

1 Kings 7

Written by K B Napier
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Verses 1-3

1.

But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

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.

3.

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

Solomon built his own palace at the same time as he saw to the building of the Temple. It took him almost twice as long to complete his palace. The reason is simple – God gave him exact details to follow for the Temple, but Solomon relied on his own wishes to build his own residence. As with the Temple, he bought and used Lebanese cedar and fir. The relevant size is given, and we see that both the Temple and the palace were built upon solid stone, the palace, however, seems to have made more use of cedar pillars and joists, without gold covering.

Verses 4-7

1.

And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

2.

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

3.

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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.

4.

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.

Windows were built into the walls, three rows of them, giving much light. Like the windows, all doors were square. A porch was built using a large number of cedar pillars, topped by 'thick' beams. A separate porch, with cedar floor, was made to house his throne, used when he judged legal and religious cases.

Verses 8-12

1.

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.

2.

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.

3.

And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.

4.

And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.

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5.

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.

Solomon's personal quarters had its own courtyard, also built of cedar. A similar building, with porch and courtyard, was built for his new wife, the Pharaoh's daughter. The outer walls of the palace consisted of expensive cut stones. As a social note we see that the stonemasons used saws to cut the stones. The foundation stones seem to have been very large - about fifteen feet square - and just as costly. The outer porch roofs were held up by huge stones and cedar beams. As the Temple is now mentioned it is possible that God gave the plans for the palace, as well as for the Temple. However, this is conjecture.

Verses 13-17

1.

And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

2.

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.

3.

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

4.

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:

5.

And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters which were upon the top

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of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter.

The Hiram in verse 13 is not the king of Tyre, but an architect-engineer of the same name, descended from a son of Jacob. Hiram was hired to do a great deal of work on and in the finished Temple. Did he make the items himself (his own father was an artisan in brass/bronze)? It is probable that he designed them and artisans actually crafted them in a variety of metals and stones, etc., though we are told that Hiram himself was skilled in brass/bronze work. Huge pillars of bronze were made, together with capitals (chapters) on top of each pillar, made from molten bronze poured into molds of clay. Each molded piece was about eight feet tall. The capitals were covered in artwork resembling nets or lattice-work, with chain effects, hung like swathes around each pillar; there were seven of these artifacts around the top of each pillar.

Verses 18-21

1.

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.

2.

And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

3.

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.

4.

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.

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The net-effect tops also had pomegranates above the network effects. These were depictions of the fruit, set above the artwork (there was a huge number of them). Added to these were depictions of lilies. The “belly” refers to the mid-part of the lattice work. The two huge pillars were set up in the Temple porch. Hiram named each pillar – one was Jachin (possibly after the fourth son of Simeon, but there are two other possibilities) and the other was Boaz (possibly after one of David’s ancestors).

Verses 22-26

1.

And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

2.

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.

3.

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.

4.

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.

5.

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.

The pillars thus completed, Hiram then designed and had made a “molten sea” or *yatsaq*, about fifteen feet in diameter. It was a massive bowl cast in bronze (hence ‘molten’) containing water (‘sea’). A thick cord surrounded the bowl, possibly for the same reason as a chain was put between the door and the Ark – to stop anyone coming closer. The underneath of the brim was

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covered in knops or rounded shapes, ten of them for every cubit, and in two rows, cast at the same time as the bowl itself and so part of the original shape.

This large bowl, about eight feet in depth, stood on twelve oxen looking outwards. There were three each facing the points of the compass, e.g. three facing north, etc. The bowl was a stupendous three to four inches in thickness. The brim itself had castings of lilies. The bowl contained "two thousand baths". That is, 80,000 litres (though some rabbinical scholars halve this amount).

Verses 27-34

1.

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.

2.

And the work of the bases was on this manner: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges:

3.

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.

4.

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.

5.

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.

6.

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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.

7.

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.

8.

And there were four undersetters to the four corners of one base: and the undersetters were of the very base itself.

Hiram went on to make "ten bases" on which stood extra bowls. Each base was about six feet square and about 3-5 feet tall. Each had a wide border with depictions cast into it of lions, oxen and cherubim. The lower part of each base was bevelled and had four bronze wheels on bronze axles set into supports of bronze castings fixed to the bowl. Each wheel was about three feet in diameter looking like the wheel of a chariot, all cast in molds.

Verses 35-39

1.

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.

2.

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.

3.

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

4.

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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.

5.

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.

Verses 35 and 36 appear to repeat earlier descriptions. Each base was cast from one mold (probably clay). After all this Hiram made ten smaller bronze lavers or bowls, which stood on top of the ten cast bases, and each contained “forty baths” or about 1600 litres of water. Borders on each laver had depictions of palm trees, lions and cherubs. Five of these lavers were positioned to the right of the Temple, and five on the left side. The huge ‘sea’ was positioned on the right of the Temple courtyard, facing south-east.

Verses 40-45

1.

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:

2.

The two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapters that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapters which were upon the top of the pillars;

3.

And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapters that were upon the pillars;

4.

And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;

5.

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And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;

6.

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.

These verses are a summation of previous verses. The 'shovels' were for the removal of ashes. When Hiram completed all the items, his work for Solomon was finished. And everything was made of polished bronze.

Verses 46-51

1.

In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

2.

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

3.

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,

4.

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,

5.

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.

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6.

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.

The foundry work and ornamentation were made in the Jordan valley, between Succoth and Zarthan, where there was plenty of clay. Solomon did not have the individual bronze pieces weighed, because there were too many (and probably many more than are listed in the text). He checked and commanded everything made, including the large candlesticks standing before the Holy of Holies – five on each side – and the flowers, oil lamps and tongs, all made of gold. Everything down to the smallest detail was checked and double-checked... solid gold bowls, snuffers, spoons, basins, door hinges and ‘censers’ (fire pans).

The work on both palace and Temple were then finished. Solomon brought in to the Temple the items dedicated to the future Temple by his father, David, including silverware. These were all kept in the treasury room of the Temple.

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