

Jachin & Boaz



Construction

The two brazen pillars in Solomon's Temple are mentioned several times in Scripture: 1 Kings 7.13-22, 2 Kings 25.16-17, 2 Chronicles 3.15-17, 4.12-13, 17, Jeremiah 52.17, 20-23 and Ezekiel 40.49. The pillars totalled 35 cubits (16m, 50ft) in height (2 Chronicles 3.15) and were 12 cubits (5.5m, 18ft) in circumference, being hollow and having a thickness of four finger-breadths (Jeremiah 52.21). The shafts of the pillars were 18 cubits (8.2m, 27ft) in height (1 Kings 7.15) which supported a 'chapter' (1 Kings 7.16) or capital of 5 cubits (2.3m, 7.5ft). There was various ornate work on the pillars including 'nets of checker work', 'wreaths of chain work', 'pomegranates' and 'lily work' (1 Kings 7.17-19). The two pillars were called Jachin (on the right) and Boaz (on the left). It is very uncertain how the pillars looked, however it is thought that 'oil basins' or 'fire bowls' (cf. 'bowls', 1 Kings 7.41) were constantly alight on top of the pillars to illuminate the Temple by night and perhaps remind the people of the pillar of cloud and fire which led Israel through the Wilderness.

Significance

The study of pillars in Scripture is interesting. They were used as a memorial to people or events (Genesis 28.18, 35.20), to support buildings (Judges 16.26) and as symbols of the manifestation of Divine presence (Exodus 13.21). Pillars are also used metaphorically of God's people such as Jeremiah, James, Peter and John (Jeremiah 1.18, Galatians 2.9, Revelation 3.12). It is also significant that pillars are always associated with the House of God (cf. Bethel, Genesis 28.18; Tabernacle, Exodus 13.21-22; Temple, 1 Kings 7.13-22; Church, 1 Timothy 3.15).

It is clear from 1 Timothy 3.15 that the pillars in Solomon's Temple represent the Church, and in particular, its association with the Word of God. *1 Timothy 3.15: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* As a 'pillar' of the truth, the local church has a responsibility to proclaim, uphold and maintain it by teaching **and** practice. As the 'ground' of the truth, the local church is firm and steadfast in the face of all opposition. What truth do we uphold? The truth of 1 Timothy 3.16. The Truth which is a Person. Often pagan temples bore the inscription of the names of wealthy benefactors on their pillars. For example, in the Temple of Diana or Artemis (cf. Acts 19) 127 pillars each bore witness to the name of a different false heathen god. In contrast, the local church bears witness to the One, True Risen Man. The pillars, therefore, speak of the church and the truth which it seeks to uphold.

The Character of the Truth (in association with believers)

The truth is **reliable**. The pillars were called Jachin, 'He shall establish' and Boaz, 'in Him is strength'. It is possible that these names refer to the fact that God had unconditionally promised to establish the throne of David forever (2 Samuel 7.16). The same promise was repeated to Solomon on a conditional basis (1 Kings 9.3-9). The names of these pillars were therefore bearing witness to Solomon's confidence in the truth of God's word and His power to perform it. To put it simply, what God promises He is able to perform. This same confidence and faith in the reliability of God's Word must characterise the local church today. Do we fully believe and rely on the promises of God's word? Do we really believe what He says? See Luke 1.45, 2.25-35, Romans 4.21, Hebrews 11.19. *Psalm 119.89: For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. Psalm 119.152: Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever. Psalm 119.160: Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*

The truth is **powerful**. The pillars were made of brass, a compound which was unknown in Solomon's day and probably refers to copper. This was an emblem of strength (Jeremiah 1.18) and speaks of that which is stubborn, obstinate and unchanging (Leviticus 26.19, Isaiah 48.4, Zechariah 6.1). This indicates that God's Word has inherent power and strength; it shall never fail (Psalm 29.4, Hebrews 4.12; Luke 16.17, 21.33, 1 Peter 1.23-25). *Hebrews 4.12: For the word of God is quick (constantly active, alive), and powerful (energising), and sharper (more incisive) than any twoedged sword, piercing (penetrating the inward recesses of our spiritual being) even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner (sifter, analyser) of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Not only this, but the truth we maintain is unchanging (Hebrews 6.16-20). *Psalm 119.50: This is my comfort in my trouble; that your sayings have given me life. Psalm 19.7: The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

The truth is **educational**. Much that is associated with these pillars speaks of witness and testimony. There were two which is the number of adequate testimony and witness (Deuteronomy 19.15, Matthew 18.18, 1 Timothy 5.19, Revelation 11.3). There was also a fire burning continuously in the 'bowls' on top of the pillars. The truth which we proclaim is characterised by light; the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (2 Corinthians 4.4). The Word of God is able to discern, sift and analyse the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. We should therefore constantly read it with a thoughtful mind. *Psalm 19.8: The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. Psalm 119.130: The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Psalm 119.105: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

The Character of the Believers (in association with the truth)

Not only do Jachin and Boaz speak of the truth itself, they also picture believers and the way in which the Word of God has affected their behaviour and character. It is significant that in 1 Timothy 3.9 Paul declares that deacons should 'hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience', i.e. they should possess the truth in consciousness of right conduct. Our lives should live out the truth of the faith. We not only know the truth, but LIVE IT! **The Word of God in our lives brings:**

Foundation. Every pillar was cast by Hiram for Solomon in the clay of the Jordan valley (1 Kings 7.46). What a contrast between the mud of the plain of Jordan (river of death) and the rock of Mount Moriah. This pictures believers who were once 'dead in trespasses and sins' but now 'raised... in newness of life' and 'accepted in the Beloved'. *Psalm 40.2: He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established (made 'firm' or 'stable') my goings ('steps')*. This was accomplished by the power of the Word of God (John 3.5, Ephesians 5.26, Titus 3.5, 1 Peter 1.23) which continues to work in our lives by establishing our steps. *Psalm 119.133: Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

Fragrance. The top of the pillars were decorated with 'lily work' (1 Kings 7.22). This lily is a pure white flower which speaks of God-given beauty (Song of Solomon 2.1-2, Hosea 14.5) demonstrated in the fragrance of a pure and holy life. The root meaning of the word lily is 'joy', 'gladness' and 'rejoicing'. These things were demonstrated in the life of Susanna, whose name means 'a lily' in Greek (Luke 8.3). The Word of God is that which produces the fragrance of a holy life in us (Psalm 119.11, 98, 101, Psalm 1.1-3, Psalm 19.11) as it is in itself pure and holy. This in turn will produce God-given beauty (2 Corinthians 3.18, James 1.22-25) and a rejoicing heart in the great and precious promises of a gracious God. *Psalm 12.6: The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Psalm 19.8: The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. Psalm 119.9: Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Psalm 119.16: I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*

Fruitfulness. The two capitals of the pillars contained 200 pomegranates each, making 400 in all (1 Kings 7.20, 42). The pomegranate is a fruit containing a large number of seeds within it and therefore speaks of great fruitfulness (Song of Solomon 4.13). The Word of God produces fruit in our lives which is the evidence of spiritual life (John 15.8, Colossians 1.6, 10, Galatians 5.22, 2 Peter 1.8). *Colossians 1.5-10: Ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it... (we) desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.* It is delightful to remember that the High Priest wore a 'robe of the ephod' upon the hem of which were golden bells and pomegranates alternately (Exodus 28.33-34). This signifies that the measure of my testimony as a Christian (golden bells) is equal to the fruit which I am feeding upon; it is equal to my communion (pomegranates).

Faithfulness. The pillars were decorated with 'nets of checker work' and seven 'wreaths of chain work' were on each (1 Kings 7.17, 2 Chronicles 3.16). The nets and chains speak of captivity, constraint and submission. Christ has drawn us to Himself 'with bands of love' (Hosea 11.4) and now we stand in captivity to Him and His Word. The Word of God should produce faithfulness and obedience in our lives. We are bound to it. Do we submit to the simple demands of the Word of God or are we rebellious? *Psalm 119.4: Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.* The psalmist speaks of keeping (to 'guard', 'observe' and 'give heed') God's Word twenty-one times in Psalm 119. We are to keep it diligently (119.4), whole-heartedly (119.34) and continually (119.44).

It should be solemnly remembered that Jachin and Boaz stood for 400 years until 586BC when the Chaldeans broke them up and carried them away to Babylon (Jeremiah 52.17). The world will seek to dilute the truth we teach until there is no witness to God that remains. Let us hold fast (2 Timothy 1.13, Hebrews 10.23). *2 Timothy 1.13: Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

