

2 Chronicles Chapter 4

Verses 4:1 – 5:1

See 1 Kings 7:23-51 for amplification and additional details.

2 Chronicles 4:1 Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

This “altar of brass”:

This is the main altar on which sacrifices were offered (compare the millennial temple altar, Ezek. 43:13-17).

For comparison to the tabernacle’s altar (see Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7).

Approximately 30 feet long by 30 feet wide by 15 feet high, was likely made of some of the brass that David had gathered for the temple work (Exodus 27:1-2; 1 Chron. 29:1-2; Ezek. 43:13, 16).

“Brass” or bronze symbolizes judgement.

This altar of brass was the first thing a person saw when they came to the temple.

Verses 2-6

See the note on 1 Kings 7:23-39.

2 Chronicles 4:2 “Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.”

“Made ... sea”:

This large laver was used for ritual cleansing (compare Exodus 30:17-21 as it relates to the tabernacle).

In Ezekiel’s millennial temple, the laver will apparently be replaced by the waters that flow through the temple (Ezek. 47:1-12).

This “molten sea” was 15 feet across.

It was 7 1/2 feet high and 45 feet in circumference.

This also was made of brass, and was filled with water.

This was a place for the priests to wash.

The priests symbolize all believers in Christ.

We too must be washed before we enter into fellowship with God.

2 Chronicles 4:3 “And under it [was] the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen [were] cast, when it was cast.”

“Oxen”:

(1 Kings 7:24), reports “gourds”, which is the more likely translation.

These were also around the laver, which was set on top of the 12 oxen.

The rim of the sea was turned down to make a lip around the whole thing.

On this lip, there were figures of oxen all the way around.

There were probably, about three hundred of these decorations around the rim of the sea.

2 Chronicles 4:4 “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.”

“Twelve oxen”:

Very likely the 12 oxen represent the 12 tribes who were similarly arrayed around the tabernacle as they set out on their journey in the wilderness (compare Num. 2:1-34).

The words of the Hebrew text of this verse and the parallel (1 Kings 7:25), are facsimiles.

Oxen symbolize work or service.

The fact that there were 12 oxen with three of them facing north, south, east and west shows us that the service the LORD had provided was for all the world.

12 is a number that represents the whole.

2 Chronicles 4:5 “And the thickness of it [was] a handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; [and] it received and held three thousand baths.”

“Held three thousand baths”:

1 Kings 7:26 reads 2000 baths.

This discrepancy has been reconciled by accounting here not only the water the basin held, but also the water source that was necessary to keep it flowing as a fountain.

A “bath” is a little over 7 gallons.

Even figuring a bath at 7 gallons shows us there would be 21,000 gallons of water in this sea.

The decorations of lilies were representative of a true body of water where lilies grew.

The thickness of the metal was about 4 inches.

2 Chronicles 4:6 “He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea [was] for the priests to wash in.”

And he made ten pans.

The word kîyôr is used (in 1 Sam. 2:14), as a pan for cooking, and (in Zechariah 12:6), as a pan holding fire.

Its meaning here and in the parallel place is a pan for washing (compare Exodus 30:18; 30:28).

“To wash in them”:

This statement, and, indeed, the rest of the verse is peculiar to the chronicler.

On the other hand (1 Kings 7:38), specifies the size and capacity of the lavers here omitted.

“Such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them”:

Literally, the work (compare Exodus 29:36), “to do” being equivalent to “to offer” of the burnt offering they used to rinse (strictly, thrust, plunge), in them.

The lavers were to wash the animals in before sacrificing them.

It is interesting that there were ten of them, since ten has to do with world government.

“But the sea was for the priests to wash in”:

Read the notes in 2 Chron. above.

Verses 7-8

“Ten candlesticks of gold ... ten tables”:

The tabernacle had one of each.

Everything was large because of the crowds of thousands that came on a daily basis and for special occasions.

(See the note on 1 Kings 7:48-50).

2 Chronicles 4:7 “And he made ten candlesticks of gold according to their form, and set [them] in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left.”

And he made the golden lampstands ten, according to their rule, or, prescribed manner.

(Compare 1 Kings 7:49; Exodus 25:31-40), where their type is described.

“According to their form”:

Rather, “after their manner” (compare 2 Chron. 4:20).

There is no allusion to the shape of the candlesticks, which were made.

No doubt, after the pattern of the original candlestick of Moses.

The candlesticks of gold represent the container for the Light which represents Jesus.

Again, there are ten candlesticks.

In the churches in Revelation, each church had its candlestick.

Jesus is the Light in all Protestant churches.

The fact that they are gold shows us that they are associated with God.

“Gold” symbolizes the pureness of God.

2 Chronicles 4:8 “He made also ten tables, and placed [them] in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made a hundred basins of gold.”

The number of the tables (see 2 Chronicles 4:19), and of the basins, is additional to the information contained in Kings.

“Basins”:

Or bowls, were to receive and hold the blood of the slain, about to be sprinkled for purification (see Exodus 24:6-8; 29:10-12; 20-21; Lev. 1:5).

The ten tables are the same as the ten candlesticks.

There is sufficient room at the table for all of God's people.

The hundred basins of gold for catching blood to be used in the sprinkling of the blood.

2 Chronicles 4:9 “Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.”

“The court of the priests”:

See 1 Kings 6:36; 7:12.

“The inner court;” Jeremiah 36:10, “the higher court.”

The Syriac renders the whole verse: “And he made one great court for the priests and Levites, and covered the doors and bolts with bronze.”

Compare note on 2 Chron. 4:3, for this plating of the doors with brass.

These doors were far away from the Most Holy Place.

They were the doors of entrance.

Brass was always at the entrance or very near.

Gold was used in the near presence of God.

2 Chronicles 4:10 “And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south.”

Literally, and he set the sea on the right shoulder, eastward, in front of the southward; i.e., on the south-east side of the house (1 Kings 7:39b).

The LXX and some manuscripts add “of the house,” which appears to have fallen out of the text.

“The right side of the east end, over against the south”:

So also 1 Kings 7:39; compare Exodus 30:18.

The sea found its position, therefore, in the place of the tabernacle, between the altar of brass and porch.

It must be remembered that the entrance was east, but it was counted to a person standing with the back to the tabernacle or temple.

As though he were, in fact, going out, not entering in, the sacred enclosure.

Therefore, on the right side will be southward, as written in this verse.

(See the notes on 2:14 and 1 Kings 7:40-47).

This was for special access of the priests.

From 4:11 – 5:1

See notes on 1 Kings 7:40-51.

All these details emphasize the great care and concern for worship, and served as a manual for the new temple being built by Zerubbabel after the Jews returned from Babylon.

Verses 11-16

The king of Tyre sent the craftsman “Hiram” to help Solomon complete the detail work on the temple, including the “pots, shovels, and basins” made of bronze and used for temple sacrifices.

God had appointed the craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiab to oversee similar details in the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-11).

2 Chronicles 4:11 “And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basins. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God;”

1 Kings 7:40, has “lavers” (pans).

Our reading, “pots,” appears correct.

Supported as it is by many manuscripts and the LXX and Vulgate of Kings.

A single stroke makes the difference between the two words.

These “pots” were scuttles for carrying away the ashes of the altar.

“Basins”:

“Bowls”.

Probably the same as the mizrāqîm of (2 Chron. 4:8).

“Hiram”:

Hebrew text, Hiram, as in Kings.

The LXX. renders: “And Hiram made the fleshhooks (κρεάγρας) and the firepans (πυρεια), and the hearth of the altar and all its vessels.”

“And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God”:

Revised Version: So Hiram made an end of doing the work that he wrought for king Solomon in the house of God.

“Hiram” (see note on 2:13-14).

He led the actual work which Solomon directed.

Huram and Hiram are believed to be the same person.

These pots, shovels and basins were used in the preparation of the offerings.

This fancy artistic work was done by Hiram’s men, who had been hired for this purpose.

2 Chronicles 4:12 “[To wit], the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapiters [which were] on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which [were] on the top of the pillars;”

“Two pillars” (see 2 Chron. 3:15-17).

“The pommels”:

Revised Version, the bowls, as in (1 Kings 7:41), for the same Hebrew word.

I.e. the bowl-shaped part of the capital (or chapter), of a pillar.

“Pommel” or “knob.”

“The chapiters”:

In modern English, “capitals.”

“Two wreaths”:

R.V., two networks, as in (1 Kings 7:41), for the same Hebrew word.

“Which were on the top of the pillars”:

Hebrew (and the globes and the chapiters), on the top of the pillars.

Two; i.e., two globes and chapiters.

The word “two” (shtayim) is feminine, agreeing with “globes and chapiters,” which are also feminine.

Whereas “pillars” is a masculine term.

The pillars had engraving on them, as well as all of the chapiters.

The “pommels” were balls that were used for decoration on top of the chapiters.

Hiram and his men were skilled in wood carving as well as engraving, and they were used for this purpose.

2 Chronicles 4:13 “And four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which [were] upon the pillars.”

Four hundred pomegranates.

This number of pomegranates substantially agrees with the parallel (1 Kings 7:20).

There were two hundred of them on each wreath that encircled the chapter.

The pomegranate was a favorite ornament in work as well as in more solid architectural forms (Exodus 28:33-34).

The pomegranates were decorations that symbolized the fruitfulness of Israel.

2 Chronicles 4:14 “He made also bases, and lavers made he upon the bases;”

This repetition of the verb is suspicious; and the parallel text shows the right reading to be and the bases ten (in number).

And the lavers ten upon the bases.

“Ten” in Hebrew writing closely resembles “he made.”

The LXX. renders, “And the bases he made ten, and the lavers he made upon the bases;” which shows that the corruption of the text is ancient.

2 Chronicles 4:15 “One sea, and twelve oxen under it.”

Kings, And the oxen, twelve, under the sea.

The chronicler has abridged the expression.

Verse 15 is back again to the sea of brass which held over 21,000 gallons of water.

This just explains that this is some more of the decorative work that Hiram and his men did.

2 Chronicles 4:16 “The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to king Solomon for the house of the LORD of bright brass.”

“Flesh-hooks”:

Occurring twice in Exodus (Exodus 27:3; 38:3; once in Numbers, and twice in Chronicles).

Another form of the same root, occurs twice in Samuel, in the same sense of “flesh-hook” (See 1 Samuel 2:13, 14).

Where also its use is made dramatically plain.

Hiram his father; i.e. his chief artist.

“Did Hiram”:

Whom Solomon revered for the gifts that God had given him.

As a father; he had the same name as Hiram the king of Tyre, his mother was a Jewess, and his father a Tyrian.

Some read, for his father, the author of this work.

The pots, shovels, and fleshhooks and all of their instruments made of brass were used away from the Holy of Holies.

This brass when shined, was almost as pretty as gold, but it stayed out in the outer court.

2 Chronicles 4:17 “In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah.”

“In the plain”:

I.e. in the Ciccar (or round, equivalent to the New Testament “region round about”), of Jordan.

A distinctive designation of the Jordan valley.

The region here intended lies east of the river, in what became the division of Gad.

“The clay ground”:

That is,” the clay of the ground “(Hebrew).

The radical idea of the word here translated “clay” is “thickness,” which should not be rendered, as in margin, “thicknesses.”

The word occurs thirty-five times, and is rendered a large proportion of these times “clouds” or “thick clouds” (e.g. Exodus 19:9).

“Succoth”:

Lay a little to the north of the river Jabbok, which flows almost east to west into the Jordan.

“Zeredathah”:

I.e. Zarthan of (1 Kings 7:46).

And this latter is in the Hebrew also the same in characters and all with the Zaretan of (Joshua 3:16).

Very possibly the place is the same as Zererath (Judges 7:22).

It appears from this, that sand molding is very old.

Many of these pieces were so large that the seashore is needed for the open space to form them.

They would be extremely hard to move because of their great weight, but we must remember, there were thousands of burden bearers to carry this.

This place they were cast would have been near the Jordan, but in the eastern part in the land of Gad.

2 Chronicles 4:18 “Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.”

1 Kings 7:47: “And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many”.

The brass that David had taken in battle was said to be so much it would not have been reasonable to try to weigh it.

This brass was used for the things of the temple.

Verses 19-22

Details related to the temple and its worship provided important information for the returned exiles, who were faced with the task of rebuilding.

Even though the new temple would be somewhat different (e.g., the ark of the Covenant was not there), the returnees would need to carefully consider how to adjust the plan while preserving the worship that God had specified.

Circumstances will always change, yet worship must remain.

It is up to God's people to prayerfully and carefully consider how to maintain it.

2 Chronicles 4:19 “And Solomon made all the vessels that [were for] the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the showbread [was set];”

“The tables”:

A single table only is mentioned (in 1 Kings 7:48; 2 Chron. 29:18).

It is supposed that Solomon had ten similar tables made, any one of which might be used for the showbread.

But that the bread was never placed on more than one table at a time.

This does not mean that Solomon personally did these things.

It means that he had it done.

There was a table of showbread where there were always 12 loaves of bread.

This bread symbolized the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Chronicles 4:20 “Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the oracle, of pure gold;”

“With their lamps, that they should burn after the manner”:

(According to the legal rule, 2 Chron. 4:7).

This is added by the chronicler, who omits “five on the right and five on the left” (Kings).

The rest is as in Kings.

2 Chronicles 4:21 “And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, [made he of] gold, [and] that perfect gold;”

“And the flowers . . . gold”:

See 1 Kings 7:49.

The Vulgate which renders “all were made of purest gold.

2 Chronicles 4:22 “And the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the censers, [of] pure gold: and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy [place], and the doors of the house of the temple, [were of] gold.”

“The snuffers”:

Hebrew, occurring five times, and always translated “snuffers.”

A slightly different form of the word is translated “pruning-hooks” four times in the Prophets Isaiah, Joel, and Micah.

No doubt these snuffers were something different from the tongs of the preceding verse.

The use of one may have been rather to cut the wicks, and the other to trim them.

“The spoons”:

This is the word used so often for the “hand,” but the essential idea of which is the hollow of either hand or foot or other thing, and among other things of a spoon shape.

The word is used of the frankincense-cups (Num. 7:14, 20, 26), brought to the dedication of the tabernacle by the several princes.

“The censers”:

Hebrew.

These were “snuff-dishes” (Exodus 25:38; 37:23; Num. 4:9).

“The entry of the house”:

The text is, by some, corrected by (1 Kings 7:50).

“The hinges” of the doors of the house, etc.

“The doors of the house of the temple”:

Revised Version; the doors of the house.

To wit, of the temple.

The “[greater] house” or “temple” is here distinguished from the “Most Holy Place” or “shrine.”

Compare 2 Chron. 3:5; 3:8.

Everything inside the Holy of Holies, the doors in the near vicinity, and even the walls inside the Most Holy Place were pure gold.

Everything in the near presence of God had to be pure gold, or 24 kt. gold plate.

The candlesticks and many other of the beautiful things in this Most Holy Place, were pure gold that had been engraved for extra beauty.

2 Chronicles Chapter 4 Questions

1. How large was the altar of brass he made?
2. What does “brass” symbolize?
3. How large was the molten sea?
4. The sea was made of _____.
5. The sea was used for what?
6. Who do the priests symbolize?
7. We must be _____, before we come into fellowship with God.
8. What was around the rim that was turned down of the molten sea?
9. Oxen symbolize _____, or _____.
10. What does the number of the oxen, and the way they were facing, tell us?
11. _____ is the number that represents the whole.
12. How thick was the metal in the sea?
13. What was it decorated with?
14. How much water would it hold?
15. How many lavers were made?
16. Where were they located?
17. The lavers were used for _____ the _____ for _____.
18. How many candlesticks of gold were there?

19. Who is the Light?
20. Which churches contain the Light of Jesus?
21. How do we know the doors, in verse 9, are far away from the Most Holy Place?
22. Where was the sea located?
23. What were the items, in verse 11, used for?
24. What were “pommels”?
25. What did the decorations of pomegranates symbolize?
26. The fleshhooks were made of _____.
27. What does verse 19 mean when it says, Solomon made it?
28. The candlestick in the Most Holy Place was made of _____.
29. Name some of the other things made of gold.
30. Why were they made of gold?