

1Kings 7:1 ¶ But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

1Kings 7:2 He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

1Kings 7:3 And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row.

1Kings 7:4 And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

1Kings 7:5 And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks.

After completing the temple I presume, it took Solomon 13 years to build his own home or palace. After reading through several translations, I am not sure if the "house of the forest of Lebanon" is the same as his palace. Some consider it to have been a separate building for storing weapons, but it would be odd to have such detailed description for a storage building. I tend to think it referenced the palace compound that included an area in which to store weapons. It was 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits tall or 150' long x 75' wide x 45' tall. As we continue to read this description, it becomes clear that the name "house of the forest of Lebanon" must have been a reference to the fact that so much cedar from Lebanon was used to build it. Gill made this observation: "The forty-five pillars set in the House of the Forest of Lebanon also gave the impression of being in a majestic forest."

I don't think I am going to try to decipher all of this description. I will only make comments along the way and use helpful quotes from commentaries.

1Kings 7:6 And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them.

1Kings 7:7 Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.

1Kings 7:8 And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch.

"porch" = a vestibule (as bound to the building)

The Hebrew for the word "porch" makes me think that the "porch of pillars" and the "porch for the throne" were separate buildings but connected to Solomon's palace. It seems that the "porch of the throne" served as the courthouse so to speak. It also seems that his living quarters were in a separate building to the living quarters he built for his wife, Pharaoh's daughter.

JFB offers this explanation: "On the one side of this great hall was the king's house; and on the other the harem or royal apartments for Pharaoh's daughter

(Esther 2:3, 9). This arrangement of the palace accords with the Oriental style of building, according to which a great mansion always consists of three divisions, or separate houses — all connected by doors and passages — the men dwelling at one extremity, the women of the family at the other, while public rooms occupy the central part of the building.”

1Kings 7:9 All these *were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court.*

1Kings 7:10 And the foundation *was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.*

1Kings 7:11 And above *were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.*

1Kings 7:12 And the great court round about *was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house.*

It is emphasized that the stones used in constructing these buildings were of the highest quality and of great size.

1Kings 7:13 ¶ And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

1Kings 7:14 He *was a widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.*

At some point, Solomon sent for Hiram of Tyre, the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali and a man of Tyre. He was evidently well known for making things out of brass. In fact, we are told that he was “filled” with wisdom, skill and understanding to work in brass. This tells me that this was a God-given ability since it is God that gifts us with our abilities. He certainly didn’t fill himself up with such ability. The Chronicler tells us that he was skilled in many areas.

2 Chronicles 2:13–14 “And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding...skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.”

1Kings 7:15 For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

1Kings 7:16 And he made two chapters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter *was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits:*

1Kings 7:17 And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters which *were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter.*

1Kings 7:18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one

network, to cover the chapters that *were* upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

1Kings 7:19 And the chapters that *were* upon the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

1Kings 7:20 And the chapters upon the two pillars *had pomegranates* also above, over against the belly which *was* by the network: and the pomegranates *were* two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.

1Kings 7:21 And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

1Kings 7:22 And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

This section describes the making of the two great pillars that stood in the front of the temple that were called Jachin and Boaz and were placed in front of the temple on the right and left respectively. The wording both here and in Chronicles indicates that the columns were freestanding.

2 Chronicles 3:17 "And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz."

Each column was 18 cubits or 27' tall and topped with a capital that was 5 cubits or 11.5' tall, for a total of 23 cubits or 38.5' tall. There is a discrepancy with the Chronicler who declares the pillars to be 35 cubits tall.

2 Chronicles 3:15 "Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits."

Jeremiah tells us that the pillars were hollow.

*Jeremiah 52:17–21 "Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon....The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. And concerning the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof was four fingers: **it was hollow.**"*

JFB notes that the names of the pillars represented stability and strength.

I liked this quote used by Guzik: "In practical terms the pillars were to be an ever-present reminder to each successive king of the fact that he was ruling by Gods appointment and by his grace, and that in God lay his strength. Just so ought believers today to be ever mindful of Gods grace in their lives and of their utter dependence on him." (Patterson and Austel)

1Kings 7:23 And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of

thirty cubits did compass it round about.

1Kings 7:24 And under the brim of it round about *there were* knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast.

1Kings 7:25 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

1Kings 7:26 And it *was* an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

JFB provides a good explanatory note on this section and the next: "The molten sea was an immense semicircular vase, measuring seventeen and a half feet in diameter, and being eight and three-fourths feet in depth. This, at three and a half inches in thickness, could not weigh less than from twenty-five to thirty tons in one solid casting — and held from sixteen thousand to twenty thousand gallons of water. The brim was all carved with lily work or flowers; and oxen were carved or cut on the outside all round, to the number of three hundred; and it stood on a pedestal of twelve oxen. These oxen must have been of considerable size, like the Assyrian bulls, so that their corresponding legs would give thickness or strength to support so great a weight for, when the vessel was filled with water, the whole weight would be about one hundred tons."

1Kings 7:27 And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it.

1Kings 7:28 And the work of the bases *was* on this *manner*: they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges:

1Kings 7:29 And on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work.

1Kings 7:30 And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.

1Kings 7:31 And the mouth of it within the chapter and above *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round *after* the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it *were* gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round.

1Kings 7:32 And under the borders *were* four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels *were* joined to the base: and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit.

1Kings 7:33 And the work of the wheels *was* like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten.

1Kings 7:34 And *there were* four undersetters to the four corners of one base: and the undersetters *were* of the very base itself.

1Kings 7:35 And in the top of the base *was* *there* a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof *were* of the same.

1Kings 7:36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.

1Kings 7:37 After this *manner* he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, *and* one size.

1Kings 7:38 Then made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: *and* every laver was four cubits: *and* upon every one of the ten bases one laver.

1Kings 7:39 And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.

40 baths = around 230-360 gallons depending on the resource

The NIV Commentary explains: "The Sea, together with the ten movable basins, served as the basin had in the tabernacle, for ceremonial cleansing. The Sea was used by the priests for their washing, while the basins were used for the rinsing of the burnt offerings (2Ch 4:6). The ceremonial stipulations for the priesthood with regard to the cleansing were intended to teach a truth that transcends mere ritualism, namely, that one who would approach God and serve him needs to be cleansed from the pollution of the world."

2Chronicles 4:6 He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

1Kings 7:40 And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD:

1Kings 7:41 The two pillars, and the *two* bowls of the chapiters that *were* on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars;

1Kings 7:42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, *even* two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* upon the pillars;

1Kings 7:43 And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;

1Kings 7:44 And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;

1Kings 7:45 And the pots, and the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, *were* of bright brass.

1Kings 7:46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

1Kings 7:47 And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.

This section summarizes all of the items of brass made by Hiram.

The NIV Commentary provides information on the use of some of the smaller items: "The basins are small vessels used for carrying away the ashes from the

altar. The shovels were for the actual removal of the ashes from the altar, and the sprinkling bowls were large bowls used at the altar of burnt offering, probably for catching blood.”

The casting was done in the clay soil of the plain of Jordan between Succoth and Zarthan. It seems that the total weight of these items wasn't calculated because of the tremendous quantity used.

Again, the NIV Commentary adds to our understanding: “Zarethan is not as certainly located but is perhaps downstream on the Jabbok River, closer to the Jordan. This general area shows abundant evidence of having been an active center of metallurgy during the period of the Hebrew monarchy. There is an abundance of good clay; and with available wood for charcoal and a prevalent north wind, this area was an ideal center for metalsmiths.”

1Kings 7:48 ¶ And Solomon made all the vessels that *pertained* unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread *was*,

1Kings 7:49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right *side*, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold,

1Kings 7:50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, *both* for the doors of the inner house, the most holy *place*, and for the doors of the house, *to wit*, of the temple.

It is noted that all the furnishings, even the hinges of the doors, used inside the temple were made of gold.

1Kings 7:51 So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; *even* the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

After Solomon saw that all the work for the temple was completed, he brought in the items that David had gathered and dedicated for use there and put them in the temple treasury.