

Jeremiah 52:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

Analysis

The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD—this verse summarizes the most magnificent bronze works, emphasizing their Solomonic origin to stress the tragedy of their loss. **The two pillars** Jachin and Boaz stood 27 feet high with ornate capitals (1 Kings 7:15-22), symbols of God's establishing power. **One sea** was the massive bronze basin for priestly purification, 15 feet in diameter and 7.5 feet deep (1 Kings 7:23-26). **Twelve brasen bulls** supported the sea, facing outward in groups of three toward the four compass points, representing the twelve tribes and symbolizing strength upholding purification.

The brass of all these vessels was without weight (לא-הָיָה מִשְׁקָל לִנְחַשְׁתָּם) —literally 'there was no weight to their bronze,' meaning they were too heavy to weigh or beyond calculation. First Kings 7:47 explains Solomon didn't weigh the bronze because of its exceeding abundance. The phrase emphasizes both the massive scale (tons of bronze) and the incomprehensible tragedy of seeing four centuries of sacred craftsmanship destroyed for raw material. These objects embodied Israel's covenant relationship—purification, tribal unity, God's established strength. Their demolition signaled covenant rupture and divine abandonment of the temple, precisely what Ezekiel saw in vision when God's glory departed (Ezekiel 10-11). Yet God Himself remained faithful; only the physical symbols were destroyed.

Historical Context

Solomon crafted these bronze works around 960 BC using Phoenician expertise (Hiram of Tyre, 1 Kings 7:13-14) and massive bronze-working facilities near the Jordan River where clay deposits allowed large-scale casting (1 Kings 7:46). The technology required to cast objects this size was extraordinary for the ancient world—the bronze sea alone, holding about 12,000 gallons and weighing approximately 27 tons empty, represented engineering achievement comparable to great ancient monuments. These works stood for 374 years before Babylon destroyed them (960-586 BC), serving daily in temple worship through reigns of 20 kings from Solomon to Zedekiah. Their loss devastated the Jewish psyche—they were tangible connections to Solomon's glory and God's promises to David. When Jews later rebuilt the temple under Zerubbabel (520-516 BC), they could not replicate these bronze masterpieces' scale, leading older men who remembered the first temple to weep (Ezra 3:12). The second temple's bronze works were smaller, never matching Solomonic grandeur. This physical diminishment, however, pointed toward spiritual reality—the second temple's true glory would be Messiah's presence (Haggai 2:9), making all external furnishings secondary. Archaeological bronze-working sites from this period confirm the technical sophistication required for such large-scale casting.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the destruction of Solomon's magnificent bronze works teach about the impermanence of even the most sacred human achievements?

2. How did the 'weight beyond weighing' of these objects symbolize the incalculable loss caused by covenant unfaithfulness?
3. In what ways does this verse prepare Israel to recognize that God's true temple would not be made with hands (Acts 7:48, 17:24)?

Interlinear Text

עַשׂ רְשָׁנִים וַיַּבְנֵן רְאַחֲדָם
 pillars The two sea one bulls The two H6240

H5982 H8147 H3220 H259 H1241 H8147

עַשׂ הָאָשֶׁר לְנַחֲשָׂת מִ
 that were under the bases H834 had made H6213

brasen H834 H8478 H4350 H834

H5178 H834 H8478 H4350 H834

מִשְׁקָל לְ
 which king Solomon in the house of the LORD H3808 H1961 was without weight H4948

H4428 H8010 H1004 H3068 H3808 H1961

מִשְׁקָל לְ
 brasen H3605 of all these vessels H428

H5178 H3605 H428

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 7:47 (Parallel theme): And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.

2 Kings 25:16 (Creation): The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.