–Save This Page as a PDF–

The Bronze Sea
First Kings 7:23-26 and Second Chronicles 4:2-5

The bronze sea DIG: What was the function of the bronze sea? Given the Golden Calf incident in Exodus 32:1-35, do you think it was a good idea to furnish the Temple with bronze bulls?

REFLECT: Have you ever had an encounter with the sea? Saved through the sea as the Israelites were? Rescued from the sea as Jonah was? Has God calmed the waters for you?

We have been cleansed by the washing with water through the Word.



The second item that **Hiram made** for Solomon's Temple was an enormous basin. **The cast metal "Sea"** was **circular, seventeen-and-a-half feet from rim to rim, eight-and-three quarter feet high** (**to see a video of Solomon's Temple in 3D click here**). This beautiful bronze sea (as it was called) was one of ancient Isra'el's great technical achievements. Anyone who knows the history of America's famous Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, which was cast and then recast,

knows how hard it is to fabricate a large metal object, especially one with a curved edge. **The bronze basin** in **Solomon's Temple** was much larger than the Liberty Bell, with **a circumference of fifty-two-and-a-half feet**.[140]

Under its rim, three hundred gourds encircled it in two rows; they were cast when the Sea was cast. It rested on twelve oxen representing **the twelve** tribes of Isra'el**, three looking north, three looking west, three looking south and three looking east, all with their hindquarters toward the center. The Sea was set on top of them. It was a handbreadth thick,** or the thickness of the palm (about four inches), **its rim was made like the rim of a cup, like the flower of a lily (First Kings 7:23-26a: Second Chronicles 4:5a). The capacity of the Bronze Sea was two thousand baths,** or about 11,500 gallons **(First Kings 7:26b).** The Chronicler, however, gives us a different number of **three thousand baths,** or about 17,500 gallons **(Second Chronicles 4:5b).** Therefore, either there were two sorts of **baths**, as there are two types of cubits, the one common, the other sacred, and the sacred held half as much as the common; or possibly, he speaks of what it did actually and usually contain, or **two thousand baths**, which was sufficient for use. In **Second Chronicles 4:5** the Chronicler speaks of what it could contain if it were filled to the brim, as it is implied in the Hebrew words, which differ from these, and properly sound like *strengthening itself*, (that is, to receive and hold as much as it could, or being filled to its utmost capacity,) *it contained*, or could contain, **three thousand baths**.[141] There must have been a system for removing small amounts of water, but this system isn't explained in the text. Perhaps there were spigots at the base of **the basin**, or coming out of the mouths of **the oxen**.

As Philip Ryken relates in his commentary on **First Kings**, **the Bronze Sea** may have reminded **the Israelites** of **their** own encounter with **the sea**. When they made their famous exodus from Egypt, the people of **God** walked through the Sea of Reeds on dry land, while Pharaoh's chariots and horsemen drowned (see the commentary on **Exodus Ci – The Waters Were Divided and the Jews Went Through the Sea**). We can give a similar testimony, for we too have passed through a symbolic sea. For believers in **Messiah**, baptism is a deliverance from death – a saving passage through water **(First Corinthians 10:1-4; First Peter 3:20-21)**.

The water may also have represented the peace of **YHVH** controlling the chaotic troubles of a fallen world. **The sea** was a threatening force for people in ancient times, as it still is today, and thus it represents the forces of chaos. We find similar

imagery elsewhere in the Bible, where the sea is sometimes regarded as an ominous, threatening force. **Its waters roar and foam,** wrote the psalmist; **the mountains tremble at its swelling (Psalm 46:3).** Or consider the desperate prayer of **Jonah, "You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounding me; all Your waves and Your billows passed over me (Jonah 2:3).**

But since **ADONAI** is **Lord** of **the sea**, **He** is able to bring its **waters** under **His** control: **You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them (Ps 89:9). Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, ADONAI on high is mighty (Ps 93:4)!** The mighty power of **God** was on display at Solomon's Temple, where a large volume of **water** was symbolically stilled. The chaos of the sea was kept in its place by a **bronze basin**, much the way **God** keeps **the waters** of **the sea** within the boundaries of land.

The same is true for our own troubles in life. No matter how chaotic things may seem, **ADONAI** is still in control and wants to furnish us with inner peace. Rather than getting thrown around by all kinds of turmoil, tossed up and down in an ocean of anxiety, we can trust our **Savior** to calm the trouble of our worried thoughts. Knowing that **Yeshua** is the commander of the winds and the waves, who stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ff – Jesus Calms the Storm**), we are able to heed the apostolic command: **Let the peace of Messiah rule in your hearts (Colossians 3:15).**

One further aspect of **the sea's** symbolism is perhaps the most important of all: **the Bronze Sea** emulated **the bronze basin** in **the Tabernacle** (see the commentary on **Exodus Fh – The Bronze Basin: Christ, Our Cleanser**). **The water** in **the basin** made **Aaron** and **his sons** holy as **they** performed their priestly duties. **When they enter the Tabernacle – they are to wash with water, so that they won't die. Also when they approach the altar to minister by burning an offering for ADONAI, they are to wash their hands and feet, so that they won't die. This is to be a perpetual law for them through all their generations (Exodus 30:20-21).** And as we are sanctified, being **cleansed by the washing with water through the Word (Ephesians 5:26)**, we also become holy for **His** service.[142]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that **You wash** us **clean** thru **the blood of the Lamb of God (John 1:29)**. Though my life is very busy, making time for **You** is the most important and wonderful thing I can do. To be **cleansed** by **You** is so*

refreshing. It takes away the burdens of our sins when I submit to ***You*** *as my* ***Lord*** *and* ***Savior****.* ***For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation (Romans 10:9-10).***

It is wisest to give ***You*** *the glory and honor that is due* ***You*** *by planning to begin and end each day in meditation of* ***Your*** *greatness.* ***You*** *are Awesome and worthy of my making the time for* ***You****! It is important to check often to ask* ***You*** *to help us see what we can do to walk closer with* ***You*** *and have* ***You*** *show me any little sins in my life that I need to daily* ***cleanse****.*

No matter what is happening in my life, it is always a joy to bow in my heart, giving ***You*** *all the praise.* ***David*** *praised* ***You*** *and wrote* ***Psalm 57*** *while* ***he*** *was in great trouble and fleeing from the king.* ***My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing, yes, I will make music. Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise You, my Lord, among the peoples. I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your lovingkindness is great up to the heavens, and Your truth to the skies. (Psalms 57:8-11). You*** *are always worthy to be praised! In* ***Yeshua's*** *holy name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*