

FIRST KINGS

Chapter 7

Solomon Builds His Palace

It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace. ² He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high, with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. ³ It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns—forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. ⁴ Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. ⁵ All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other. ⁶ He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide. In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof. ⁷ He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling. ⁸ And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design. Solomon also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married. ⁹ All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and trimmed with a saw on their inner and outer faces. ¹⁰ The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits and some eight. ¹¹ Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. ¹² The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the inner courtyard of the temple of the LORD with its portico.

7:1 *thirteen years.* Solomon spent almost twice as long building his own house as he did the Lord's house (see 6:38; see also Hag 1:2–4). (CSB)

It took Solomon twice as long to build his royal edifices as it did to complete the temple (6:38). One house was considerably longer and wider than the house of the Lord (see note, v 2). However, only 12 verses are devoted to Solomon's palace (vv 1–12). From the available data, it is impossible to gain a clear picture of the architectural features and specific function of these buildings. The descriptions illustrate the splendor of Solomon's reign. (TLSB)

7:2–7 *House of the Forest of Lebanon ... Hall of Pillars ... Hall of the Throne.* Individual structures in the royal building complex were named in part according to their basic features and in part according to their purpose. (TLSB)

7:2 *Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.* Four rows of cedar pillars in the palace created the impression of a great forest. (CSB)

This was 60 ft longer and 45 ft wider than the temple; it required so much cedar wood for its construction as to make it a veritable forest. It served as an armory (10:17). (TLSB)

a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high. See NIV text note. Compare these measurements with those of the temple in 6:2. (CSB)

7:3 *the chambers.* May have been three floors. (TLSB)

forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. Suggests that there were three floors in the building above the main hall on the ground level. The building included storage area for weaponry (see 10:16–17). (CSB)

7:6 *Hall of Pillars.* Characteristic feature of the second edifice was its colonnaded pillars. (TLSB)

colonnade. Apparently an entrance hall to the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. Its length (50 cubits) corresponds to the width of the palace. (CSB)

7:7 *throne hall.* It is not clear whether the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, Solomon's own living quarters (v. 8) and the palace for Pharaoh's daughter (v. 8) were separate buildings or locations within the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. (CSB)

In the third structure, Solomon set up his throne, from which he rendered judgments. Cf 10:20. (TLSB)

7:8 *like workmanship.* Solomon's own royal residence and the palace for Pharaoh's daughter were similar to the Hall of the Throne. (TLSB)

Pharaoh's daughter. In this political marriage, she may have required unique accommodations and dignity. (TLSB)

7:9 *trimmed with a saw.* The pinkish white limestone of Palestine is easily cut when originally quarried, but gradually hardens with exposure. (CSB)

coping. The covering course of stones at the top of a wall. (TLSB)

great court. Likely surrounded all the buildings erected by Solomon, including the temple complex with its smaller "inner court" (v 12). (TLSB)

7:12 *great courtyard.* Constructed in the same way as the inner courtyard of the temple (6:36). (CSB)

7:1–12 Solomon's house takes almost twice as long to build (13 years) as does the temple, an ominous foreshadowing of Solomon's shifting priorities. Too often, we neglect the things of God in favor of personal interests. Though the Lord would not have us ignore our home and comforts, He bids us to use all we have for the glory of His name, dedicating ourselves and all to the Architect of heaven. May God for Jesus' sake refocus our attention on spiritual matters and glorify the great gift of salvation among us! • Triune God, we come to You for forgiveness and renewal in Christ. May we praise Your name in all we do and say. Amen. (TLSB)

The Temple's Furnishings

¹³ King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram, ¹⁴ whose mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali and whose father was a man of Tyre and a craftsman in bronze. Hiram was highly skilled and experienced in all kinds of bronze work. He came to King Solomon and did all the work assigned to him. ¹⁵ He cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits around, by line. ¹⁶ He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set on the tops of the pillars; each capital was five cubits high. ¹⁷ A network of interwoven chains festooned the capitals on top of the pillars, seven for each capital. ¹⁸ He made pomegranates in two rows encircling each network to decorate the capitals on top of the pillars. He did the same for each capital. ¹⁹ The capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were in the shape of lilies, four cubits high. ²⁰ On the capitals of both pillars, above the bowl-shaped part next to the network, were the two hundred pomegranates in rows all around. ²¹ He erected the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakin and the one to the north Boaz. ²² The capitals on top were in the shape of lilies. And so the work on the pillars was completed. ²³ He made the Sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits to measure around it. ²⁴ Below the rim, gourds encircled it—ten to a cubit. The gourds were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea. ²⁵ The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center. ²⁶ It was a handbreadth in thickness, and its rim was like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It held two thousand baths. ²⁷ He also made ten movable stands of bronze; each was four cubits long, four wide and three high. ²⁸ This is how the stands were made: They had side panels attached to uprights. ²⁹ On the panels between the uprights were lions, bulls and cherubim—and on the uprights as well. Above and below the lions and bulls were wreaths of hammered work. ³⁰ Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles, and each had a basin resting on four supports, cast with wreaths on each side. ³¹ On the inside of the stand there was an opening that had a circular frame one cubit deep. This opening was round, and with its basework it measured a cubit and a half. Around its opening there was engraving. The panels of the stands were square, not round. ³² The four wheels were under the panels, and the axles of the wheels were attached to the stand. The diameter of each wheel was a cubit and a half. ³³ The wheels were made like chariot wheels; the axles, rims, spokes and hubs were all of cast metal. ³⁴ Each stand had four handles, one on each corner, projecting from the stand. ³⁵ At the top of the stand there was a circular band half a cubit deep. The supports and panels were attached to the top of the stand. ³⁶ He engraved cherubim, lions and palm trees on the surfaces of the supports and on the panels, in every available space, with wreaths all around. ³⁷ This is the way he made the ten stands. They were all cast in the same molds and were identical in size and shape. ³⁸ He then made ten bronze basins, each holding forty baths and measuring four cubits across, one basin to go on each of the ten stands. ³⁹ He placed five of the stands on the south side of the temple and five on the north. He placed the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner of the temple. ⁴⁰ He also made the basins and shovels and

sprinkling bowls. So Hiram finished all the work he had undertaken for King Solomon in the temple of the LORD: ⁴¹the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; the two sets of network decorating the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; ⁴²the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of network (two rows of pomegranates for each network, decorating the bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars); ⁴³the ten stands with their ten basins; ⁴⁴the Sea and the twelve bulls under it; ⁴⁵the pots, shovels and sprinkling bowls. All these objects that Hiram made for King Solomon for the temple of the LORD were of burnished bronze. ⁴⁶ The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan. ⁴⁷ Solomon left all these things unweighed, because there were so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined. ⁴⁸Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the LORD's temple: the golden altar; the golden table on which was the bread of the Presence; ⁴⁹ the lampstands of pure gold (five on the right and five on the left, in front of the inner sanctuary); the gold floral work and lamps and tongs; ⁵⁰the pure gold basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers; and the gold sockets for the doors of the innermost room, the Most Holy Place, and also for the doors of the main hall of the temple. ⁵¹ When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver and gold and the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple.

7:13–51 After describing the temple's structural features (6:1–10) and its wooden interior (6:14–36), the account now lists its furnishings and vessels of bronze (7:13–47) and gold (vv 48–50). (TLSB)

7:13 *King Solomon sent.* Prior to the completion of the temple and the construction of Solomon's palace (see 2Ch 2:7, 13–14). (CSB)

Hiram. See NIV text note. His full name is Hiram-Abi (2Ch 2:13). (CSB)

Not the king of Lebanon (cf 5:1). (TLSB)

7:14 *widow from the tribe of Naphtali.* 2Ch 2:14 indicates that Hiram-Abi's mother was from Dan. Apparently she was born in the city of Dan in northern Israel close to the tribe of Naphtali, from which came her first husband. After he died, she married a man from Tyre. (CSB)

Cf 2Ch 2:14. The mother's first husband was from Naphtali; when he died, she married a man from Tyre. (TLSB)

all kinds of bronze work. Hiram-Abi had a much wider range of skills as well (see 2Ch 2:7, 14). (CSB)

Solomon commissioned a half-Tyrian to do the castings. His name, like the king's, was Hiram (cf 2Ch 2:7, 13–14) (TLSB)

all his work. He produced two massive pillars (vv 15–22); a large reservoir (vv 23–26); 10 lavers, or basins (vv 27–39); and many smaller items (vv 40–45). To this list, 2Ch 4:1 adds the great “altar of bronze.” (TLSB)

7:15 *capitals.* Crowns that top pillars. (TLSB)

two bronze pillars. One was placed on each side of the main entrance to the temple (v. 21). Surely decorative, they may also have embodied a symbolism not known to us. It has been suggested that they were not freestanding but supported a roof (forming a portico to the temple) and an architrave. However, evidence for this view is lacking. (CSB)

7:18 *pomegranates.* Near-Eastern fruit; also a symbol of fruitfulness. A pomegranate carved from ivory, which may have been part of the temple decorations, was discovered in Israel with the inscription, “Holy of the priests, to the h[ouse of Yahwe]h.” Pomegranates were commonly depicted in Israelite and regional artifacts. (TLSB)

7:19 *lily-work.* Shaped like lilies. (TLSB)

7:21 *pillar to the south.* The temple, like the tabernacle before it, faced east (see Eze 8:16). (CSB)

Jachin ... Boaz. Name of first pillar is a verb, meaning “He [God] will establish.” Boaz is a prepositional phrase plus a noun: “in Him [is] strength.” It is also possible that both names were read as one sentence: “He will establish in strength.” The entrance to the Holy Place was “oriented,” i.e., it faced east, toward the sunrise, as had the tabernacle (Ex 27:12–15). Sunrise and sunset determined the beginning and ending of the Sabbath and the hours of sacrifice. (TLSB)

7:23 *Sea of cast metal.* This enormous reservoir of water corresponded to the bronze basin made for the tabernacle (see Ex 30:17–21; 38:8). Its water was used by the priests for ritual cleansing (2Ch 4:6). (CSB)

A reservoir so large that it was called a sea, a term applied to no other water basin. The Hbr always includes the definite article because it served a unique purpose (2Ch 4:6). If the dimensions are meant to be exact (circumference, 45 ft; diameter, 15 ft; depth, 7½ ft), it was rounded or slightly oblong, with bulging or convex sides. (TLSB)

thirty cubits. Technically speaking, this should be 31.416 cubits because of the ten-cubit diameter of the circular top. Thirty may be a round number here, or perhaps the measurement was taken a bit below the rim or on the inside circumference (see v. 26). (CSB)

7:24 *ten to a cubit.* With ten gourds to a cubit it took 300 gourds to span the entire reservoir, or 600 gourds counting both rows. (CSB)

7:26 *two thousand baths.* C 12,000 gal. (2Ch 4:5 reports the number as 3,000.). (TLSB)

7:27 *ten movable stands.* These movable bronze stands were designed to hold water basins (see v. 38) of much smaller dimensions than the bronze Sea. The water from the basins was used to wash certain prescribed parts of the animals that were slaughtered for burnt offerings (see Lev 1:9, 13; 2Ch 4:6). (CSB)

More complicated in design than the stationary sea were the 10 movable basins, or lavers, in which the water was wheeled in order to make it available to “rinse off what was used for the burnt offering” (2Ch 4:6). Though the description is surprisingly detailed, it is difficult to reconstruct an exact model. The author demonstrates a personal fascination with these mechanisms. (TLSB)

7:29–36 *lions, oxen, and cherubim ... wreaths ... palm trees.* Low relief. The changing patterns are not explained. (TLSB)

7:36 *He engraved cherubim, lions and palm trees.* See note on 6:29. (CSB)

7:38 *forty baths.* C 240 gal. (TLSB)

7:40–44 In listing all the items of bronze made by Hiram, the three major castings (pillars, sea, lavers) are repeated. (TLSB)

7:40 *basins.* Perhaps used for cooking meat to be eaten in connection with the fellowship offerings (see Lev 7:11–17; 22:21–23). (CSB)

shovels. Used for removing ashes from the altar. (CSB)

Iron examples were discovered at the worship complex in Dan. (TLSB)

sprinkling bowls. For use by the priests in various rites involving the sprinkling of blood or water (see Ex 27:3). (CSB)

7:41 *two sets of network.* See v. 17. (CSB)

7:42 *four hundred pomegranates.* See vv. 18, 20. (CSB)

7:43 *ten stands with their ten basins.* See vv. 27–37. (CSB)

7:44 *the Sea and the twelve bulls.* See vv. 23–26. (CSB)

7:45 *pots, shovels and sprinkling bowls.* See v. 40. (CSB)

7:46 *plain of the Jordan.* Molds for the castings were made of Jordan Valley clay, which was best suited for that purpose. (TLSB)

Succoth. Located on the east side of the Jordan (Ge 33:17; Jos 13:27; Jdg 8:4–5) just north of the Jabbok River. Excavations in this area have confirmed that Succoth was a center of metallurgy during the period of the monarchy. (CSB)

Transjordanian town. (TLSB)

Zarethan. Located near Adamah (see Jos 3:16) and Abel Meholah (4:12). (CSB)

Spelled Zeredah in 2Ch 4:17. Site not determined. (TLSB)

7:48–50 Temple's rich and beautiful decoration is a paradigm for the use of artwork in places of worship throughout the ages. (TLSB)

7:48 *Solomon made*. Solomon receives the credit, having funded the work. (TLSB)

the vessels. Much of the wooden interior of the temple was overlaid with gold (6:14–36). These objects were made entirely of the precious metal. (TLSB)

golden altar. See 6:22. (CSB)

For the burning of incense. (TLSB)

golden table. The bread of the Presence was placed on this table (see Ex 25:23–30; 1Ch 9:32; 2Ch 13:11; 29:18). Ten such golden tables are mentioned in 1Ch 28:16 and 2Ch 4:8, 19, five placed on the north and five on the south side of the temple. (CSB)

7:49 *lampstands of pure gold*. Only one lampstand with seven arms had stood in the tabernacle, opposite the table for the bread of the Presence (Ex 25:31–40; 26:35). The ten lampstands in the temple, five on the north and five on the south side, created a lane of light in the Holy Place. *gold floral work*. See Ex 25:33. (CSB)

lamps. See Ex 25:37. (CSB)

tongs. See 2Ch 4:21; Isa 6:6. (CSB)

7:50 *censers*. See 2Ki 25:15; 2Ch 4:22; Jer 52:18–19. (CSB)

7:51 *things his father David had dedicated*. Valuable objects of silver and gold, either taken as booty in war or received as tribute from kings seeking David's favor (see 2Sa 8:9–12; 1Ch 18:7–11; 2Ch 5:1). (CSB)

Cf 1Ch 22:14. (TLSB)

treasuries of the LORD's temple. See 15:18; 2Ki 12:18; 1Ch 9:26; 26:20–26; 28:12. (CSB)

Royal support for priestly services. (TLSB)

7:13–51 The inspired account details the temple's furnishings, indicating the care given to honor this beautiful place of worship. Solomon's magnificent temple with its furnishings, especially those relating to the sacrificial system, point to the coming Savior. Through Jesus' blood and merit, all our sins are washed away. Through the Savior's long-promised sacrifice, forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation are ours. Thanks be to God! • Savior of the nations, dwell in my heart, and make it a temple set apart for loving service to You. Amen. (TLSB)