

Jeremiah 52:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon.

Analysis

Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea—meticulous inventory of the temple's bronze furnishings being plundered begins here. The **pillars of brass** (עמודי הַנְּחֹשֶׁת, amudei hanechoshet) refer to Jachin and Boaz, the two massive bronze pillars Solomon erected at the temple entrance (1 Kings 7:15-22), each 27 feet high, crowned with ornate capitals. These pillars symbolized God's strength and establishment of His house—their names meant 'He establishes' (Jachin) and 'In Him is strength' (Boaz). Their destruction signified God's strength departing from the temple.

The bases (הַמִּכְנוֹת, hammekhonot) were the ornate bronze carts that held lavers for ritual washing (1 Kings 7:27-37). **The brasen sea** (יָם הַנְּחֹשֶׁת, yam hanechoshet) was the massive bronze basin holding thousands of gallons for priestly purification (1 Kings 7:23-26), resting on twelve bronze bulls. The Chaldeans **brake** these sacred objects—not merely took them, but **carried all the brass of them to Babylon**, melted down as raw material. This desecration fulfilled warnings that Israel's idolatry would result in God giving His glory to foreigners (Isaiah 42:8, 48:11). The temple's magnificent bronze works, crafted for God's glory, became Babylonian plunder—the tragic end of objects made for worship perverted by the people's unfaithfulness.

Historical Context

Solomon's temple furnishings represented extraordinary craftsmanship and enormous wealth. The bronze pillars alone required advanced metallurgy—each was cast hollow, about 3 inches thick, requiring massive molds and foundries. The bronze sea weighed approximately 27 tons when empty. These objects had stood for nearly 400 years (967-586 BC), symbols of God's presence and Israelite worship. Their destruction devastated survivors psychologically and theologically—how could God's house be plundered? The answer lay in understanding that God never promised to protect structures while people violated covenant. The pillars Jachin and Boaz proclaimed God's establishment and strength, but these attributes belonged to God Himself, not the building. When the people forsook God, the structure lost divine protection. Babylon's practice of plundering conquered temples served both economic and religious purposes: the valuable metals enriched Babylon's treasury, while humiliating conquered peoples' gods demonstrated Marduk's supposed supremacy. Ironically, Daniel later demonstrated Yahweh's superiority over Babylon's gods (Daniel 1-6), and Babylon itself fell to Persia within 50 years. The temple vessels were eventually returned under Cyrus (Ezra 1:7-11), though the bronze objects destroyed here had to be recreated for the second temple.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the destruction of the temple's bronze pillars teach about the difference between sacred symbols and God's actual presence?
2. How had Israel's unfaithfulness transformed objects meant for God's glory into mere plunder for pagans?
3. In what ways might modern believers mistake religious buildings or symbols for God's true presence?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	עַמֻּדֵי י	נְחֹשֶׁת מִן	אֲשֶׁר	בְּבֵית	יְהוָה הִוא
H853	Also the pillars	all the brass	H834	that was in the house	of the LORD
	H5982	H5178		H1004	H3068

וְאֵת	הַמִּכְנֹת וְ	וְאֵת	יָם הַ	נְחֹשֶׁת מִן	אֲשֶׁר	בְּבֵית
H853	and the bases	H853	sea	all the brass	H834	that was in the house
	H4350		H3220	H5178		H1004

וְאֵת	יְהוָה הִוא	שֶׁבַר וְ	כַּשְׂדִּים	וַיִּשָּׂא וְ	אֶת	כָּל	נְחֹשֶׁת מִן
of the LORD		brake	the Chaldeans	and carried	H853	H3605	all the brass
H3068		H7665	H3778	H5375			H5178

בָּבֶלָה:

of them to Babylon

H894