

# The Books of 1 and 2 Kings

## Lesson 4: Solomon's Palace and the Temple Furnished -- 1 Kings 7:1-51

Seven years for God's house. Thirteen years for his own. The text does not editorialize. It simply states the numbers and lets you sit with them: 'He was thirteen years building his own house, and he finished his entire house' (7:1). That quiet arithmetic is one of the most searching moments in the whole book. Solomon did not neglect the temple; he built it magnificently. But when it came to his own comfort and glory, he found nearly twice the time, twice the resources, and apparently twice the patience. The narrator leaves the comparison on the table and trusts the reader to feel its weight.

And yet this chapter is not mainly a rebuke. It is a record of overwhelming beauty in service of God. The craftsman Hiram of Tyre, a man of bronze and brilliance, arrives from Phoenicia and begins work that Israel's own artisans could not have managed. Two towering pillars, Jachin and Boaz, rise at the entrance to the temple. A massive bronze basin called the 'molten sea' rests on the backs of twelve bronze oxen. Ten rolling stands carry ten basins for washing. And Solomon brings the treasures David had dedicated, silver and gold and the sacred vessels, and places them in the storerooms of the house of the Lord. The whole chapter breathes the mingled scents of bronze and cedar and reverence.

Every one of these objects was doing something. The pillars said something about standing firm. The molten sea said something about cleansing. The basins said something about preparation. Even the twelve oxen beneath the sea said something about the twelve tribes of Israel lifting the burden of priestly service. The temple was not decorated; it was teaching. Every surface, every piece of furniture, every carefully forged bronze panel was a sermon in metal and stone about the character of God and the nature of approaching Him.

And all of it pointed beyond itself. The writer of Hebrews would one day open his letter by announcing that God, who spoke through the prophets 'in many portions and in many ways,' had now spoken in His Son (Heb 1:1-2). Every bronze basin, every golden lampstand, every carved cherub was one of those 'many ways' God spoke, whispering of the One who would come to be the true cleansing, the true light, the true mediator. The furnishings of Solomon's temple were given to Israel as a vocabulary with which to recognize Jesus when He arrived.

**Group Discussion:** Which piece of temple furniture or craftsmanship in this chapter strikes you most, and what do you think it was communicating to the Israelite worshiper about approaching God?

**Personal Reflection:** The narrator quietly notes that Solomon spent nearly twice as long building his own house as God's house. Is there a place in your own life where the time and attention you give to your own comfort quietly reveals something about what you actually value most?

*Read 1 Kings 7:1–51*

## **Study Questions**

1. Read 1 Kings 7:1–8. The text notes that Solomon spent seven years on the temple and thirteen years on his own palace complex. This comparison is not accidental. What does the narrator seem to be signaling about Solomon's priorities, and why does the order (God's house first) matter even if the proportion is uneven?
2. The thirteen years Solomon spent on his own palace is a quiet warning about how easily personal comfort and status can quietly become our greatest project. Where in your own life do you notice that you invest your most careful effort, your best time, or your largest resources, and what does that pattern reveal about your actual priorities?
3. Read 1 Kings 7:13–22. Hiram of Tyre, a craftsman of extraordinary skill, is brought in to cast the bronze work for the temple. What does God's use of a skilled Gentile craftsman tell us about the relationship between human excellence and craftsmanship and the worship of God?
4. Hiram was called to use his God-given abilities in service of God's house. Every believer has been given gifts and abilities by God. How intentionally are you using your specific skills, your work, your creativity, or your practical knowledge in service of the church and the Lord's purposes?
5. Read 1 Kings 7:15–22. The two pillars named Jachin ('He establishes') and Boaz ('In him is strength') stood at the entrance to the temple. What was Israel meant to understand as

they passed between these two pillars to worship, and what does the naming of these pillars tell us about the theological purpose of the temple's architecture?

6. Every time an Israelite passed through those pillars, they were reminded that God establishes and God is strength. What declarations of God's character do you carry into your week that function the same way, reminders that anchor you before you step into your ordinary days?
7. Read 1 Kings 7:23–26 and 38–40. The molten sea and the basins were used for washing: the sea for the priests and the basins for rinsing the burnt offerings. Why did God's design for worship build in repeated, visible acts of cleansing, and what does this emphasis on purity before approaching God's presence teach us?
8. The repeated washing built into Israel's worship was a physical reminder that drawing near to a holy God requires cleansing. In your own walk with God, how seriously and regularly do you practice confession and repentance as the act of being made clean before you approach Him in prayer, in worship, or in service?
9. Read Hebrews 9:1–14 and 10:1–4 alongside 1 Kings 7:48–51. The temple furnishings, including the lampstand, the table, and the altar of incense, were all part of a worship system that could never finally purify the conscience. What does the New Testament teach about the way Christ and His sacrifice fulfills and surpasses everything these furnishings pointed toward? And what does this mean for the church as the new dwelling of God?

10. Looking across all of 1 Kings 7, from the palace and its proportions to the bronze pillars and the gleaming sea, name one truth about God's character or one call on your life that this passage has made more vivid for you, and describe one specific step you will take this week in response to it.

## **Digging Deeper**

**Reflect on these passages:** Exodus 30:17–21, where God commands the bronze laver for washing before priestly service, establishing the cleansing pattern the temple sea fulfills; 2 Chronicles 3:15–17, the parallel account of Jachin and Boaz with additional dimensions; Hebrews 9:1–14, where the writer explains that the earthly tabernacle and its furnishings were a copy and shadow of heavenly realities, fulfilled in Christ; John 1:14, where the Word tabernacled among us, bringing grace and truth in place of shadows; Revelation 21:22, where the new Jerusalem has no temple because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple

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