

## The pillars of Solomon's temple

In 1 Kings 7:15 we are told the height of the two pillars that were cast for the front of the temple: "For [Hiram] cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about". In verse 16 we are told the height of the chapters [capitals]: "And he made two chapters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits". But in 2 Kings 25:17, when the Chaldeans took Jerusalem and broke in pieces the pillars, bases, brazen sea and so on, we are told that "The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits". The height of the pillars is the same as in 1 Kings 7:15, but the size of the chapters is different. This problem becomes even worse when we refer to 2 Chronicles 3:15, where the pillars are described as being *thirty-five* cubits high, and the chapters five cubits high. Why are the pillars double in height? The Hebrew word for "high" in Chronicles actually means 'length' (mg.), so this probably refers to the length of the two pillars laid end to end when they were cast.

Jeremiah 52:22 confirms the records in 1 Kings 7:16 and 2 Chronicles 3:15 that the chapters were five cubits high. So the odd verse out is 2 Kings 25:17. A possible answer to this problem is that the chapters were actually three cubits high on their own, and the "nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapters" (1 Kgs. 7:17) were another two cubits high. These embellishments were included in the height in all the references except 2 Kings 25. It may be they were separated before being carried away to Babylon. This suggestion is also put forward by the *Companion Bible*. We know there are no contradictions in the inspired Word, just a few copyist errors and one or two changes put in by scribes, so this would seem to be the most likely answer.

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