

A Precedent from Antiquity for the Doors of a Masonic Lodge  
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Flavius Josephus's Antiquities of the Jews gives a detail about King Solomon's Temple so minute that it must have escaped notice by all but Masonic historians. In the section of Josephus's account of the building of King Solomon's Temple can be read these lines which have special meaning for us as Freemasons:

"The king also had a fine contrivance for an ascent to the upper room over the temple, and that was by steps in the thickness of its wall; for it had no large door on the east end, as the lower house had, *but the entrances were by the sides, through very small doors.*" (1)

Reading "very small doors," which were "by the sides," one is reminded of the Inner- and Outer Doors of a Masonic Lodge. Looking at visual reconstructions of King Solomon's Temple the ground floor entrance is typically represented as single and in the middle of the building's facade. Some Temple reconstructions represent a second floor, inside of which presumably was the "upper room" spoken of by Josephus, and where the small side doors recorded by Josephus were located.

Because they were inner doors they would not be visible in any imaginative reconstructions. Representations of the upper floor's plan are nonexistent or very hard to find, although plan views of the ground floor abound, and not everyone agrees the Temple had an upper floor. That would be a worthy object of research: to reconstruct a plan of the upper floor of the First Temple. If there actually was an upper floor then Freemasons didn't invent one in the 18th Century to fit the Fellow Craft narrative. What is the origin of the upper chamber tradition? Bible citations referring to the form of the Temple contribute to an answer:

1Kings 6:8 The door for the middle chamber [was] in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle [chamber], and out of the middle into the third.

Wherever the inner chamber was, it was definitely "up" according to the Bible. Familiar to Freemasons, 1 Kings 6:8 also specifically mentions a door "in the right side," which we presume was one of the "very small doors . . . by the side," mentioned by Josephus. A third chamber is noted in 1 Kings 6:8, which would require an inner wall and

door. The Bible goes on to describe what I take to be the *second* door mentioned by Josephus, that which leads to the Sanctum Sanctorum:

1K 6:31 And for the entering of the oracle he made doors [of] olive tree: the lintel [and] side posts [were] a fifth part [of the wall].

1Ki 6:32 The two doors also [were of] olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid [them] with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees.

1Ki 6:33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts [of] olive tree, a fourth part [of the wall].

1Ki 6:34 And the two doors [were of] fir tree: the two leaves of the one door [were] folding, and the two leaves of the other door [were] folding.

The rich description of ornamental details given in the Bible shouldn't distract from the point that the inner chamber of the Temple had *two doors*. The Bible suggests two doors to two rooms, unlike Josephus, who indicates that there were two separate doors to the same room. That in turn suggests the floor plan of a Masonic Lodge. Such a floor layout allows the same room to be used for two entrances, a practical matter given the symbolic nature of Masonic ceremonies. One can only enter through one door at a time, the second entrance reserved for a different occasion. A remarkable similarity between Josephus's description and modern Masonic facilities, more so than the Bible description.

At this point, as a researcher, one would do well to anticipate objections to Josephus as a source of historical fact. I will not address those objections about the possible corruption of Josephus's text allegedly by Christian dogmatists zealous to claim him as a witness to the ministry of Christ. That argument is interesting, but not relevant to the matter of the *two inner doors*. About a matter as mundane as the Temple doors it is improbable that Josephus's text concerning the physical details of the Temple were altered. What would be the motive?

A credible doubt concerning Josephus's account is the matter of dates. Josephus was born in the year 37 CE. According to historians, the Temple would have been completed in around 960 BCE and destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 or 586 BCE. That is a very long oral tradition concerning a detail which anyone but a Freemason would consider insignificant! Josephus would not necessarily have known by

reading the Bible, as the Bible account differs in particulars. What was the source of his knowledge?

The fact that there were two separate doors to the inner chamber of the Temple is significant to Masonry. It suggests either that, 1) there is a long tradition of Masonic Lodge building reaching back to antiquity, or that, 2) the founders of modern Freemasonry read Josephus in minute detail. In either case Josephus's writing on the subject of King Solomon's Temple deserves a place in the canon of Masonic literature.

To conclude on a note of harmony, the reader is referred to the following quote from the Bible, because the meaning of the two inner doors concerns speculative Freemasonry, not the academic sciences:

1Chronicles 28:11 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat.

Reference (1) Flavius Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews Book VIII, Chapter 3

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-8.htm>