

What was the Court of the Gentiles in the Jewish temple?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Court-of-the-Gentiles.html>

Herod's temple, destroyed along with the rest of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, contained four separate "courts," separated from one another and each designed for a different purpose: the Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women, the Court of Israel (or the Court of Men), and the Court of Priests. The Court of the Gentiles is referred to as "the outer court" in Revelation 11:2.

The Court of the Gentiles was the outermost courtyard and the only area of the temple where non-Jews were allowed. As its name implies, the Court of the Gentiles was accessible to Gentiles, foreigners, and those who were considered impure. There, worshippers could mill about, exchange money, and even buy animals for sacrifices. It was from the Court of the Gentiles that Jesus, on two occasions (John 2:11-12; Matthew 21:12-13), drove out the money changers, declaring, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers" (Matthew 21:13). The Court of the Women, the only area of the temple complex in which women could worship, contained the poor boxes. One of these boxes was where the poor widow offered her two mites (Luke 21:1-4). Ceremonially clean Jewish men could enter the Court of Israel, and the Court of Priests, where the altar stood, was accessible only to Levitical priests.

Non-Jews were allowed to enter the Court of the Gentiles, but they were forbidden to go any farther than the outer court. The inner temple courtyards were enclosed by a balustrade, and at the entrances to it notices were posted in both Greek and Latin, warning foreigners and uncircumcised persons that crossing into one of the other

courtyards was punishable by death. One of those ancient notices is now on display in a museum in Istanbul. On Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, some Jews stirred up a crowd and grabbed Paul in the temple, alleging that he had taken Trophimus, a Gentile, into one of the forbidden courtyards (Acts 21:27-29). Paul was innocent of the charge, but the mob beat him with the intent to kill him; it was the quick action of a Roman garrison commander that preserved Paul's life on that occasion (verses 30-34).