

1 Kings Chapter 7

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

“Thirteen years”: Having built the house for the Lord, Solomon then built one for himself. Solomon’s “house” was a complex of structures that took almost twice as long to build as the temple. The time involved was probably because there was not the same preparation for building or urgency as for the national place of worship. House refers to the entire complex of five buildings.

According to (9:10), Solomon had apparently finished the temple before undertaking the construction of his palace and its surrounding building, because 20 years is given as the time for the whole project. Solomon had put God’s house before that of his own (by way of contrast, see Hag. 1:4). The architectural descriptions of the temple and the various edifices of the palace complex have been illuminated by ongoing archaeological excavations in Syro-Palestine and southern Turkey.

This is a break from the information about the temple and its contents. Perhaps the difference in the time it took to build his own palace is the difference in the size. Solomon had a large group of people who lived in his house, and the house necessarily had to be huge. The main reason for the house of the LORD being finished first was that his attention was mostly on the temple. The finishing of his own house was of less importance to him.

Verses 2-8: “The house of the forest of Lebanon”: As a part of the palace complex, Solomon also built this large rectangular building, 150 foot long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It was built of a “forest” of cedar pillars from Lebanon. Three rows of cedar columns supported trimmed cedar beams and a cedar roof.

The sequence of building in the palace complex is given in the order of approach to the palace

Verses 2-5: “The house of the forest of Lebanon”, apparently used as an armory (10:16-17 with Isa. 22:8);

Verse 6: “the porch of pillars”, apparently, a colonnaded entry hall;

Verse 7: The porch of “judgment”, or throne hall, used as a place of justice where the king personally heard problem cases;

Verse 8: A special palace for “Pharaoh’s daughter” (9:24 and the note on 3:1).

The chronicler adds that Pharaoh’s daughter was quartered in a private residence due to the sacredness of Solomon’s palace, because of its reception of the Ark of God (2 Chron. 8:11; see further the note on 1 Sam. 4:3).

Everything except the roofs of Solomon's palace complex was built of "costly stones," including the "foundation." Palestinian limestone can be cut with a saw when freshly quarried; it hardens upon exposure to the elements.

1 Kings 7:2 "He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof [was] a 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."

Besides the temple, his own palace and the queen's; so called. Not because was it built on Mount Lebanon, which lay at the northern border of the land, at a great distance from Jerusalem, whereas this was both a magazine of arms, and a court of judicature (1 Kings 7:7; see 1 Kings 10:17). Neither of which can be supposed to be far from Jerusalem. But because not only was it built of the cedars of Lebanon, but in a situation, and among groves of trees which resembled it. It seems to have been a summer house; and so the Targum calls it, a royal house of refreshment.

"The length thereof was a hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty and the height thereof thirty cubits": So that it was in every measure larger than the temple; and there was good reason for it, since into that only the priests entered. Whereas into this went not only Solomon's family but his courtiers and nobles and all foreign ambassadors, and whoever had any business with him, which required various rooms to receive them in.

"Upon four rows of cedar pillars": Or piazzas.

"With cedar beams upon the pillars": Which laid the floor for the second story.

This is probably, one of many buildings on the palace grounds. This was made of cedar. The house was 100 cubits, or 150 feet long. It was 50 cubits, or 75 feet wide, and 30 cubits, or 45 feet high. This was the size of a small hotel, or motel.

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

On the second floor were three rows of pillars, fifteen in a row, which made forty five, that stood to east, north, and south. And upon these pillars beams, which were the floor of the third story, over which was a roof of cedar wood.

This is speaking of three rows of fifteen each.

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

Both in the second and third stories, east, north, and south; there being none in the west, where the porch stood.

"And light was against light in three ranks": Or the windows, through which light was let, answered to each other.

Perhaps there were three stories, and the three rows of beams and the three rows of light show that there were windows on each floor.

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

The doors into the several stories and apartments, and the posts and lintel of them, and the windows over them, were all square:

“And light was against light in three ranks”: They answered one another as before.

This is possibly, saying that the windows were square and the doors were square.

1 Kings 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.”

“A porch of pillars”: This colonnade was probably an entry hall or waiting area for the Hall of Judgment, which was probably used for the transaction of public business.

This is speaking of the porch extending the width of the house. It appears to have a roof, which was held up by cedar beams. It did not appear to have walls however.

1 Kings 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.”

The ivory throne on which he sat to hear and try causes (1 Kings 10:18).

“Where he might judge, even the porch of judgment”: Which had its name from thence; this was either in his house in the forest of Lebanon, or in his palace at Jerusalem; the former seems best.

“And it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor unto the other”: That is, the whole floor.

This seems to be another porch on another building. The building, described before, probably, was not the one where the throne was. It appears the walls and the ceiling were made of cedar.

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

“House ... court ... house”: Behind the Hall of Judgment was an open court. Within this court, Solomon built his own personal residence, a palace for his harem, and royal apartments for the Egyptian princess he had married.

We see in this, that the king had a personal house. There seemed to be a courtyard in the center of the house, and a porch at the entrance of the house. This house is not to be confused with the building mentioned earlier in this lesson. There seemed to be a number of buildings in the complex. The queen usually lived in the women's quarters. Solomon built a separate house for the daughter of Pharaoh.

Verses 9-12: A fortune was spent on building adjacent to the temple, the whole palace with its 3 parts:

- (1) The king's home;
- (2) The courtyard in the middle; and
- (3) The house of the women on the other side.

1 Kings 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."

Marble, porphyry, etc.

"According to the measure of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without": They were all hewed, and squared, and polished, and so they appeared both on the inside of the building, and without.

"Even from the foundation unto the coping": From the bottom to the top.

"And so on the outside toward the great court": Where the people used to assemble when they had causes to be tried, and was adjoining to the king's house.

The stones and the cedar used in the buildings that made up Solomon's complex, were expensively done. The palace buildings far surpassed anything in the known world at that time. These buildings, inside and out, were as near perfection as man could make them.

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

Enormous stones, corresponding exactly with the dimensions given, are found in Jerusalem at this day. Not only the walls from the foundation to the roof beams were built of large hewn stones, but the spacious court around the palace was also paved with great square stones.

The stones that made up the foundation were huge. They were 12 and 15 feet stones. The costly stones were speaking of stones of decoration.

1 Kings 7:11 “And above [were] costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.”

Above the foundation, from thence to the top of the buildings; the whole walls were made of such, right up to the ceiling.

“After the measure of hewed stones”: Which, according to the Rabbins, as Kimchi says, were five hands breadth.

And cedars”: Beams of cedars over them, or these, both the foundation and the walls, were lined with them.

It appears here, that the smaller stones were more decorative than the foundation stones. Even the cedars were carved into beautiful decorations.

1 Kings 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.”

“The great court” was a large outer court that encircles the entire temple and palace complex. The inner court surrounded the temple (see the note on 6:36).

According to (2 Kings 11:19), access from the palace complex to the temple led through a gate called the gate of the guard.

This appears that the cedar beams were on top of the cut stones. We must remember that the great stones were 12 to 15 feet. Three rows of them would cover a very large area.

Verses 13-14: This “Hiram” is not the Phoenician king but a skilled craftsman from “Tyre.” His mother was an Israelite who had married a Phoenician artisan, from whom young Hiram had doubtless learned his craft. Hiram had become a master craftsman in his own right (see the notes on 2 Chron. 2:13-14).

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

“Solomon sent” specifically for “Hiram” the master craftsman. His similarities with Bezalel, who oversaw the craftsmanship of the tabernacle and created many of its objects, are striking, right down to both men “being filled with wisdom” (Exodus 36:1). God’s people can never accomplish great works without the skill God provides. The church needs the talents of those with artistic gifts just as it does those with gifts of leading or teaching.

“Hiram”: Although having the same Hebrew name, this individual was distinct from the King of Tyre (5:1). Hiram had a Tyrian father, but his mother was of the tribe of Naphtali. (2 Chronicles 2:14), states that Hiram’s mother came from the tribe of Dan. Probably one verse refers to her

place of birth and the other to her place of residence. Or, if his parents were originally from the two tribes then he could legitimately claim either. The description of Hiram's skills (in verse 14), is exactly the same as that of Bezaleel who made the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3; 36:1). Hiram made the pillars (verses 14-22; see note on 2 Chron. 3:15).

1 Kings 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.”

In 2 Chronicles 2:14, his mother is said to be of the daughters of Dan, as she might be, and yet her son of the tribe of Naphtali. For either she was of the city of Dan, which is placed in the tribe of Naphtali, or her mother was of the tribe of Dan. Therefore she is said to be of the daughters of Dan, when her father was of the tribe of Naphtali, as it is expressed by the Targum on (2 Chron. 2:14), and in which way most of the Jewish commentators reconcile this. Or she was of Dan, and her husband of Naphtali besides. If there was any mistake, it must be ascribed, not to the sacred historians, but to the king of Tyre, whose words they are in the above place, and who might not be so well acquainted with the tribe this man and his parents were of.

“And his father was a man of Tyre”: Not a Tyrian by birth, but one who had dwelt there a while, and therefore so called, as Obedom, for a like reason, is called the Gittite.

“A worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass”: Which might be true both of the father and of the son, and especially of the son, who had improved upon his father's knowledge and instructions. And who was skillful to work in other things besides brass, as gold, silver, iron, stone, timber, purple, blue and fine linen, crimson, and all sorts of engraving. And every device that could be put to him by the most ingenious workmen that either David or Solomon had (2 Chron. 2:14). But this is only mentioned, because it was in such work he was only employed by Solomon; and it seems, by the mode of expression, that, besides his natural genius, and his diligence and industry, he was filled with wisdom from God more immediately for this service. As Bezaleel and Aholiab were for the service of the tabernacle.

“And he came to King Solomon, and wrought all his work”: In brass, as follows.

This Hiram is not the same person as the king. He was probably named Hiram in honor of the king. This man is a master in working with bronze. This young man was from a mixed marriage. His mother had been Hebrew from the tribe of Naphtali. His father was a man of Tyre. His father is dead at this point. He has been filled with the wisdom, understanding, and cunning to work in bronze or brass. These are natural talents from God that had been improved upon by practice. He immediately comes to Solomon, and wrought his work in the brass.

Verses 15-22: The nature of the “two pillars of brass” before the “porch of the temple” (2 Chron. 3:17), has been abundantly illustrated by excavations from all areas dealing with the ancient Near East. Their names, “Jachin” (“He Establishes”), and “Boaz” (“In Him Is Strength”), may

well reflect Solomon's humble dependence upon God, the author of the Davidic Covenant. The accuracy of the height of the "two pillars" is confirmed by a comparison with (2 Kings 25:17 and Jeremiah 52:21). The measurement given in (2 Chron. 3:15), was apparently miscopied.

1 Kings 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."

"Two pillars": One bronze pillar was on each side of the temple's entrance (verse 21). Each pillar was 27 feet high and 18 feet around (see note on 2 Chron. 3:15).

These pillars were huge. They were 27 feet high by 18 feet completely around them (in circumference).

1 Kings 7:16 "And he made two chapiters [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:"

"Chapiters" These distinctively treated upper ends of the bronze pillars added 7.5 feet to the height of each pillar.

The chapiters were decorated top pieces that went on the top of the pillars. This was 7-1/2 feet high. Each of them was made exactly alike.

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

These were the ornaments of the chapiters; the former being like thick branches of trees, with their boughs and leaves curiously wrought, as the word signifies. And the latter like fringes, such as the Jews wore at the skirt of their garments.

"Seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter": Perhaps with four rows of checker work, and three of chain work.

This speaks of the decoration on the chapiters. The chain work appeared from a distance to be rope dropped down across the other decoration.

1 Kings 7:18 "And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that [were] upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter."

"Pomegranates": One of the fruits of the Promised Land (Num. 13:23; Deut. 8:8), these were popular decorative motifs used on the hem of Aaron's priestly garment (Exodus 33-34).

The "pomegranates" symbolize fruitfulness in good works. This is as if these pillars are topped with this. There were two rows of pomegranates that went around each chapter.

1 Kings 7:19 “And the chapiters that [were] upon the top of the pillars [were] of lily work in the porch, four cubits.”

Or such as was in the porch of the temple; the work was like that wrought in the form of the flower of lilies open.

“Four cubits”: Of the five cubits of which the chapiters consisted, four of them were of lily work, the two rows of pomegranates taking up the other. Though Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that at the head of the pillar was a border or circle of lily work, that stood out four cubits under the chapter, into and along the porch; a four cubit circle, after the manner of a spread lily.

This has jumped from the two pillars to the other pillars, which were surrounding the court. The chapiters were decorated with lilies.

1 Kings 7:20 “And the chapiters 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.”

The supplement is needless, according to Dr. Lightfoot; the sense being only, that the chapiters were above the lily work, which wrought out as far as the belly of the chapiters, or the middle cubit of them, which the pomegranates filled up.

“And the pomegranates were two hundred, in rows round about upon the other chapter”: There were so many in each, which in all made four hundred (as in 1 Kings 7:42). In (Jer. 52:23), it is said there were ninety six on a side, and yet one hundred round about. The meaning of which is, either that there were twenty four to every wind, as the word there is, and four on the four angles, and so in all one hundred. Or, as the above learned writer, when the pillars were set to the wall, only ninety six appeared in sight in a row, the other four being hid behind them.

The 200 pomegranates show the size of the pillars and their chapiters.

1 Kings 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.”

“Jachin ... Boaz”: “I.e. he shall establish”, “in it is strength”. It is likely that each name recalls promises given to the Davidic house, and that they perpetually reminded the worshipers of God’s grace in providing the Davidic monarch as well as each king’s need to depend on God for his success (see note on 2 Chron. 3:17). They were also symbolic of the strength and stability of God’s promise of a kingdom forever, even though the temple would come down (see Jer. 52:17).

The two pillars were at the entrance. Everyone coming in had to come between them. “Jachin” means He will establish. “Boaz” means fleetness. Boaz is in the ancestry of Jesus. I believe these two posts are speaking of the fact that the Christians will be established in the LORD Jesus Christ.

1 Kings 7:22 “And upon the top of the pillars [was] lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.”

Which seems to be repeated from (1 Kings 7:19), and confirms that.

“And so was the work of the pillars finished”: In the manner described.

These are the same as we read of earlier. These surrounded the court. The lilies were probably, open flowers instead of the bud. Some of this building we will probably never completely understand, until we get to heaven. I do know that the temple particularly, and the palace complex in general, were absolutely beautiful buildings.

1 Kings Chapter 7 Questions

1. How many years did it take to build Solomon’s house?
2. What are some of the reasons it could have taken this long?
3. Solomon’s house was built of what?
4. How large was the building mentioned in verse 2?
5. Verse 3 says, the beams were set upon how many pillars?
6. What does the author believe about the windows?
7. What was the size of the porch?
8. He made a _____ for the throne where he might judge?
9. What did Solomon make for the Pharaoh’s daughter?
10. Where did the queen usually live?
11. How beautiful, comparative to the rest of the world, were these buildings?
12. How large were the stones in verse 10?
13. How many stones made up the court?
14. The smaller stones were more _____ than the large ones.
15. Who did Solomon send for, from Tyre, to work the brass?
16. What tribe was his mother from?

17. He was filled with what three things?
18. How large were the two pillars of brass in verse 15?
19. What did he put on top of the brass pillars?
20. How tall were the chapters?
21. What do the “pomegranates” symbolize?
22. How did the pillars around the court differ from these two pillars?
23. What were the two pillars in the porch named?
24. What do their names mean?
25. Putting the two names together symbolically means what?