod Finds Out

DANIEL

- About the secret communications with Cleopatra, and he determines that Alexandra cannot be trusted.
- She is basically put on house arrest in the royal palace and constantly monitored.
- She once tried to escape to Egypt with her son in specially designed coffins, but one of Herod's servants uncovered the plot.

Aristobulus was a Threat

DANIEL

- As a Jew of the priestly line, he had an advantage which an Idumaeans could not attain.
- Aristobulus drowns while bathing in Jericho, and while Herod feigns great sorrow, Alexandra suspects foul play.
- Josephus' account of the incident has a continuity error, but he does ascribe the murder to Herod.

And So...

Alexandra Calls Cleopatra



And It Works!

DANIEL

- Antony commanded Herod to appear before him to answer for his crime.
- Herod could not defy Antony, so he planned to go to Egypt.
- Before he left, he asked his brother, Joseph, to look after his affairs, which included the provision that if he was sentenced to death, Mariamne was to be killed.

Word from Egypt

DANIEL

- Is that Herod had been executed, and Alexandra began making plans to secure the kingdom for her family.
- Joseph revealed Herod's command to Mariamne, and she began to aid her mother.
- Unfortunately for all those involved, reports of Herod's death were greatly exaggerated...

Herod Returns

DANIEL

- And he suspects the worst.
- Joseph is put to death without trial.
- Alexandra is imprisoned.
- For the moment, Mariamne escaped punishment; by all accounts, he seemed to truly love her.

Conflict in Rome

- Antony and Octavius begin a struggle for power in 32 B.C.
- Remember, Herod was the protégé of Antony, so he desired to support him in the struggle.
- On September 3, 31 B.C. Antony's forces fall to Octavius at the Battle of Actium, and Octavius emerges as the ruler of the Roman Empire.

Herod Meets Octavius

DANIEL

At Rhodes, and Josephus says that Herod boasted of his friendship with Antony and the support he gave him during the struggle, concluding with the observation that Octavius could observe the kind of person he is and the loyalty he would show to his benefactors, pledging equal loyalty to Octavius.

Octavius confirms Herod in the kingship of Judea.

Octavius' Victory

DANIEL

- Actually strengthened Herod's grip on Judea.
- Cleopatra had been given possessions in the region by Ptolemy, which passed into Herod's hands.
- When all was settled, Herod ruled a country equal in size to that which the Hasmoneans had at their peak.

Back to Mariamne

DANIEL

- When he left to meet with Octavius, Herod made similar arrangements for his wife that he did before if things went badly.
- Of course, Mariamne discovers the plan, and upon his return, she angrily confronts him.
- Herod responds by putting her to death on charges of adultery and attempt to poison.
- Alexandra was also put to death soon after.

Herod's Goodwill Efforts DANIEL

- He attempted to gain the goodwill of the Judeans by remitting a third part of their taxes, but negative feelings persisted.
- A contributing factor may have been the oath of allegiance the Jewish people were forced to pledge to both Rome and Herod.

Herod the Builder



Why Did Herod Build?

DANIEL

1. He loved grandeur and wanted to aggrandize himself to Rome.
2. He wanted to be appreciated by his Jewish subjects.
3. His paranoia drove him to build a number of fortresses.

Cities Rebuilt by Herod

DANIEL

- Samaria became Sebaste in honor of Augustus
- **Strato's Tower became Caesarea Maritima**
- Antipatris, northeast of Joppa
- Phasaelis in the Jordan Valley, north of Jericho
- Anthedon, became Agrippeion

Caesarea Maritima



Josephus on Caesarea:

DANIEL

“the king triumphed over nature and constructed a harbor larger than the Piraeus, including other deep roadsteads within its recesses.

Notwithstanding the totally recalcitrant nature of the site, he grappled with the difficulties so successfully, that the solidity of his masonry defied the sea, while its beauty was such as if no obstacle had existed.”





Herodium

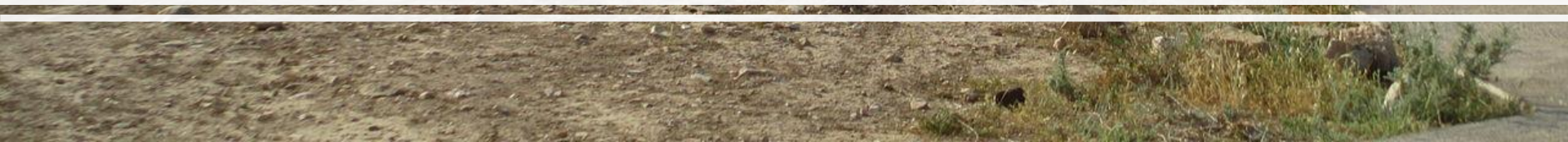








Alexandreion





Hyrkania



Machaerus





Masada









In 20/19 B.C.

DANIEL

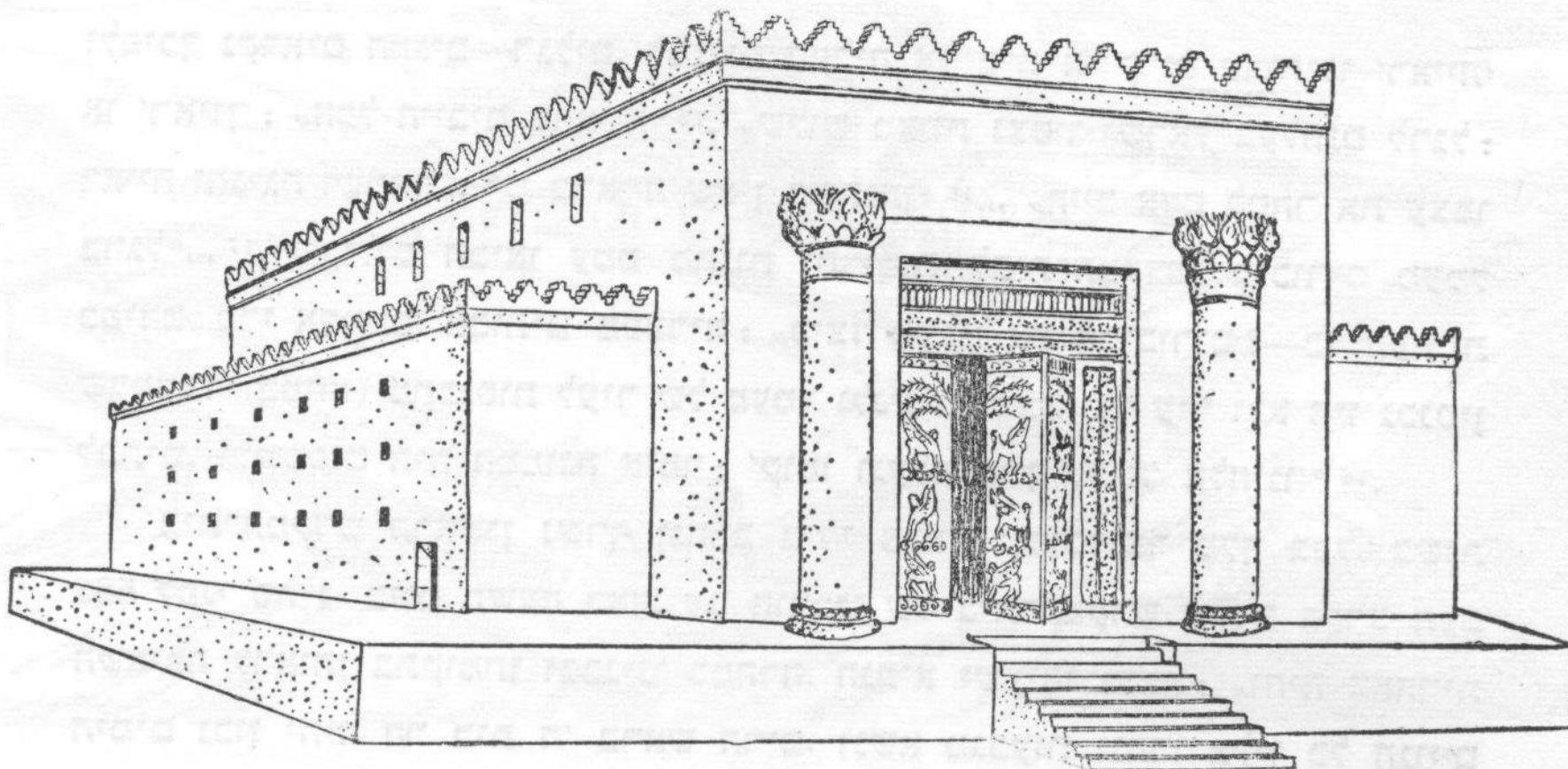
Herod began his greatest
building project:

The Temple in Jerusalem

Temple Construction

DANIEL

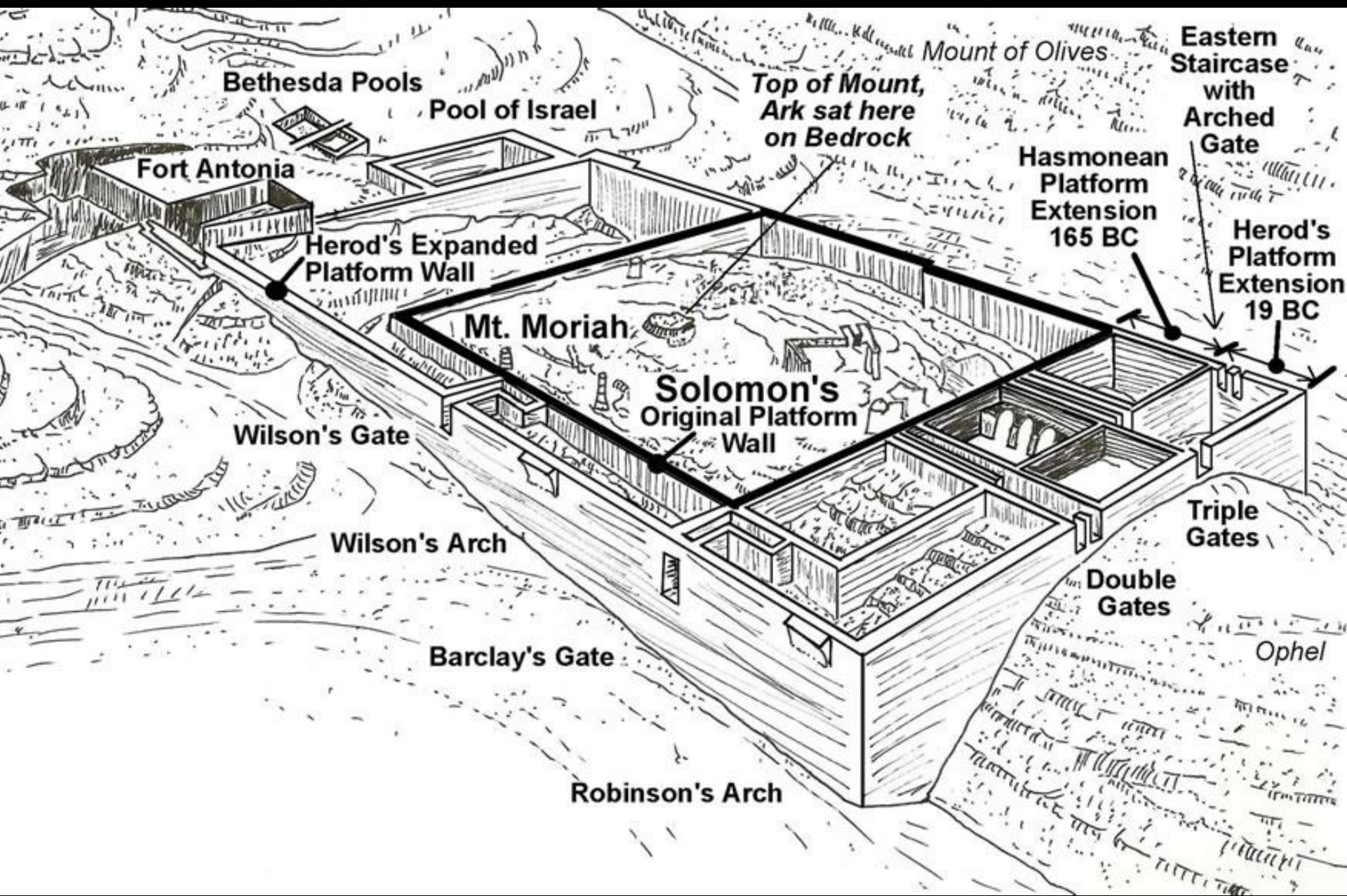
- The Temple proper was finished in 18 months with no interruption in the daily sacrifices.
- It took 8 more years to complete the courts.
- Work on the surrounding structures of the Temple were still going on in Jesus' day, and the Temple would not be completed until A.D. 64.
- The Romans would destroy it 6 years later.

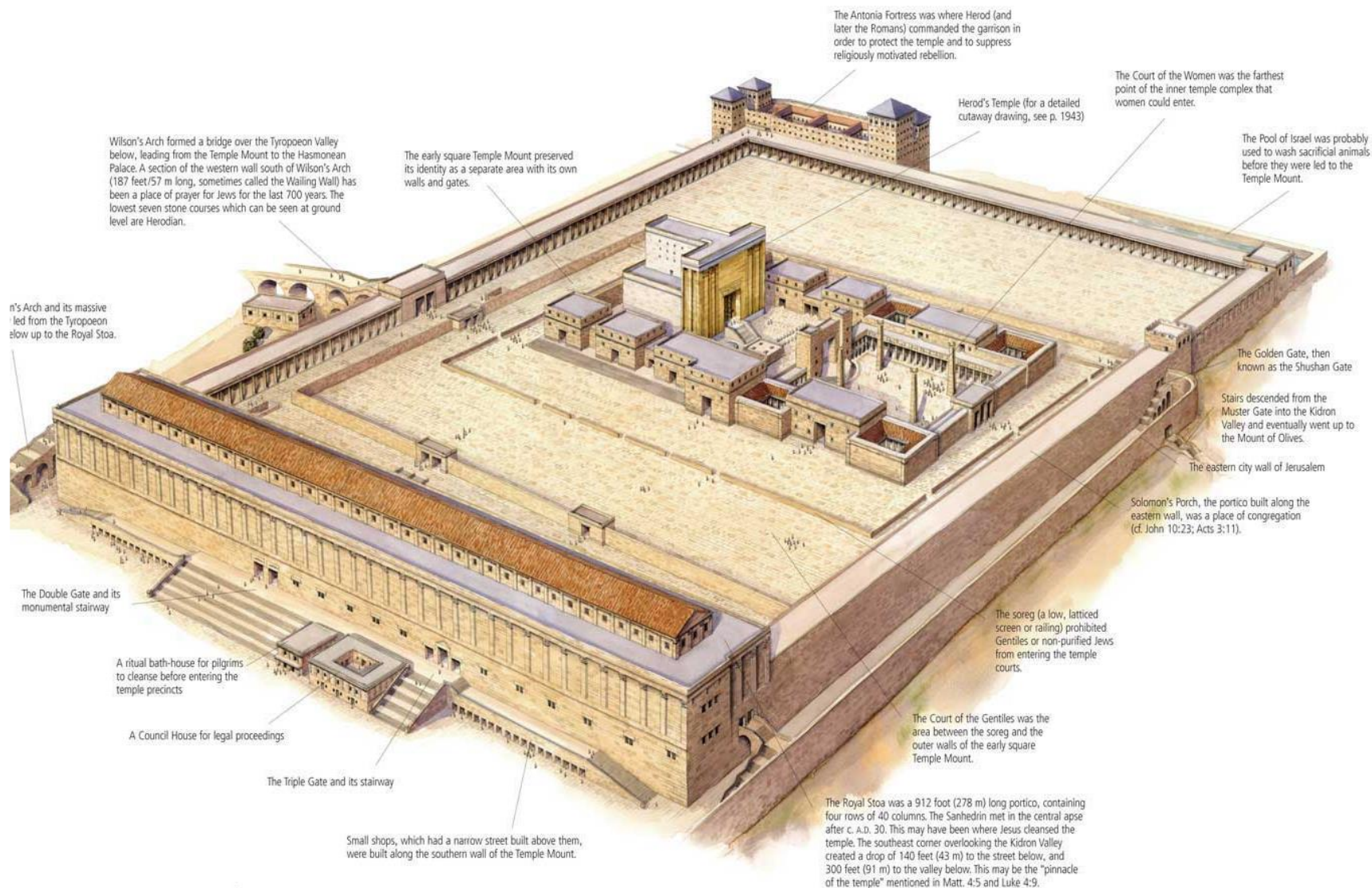


בית־המקדש הראשון—שיחזור

בכניסה אל בית־המקדש ניצבים שני עמודים—יכין ובוועז.







Herod's Paranoia



In Herod's Final Year

DANIEL

- His two sons from Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, who were educated in Rome, openly boasted about their ascendancy to power.
- Herod's son, Antipater, by his first wife, Doris, determined to eliminate his half-brothers.
- He brought charges of treason against them, and they were tried, convicted, and strangled to death.

What a Good Son...

DANIEL

- Of course, Antipater was later found guilty of attempting to poison Herod and was put to death.
- This led Caesar Augustus to reportedly quip:
“I would rather be Herod’s hog than his son.”

As Herod Nears Death

DANIEL

- He rewrites his will 6 times in the final years of his life.
- According to Josephus, his death was excruciating: internal pains, burning sensations, swelling of the feet, convulsions, a ravenous appetite, an ulcerated colon, venereal symptoms, and foul breath.

And So...

DANIEL

- Herod dies an ignoble death, hated by the people he ruled.
- He was at once a master architect who “defied nature” and at the same time, he was wickedness personified.
- But his impact in Israel lingers still today, as there are few places that you can visit in the land that have not been touched by Herod the Great.



Next Week:
—
**The Herodian
Dynasty**

DANIEL