

1 Kings Chapter 7 Continued

Verses 23-39: The “molten sea” was cast in one bronze piece by Hiram. It was set upon “twelve” bronze “oxen” (or bulls), which were later removed by Ahaz who replaced them with a stone base (2 Kings 16:17). “The sea” took the place of the laver of the tabernacle and was used for the ritual washing of the priests. Five moveable bronze basins stood on either side of the molten sea, which were used for the rinsing of the burnt offerings (Exodus 30:17-21 with 2 Chron. 4:6). The quantity of water held by the molten sea is given here as “two thousand baths,” probably the correct figure in the light of its measurements. The “three thousand baths” (of 2 Chron. 4:5), was probably miscopied.

1 Kings 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."

“Molten sea”: A huge circular bronze basin corresponding to the laver of the tabernacle. According to (verse 26), this great basin’s capacity was about 12,000 gallons (see note on 2 Chron. 4:5). The sea stood in the courtyard on the temple’s southeast side and provided the priests water to wash themselves and their sacrifices (2 Chron. 4:5). It probably also supplied water for the 10 movable basins (verses 38-39; see note on 2 Chron. 4:2).

This is a tremendous brass bowl for water for the oblations. This is called a sea, because it is so big. It is made in the shape of a circle. This is 7-1/2 feet deep, the diameter is 15 feet across and it is approximately 45 feet in circumference. This is the size of a small swimming pool.

1 Kings 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."

Of an oval form, and therefore the Targum calls them figures of eggs. In (2 Chron. 4:3), they are said to have the similitude of oxen, being like the heads of oxen, and the other parts oval. Or these were in the form of gourds, as sometimes the word is rendered, (2 Kings 4:39). These had on them the figures of the heads of oxen, and might serve as cocks to let out the water.

"Ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about": It; and as the circumference was thirty cubits, there must be three hundred of these in the circuit.

"The knops were cast in two rows when it was cast": For these were cast together with the sea, and being in two rows, there must be in all six hundred of them.

It seemed this bowl had a lip turned under all around. This too, was decorated with knops. There appears to be two rows of these knops all the way around.

1 Kings 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:

“Twelve oxen”: Hiram arranged 3 oxen facing in each of the 4 directions of the compass to support the sea (see note on 2 Chron. 4:4).

These oxen were symbolically the bearers of the burden. The heads of the animals were facing outward toward the people. There were three on each of the four sides.

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

“Two thousand baths” (see note on 2 Chron. 4:5).

The brass was as thick as the width of an adult's hand. A bath is the same as a little over 7 gallons. This means there would be over 14,000 gallons of water in this. It was decorated around the edge with lilies.

Verses 27-37: Hiram made 10 movable stands of bronze 6 feet square and 4.5 feet high. Each consisted of 4 upright corner poles joined together by square panels. For mobility, the stands rode on 4 wheels of bronze (verse 30).

To hold the basins of water needed to clean the sacrificial animals, Solomon had Hiram make “ten carts of bronze”. Even these utilitarian objects were things of beauty and were placed symmetrically on the two sides of the Sea (2 Chron. 4:6). This beauty reflected the majesty and glory of God. Those who engage in the arts have an opportunity to likewise express God’s majesty and glory.

1 Kings 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."

Seats, stands, or settles for the ten lavers after mentioned.

"Four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof; as broad as it was long, and so a square, that the laver might stand firm upon it.

"And three cubits the height of it": From the ground plates to the surface, that the priests might be able to reach the layers, and wash their sacrifices.

These bases were 6 feet long and 6 feet wide. They were 4-1/2 feet high. "Brass" symbolizes judgment.

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

The following was the form in which they were made.

"They had borders; plates of brass all around them, which enclosed them.

"And the borders were between the ledges": Which were short staves or bars of brass, that stood upright all around, like the staves of a cart on each side, or the rails of a balcony, only in double rows; and between these were the borders or plates of brass.

1 Kings 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."

The figures of them, for ornament sake; the cherubim, being distinguished from lions and oxen might be figures of men, or else of eagles, as Josephus (see Ezek. 1:10).

"And upon the ledges there was a base above": A flat piece of brass laid upon the top of the staves or bars.

"And beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work": These, according to Dr. Lightfoot, whom I chiefly follow in this account, were shelving plates of brass at the bottom of the borders and bars, where the priests washed the sacrifice. The filth of which ran off the easier, through the angle of them.

This is speaking of the decorations between the ledges that hold up the laver.

1 Kings 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."

These were flat pieces or planks of brass on which the wheels stood, so they were not on the bare floor. So these wheels seem only to serve as supporters, not to carry the laver from place to place, as is usually said. These were not like chariot wheels, on two sides of the carriage, but set one at each square. Besides, when the lavers were placed upon them, they were fixed in a certain place (1 Kings 7:39).

"And the four corners thereof had undersetters": Or "shoulders", or pillars, which were placed on the plates of brass where the wheels were. They served with them to support the lavers when laid upon the bases, and so were of the same use as men's shoulders, to bear burdens on them.

"Under the layer were undersetters molten": Cast as, and when and where, the bases were, and the plates on which they stood. This explains the use they were of, being under the laver; these pillars stood at the four corners of the base.

"At the side of every addition": Made of thin work (1 Kings 7:29). They stood by the side of, or within side, the sloping shelves.

The water within this laver would get dirty and the wheels were to move it out, so it could be emptied and refilled.

1 Kings 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 a half: and also upon the mouth of it [were] gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round."

On the lid of the base rose up a lesser base called the chapter, which was circular, like a coronet as the word signifies. The inside of which was hollow, for the lower part of the laver to rest in. This ascended straight up half a cubit, and then widening, went up half a cubit more, and so in its whole height, as here a cubit. The circuit or circumference of which is called the mouth of the base, into which the feet of the laver were set, the measure of which is next given.

"But the mouth thereof was round, after the work of the base, a cubit and a half; which was either the circumference or the diameter of it; one should think the latter.

"And also upon the mouth of it were gravings, with their borders, four square, not round": Though the mouth was round, the border of it was four square, which had figures, engraved thereon, perhaps the same as on the other borders, lions, oxen, and cherubim.

These were not round like the larger laver, but were made like a wagon. Even these were decorated with the engravings.

1 Kings 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."

Not under the borders last mentioned, but those (n 1 Kings 7:29).

"And the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base": to the four sides of it.

"And the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit": That is, from the plate of brass on which it stood, to the axis or semicircle of it. So that the highest part of the ring being also a cubit and a half, reached to the top of the base, it being but three cubits high (1 Kings 7:27.)

The wheels were 27 inches high. They were connected together under the base by axles.

1 Kings 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."

In the same form and fashion as one of them; the Targum is.

"Like a chariot of glory" a splendid one, curiously wrought; unless reference is had in it to the chariot of Ezekiel's vision:

"Their axle trees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten": Cast together when the base was.

These were made for use in the temple, and they were decorated like the other fixtures in the temple. This entire thing was made of molten brass. These wheels were made to move like a chariot or wagon.

1 Kings 7:34 "And [there were] four undersettors to the four corners of one base: [and] the undersettors [were] of the very base itself."

Or pillars (as in 1 Kings 7:30).

"And the undersettors were of the base itself": They were cast together, and of the same piece of metal with it.

This is speaking of a reinforcement coming up from the base and covering the corners, where the most stress would be.

1 Kings 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."

The same with the chapter (1 Kings 7:31), which rose up straight half a cubit, and widening upwards half a cubit more, here called the round compass of it.

"And on the top of the base, the ledges thereof and the borders thereof, were of the same": Of the same piece of brass with the base, all being cast together.

It seems that inside this flat sided wagon of brass, there was a circular bowl which was 3/4 of a foot deep.

1 Kings 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."

In this, and the preceding verse, a different word is used, translated "ledges", from that in (1 Kings 7:28). The Targum renders it axle trees; as if the axle trees of the wheels, and the borders, circumferences, and rings of them, were meant, in which were the following engravings. It literally signifies hands or handles; and Procopius Gazaeus says, that the bases had, in the upper part of them, forms of hands holding a circle like a crown.

"He graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one": These figures were made as large as the plates of the ledges, and the borders, would allow room for.

"And the addition round about": Which were sloping shelves of brass around the base (1 Kings 7:29), these were ornamented in like manner.

Everything that was visible had been engraved for beauty.

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

This was the form and fashion of them as above described.

"All of them had one casting, one measure, and one size": They were all cast into the same mold, and were exactly alike in their form, figures, and size. "All of them had one casting, one measure, and one size": They were all cast into the same mold, and were exactly alike in their form, figures, and size. Each stand of bronze was 6 feet square and 4.5 feet high. Each consisted of 4 upright corner poles joined together by 7 square panels. For mobility, the stands rode on 4 wheels of bronze (verse 30).

1 Kings 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."

"Lavers": Hiram made 10 bronze basins as water containers for the stands. Each measured 6 feet across and held about 240 gallons of water.

This is explaining that all ten of them were the very same size, made the very same way.

1 Kings 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."

"On the right side", i.e. in the south side, as expressed in the end of the verse, and as the right side is used above, see (1 Kings 6:8 Psalm 89:12).

"On the right side of the house"; not within the house, but in the priests' court, where they washed either their hands or feet, or the parts of the sacrifices. On the left side of the house, i.e. on the north side; for this is here opposed to the right or south side.

"Over against the south", i.e. in the south-east part, where the offerings were prepared.

Verses 40-47: These verses contain a summary of the work done by "Hiram" the craftsman. The account here does not mention the brass altar (2 Chron. 4:1; see the note on 2 Chron. 2:14).

All the "furnishings" correspond to virtually identical utensils in the tabernacle. King "David" had prepared and dedicated these furnishings for "temple" service (2 Sam. 8:11; 1 Chron. 22:14; 29:1-9). The "treasuries" were probably the rooms of the temple in the surrounding structure (6:5-6).

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

“The shovels and the basins”: Shovels were used to scoop up the ashes that were then emptied into the basins for disposal. The same tools served the same purpose in the tabernacle (Exodus 27:3).

The lavers are not the ten before mentioned, of the make of which an account is before given; but these, according to Jarchi and Ben Gersom, are the same with the pots (1 Kings 7:45). And so they are called (in 2 Chron. 4:11), the use of which, as they say, was to put the ashes of the altar into. As the "shovels", next mentioned, were a sort of besoms to sweep them off, and the "basins" were to receive the blood of the sacrifices, and sprinkle it. No mention is here made of the altar of brass he made (but is in 2 Chron. 4:11). Or of the fleshhooks to take the flesh out of the pots (as in 2 Chron. 4:16).

"So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord": What he undertook, and was employed in, he finished, which were all works of brass. Of which a recapitulation is made in the following verses to the end of (verse 45), where they are said to be made of "bright brass", free of all dross and rust. "Good", as the Targum, even the best brass they were made of. The brass David took from Hadarezer (1 Chron. 18:8), which Josephus too much magnifies, when he says it was better than gold.

All of the utensils used in the outer court, where the sea was, were made of brass. "Brass" signifies judgment. These shovels were for taking away the ashes from the brazen altar. The basins were for the water. Hiram finished his work in the brass.

1 Kings 7:41-45 "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;" "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;" "And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases;" "And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea;" "And the pots, and the shovels, and the basins: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, [were of] bright brass."

From (verses 41 to 45), is a re-cap of all the things made by Hiram for use in the temple service.

“Bright brass”: I.e., bronze polished to a high shine.

All of these are made of brass, so they could not be used in the Holy Place, or in the Most Holy Place. These were in the first place, as you entered from the porch.

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

“Between Succoth and Zarthan”: Succoth was located on the east side of the Jordan River just north of the Jabbok River (Gen. 33:17; Josh. 13:27; Judges 8:4-5). Zarthan was nearby. This location was conducive to good metallurgy, because it abounded in clay suitable for mold and lay close to a source of charcoal for heat, namely the forests across the Jordan.

This was in the low area near the Jordan River. This area was probably chosen, because the sand or clay was the kind needed for this type of work. The names of the towns given here, are explaining that this graving was done near the old ford for river crossing. This was done on the western side of the Jordan because it would have been truly difficult to cross the Jordan with some of these extremely heavy items.

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

The brass for these vessels had (1 Chron. 18:8), been taken by David from Tibhath and Chun, cities of the territory of Zobah, and laid up with other stores for the purpose of the Temple. How these cities were so rich in brass we are not told; but there are very ancient copper-mines, once worked by the Egyptians, in the Sinaitic peninsula. And the allusions to mining of various kinds (in Job 28:1-11), perhaps belonging to the time of Solomon, are very striking.

It would have been a monumental task to weigh all of this brass. The only way they could have done it, was weigh the amount they used. They could not have found anything capable of weighing things like the sea.

Verses 48-50: These are items for the Holy Place of the temple. "The altar of gold" replaced the altar of incense in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:2-4).

"The table of Gold" was equivalent to the table of the showbread (Exodus 25:23-40). Although only one table is mentioned here, there were actually 10 such tables (2 Chron. 4:8). Apparently the 10, together with their articles, were considered as one unit (2 Chron. 29:18). Instead of the one golden lampstand of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-40), 10 lampstands were set in the Holy Place of the temple.

1 Kings 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 showbread [was],"

"Bright brass": The altar of incense stood in front of the Most Holy Place (Exodus 30:1-4).

"The altar of gold": The table on which the bread of the Presence was placed, which the Law required to be continually in God's presence (Exodus 25:30).

These items had to have nothing showing but the pure gold, because they were in the presence of God. The "showbread" symbolized the Lord Jesus, who was the bread of life.

1 Kings 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,"

"Candlesticks": Ten golden candlesticks standing directly in front of the Most Holy Place, five on either side of the doors, provided a corridor of light.

These candlesticks bring forth the light, symbolic of Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the world. This is really saying that there were ten candlesticks. It is not saying ten flutes on one candlestick. This is just saying there were ten candlesticks, and each of these candlesticks probably, had the seven flutes on them. The number "ten" has to do with world government. This just means that the Lord has enough light for the world. Everything in the near presence of God is pure gold, or 24 karat gold overlaid.

1 Kings 7:50 "And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basins, 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."

To keep the oil in.

"And the snuffers": To trim the lamps with; though some interpret the word of musical instruments, as the Targum, of psalteries.

"And the basins": Which were to receive the blood of the sacrifices. And, Ben Gersom thinks, particularly the blood of those that were brought into the sanctuary (see Heb. 13:11). There were a hundred of them (2 Chron. 4:8).

"And the spoons": Which held the incense.

"And the censers of pure gold": With which the coals were carried from one altar to another, on which the incense was burnt. Not only those but all the other vessels were 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": The Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, the hinges of the doors of each, on which they were hung, and turned, were of gold. So grand and magnificent was this edifice, and so liberal was Solomon in the building of it.

These are the smaller instruments used in the service. They must all be gold. Even the hinges on the doors entering into the Holy of Holies must be made of pure gold.

1 Kings 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."

"David ... had dedicated": Solomon deposited that which David had dedicated to the Lord (2 Sam. 8:7-12), in the side rooms of the temple.

"The treasures" were probably stored in one of the side chambers of the temple (6:5-10).

These were speaking of the things used in the tabernacle in the worship services. "Silver" means redemption and had been a part of the items in the Holy Place in the tabernacle. These were stored in the temple treasury.

1 Kings Chapter 7 Continued Questions

1. How big was the molten sea?
2. Why was it called a sea?
3. What was it for?
4. This is the size of a small _____ pool.
5. What were the decorations on the sea?
6. How many oxen were under the sea?
7. What were these oxen symbolically?
8. The brass it was made of was how thick?
9. How big is a bath?
10. How many gallons of water would it hold?
11. The bases made of what?
12. Describe the size of the bases?
13. What were between the ledges of the base?
14. How many wheels did each base have?
15. What were the wheels connected to?
16. The wheels made this move like what?
17. How many layers of brass did he make?
18. How much did each laver hold?
19. Where was the sea located?
20. What were the utensils made of, that were used in the outer court?
21. Who made the lavers and the utensils?
22. Where had he made these things?
23. Why was that place chosen?
24. The things used in the Holy of Holies were made of what?

25. What does the "showbread" symbolize?
26. Who does the light in the candlesticks symbolize?
27. What did they do with the things David furnished?