

## Beauty – 1 Kings 6:1-4, 11-36

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. <sup>2</sup> Now the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length was sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits. <sup>3</sup> The vestibule in front of the sanctuary of the house was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the width of the vestibule extended ten cubits from the front of the house. <sup>4</sup> And he made for the house windows with beveled frames.

<sup>11</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying: <sup>12</sup> "Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. <sup>13</sup> And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

<sup>14</sup> So Solomon built the temple and finished it. <sup>15</sup> And he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards; from the floor of the temple to the ceiling he paneled the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress. <sup>16</sup> Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place. <sup>17</sup> And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits long. <sup>18</sup> The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone to be seen.

<sup>19</sup> And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. <sup>20</sup> The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. <sup>21</sup> So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. <sup>22</sup> The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple; also he overlaid with gold the entire altar that was by the inner sanctuary.

<sup>23</sup> Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. <sup>24</sup> One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. <sup>25</sup> And the other cherub was ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape. <sup>26</sup> The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was the other cherub. <sup>27</sup> Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room; and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. <sup>28</sup> Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

<sup>29</sup> Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer sanctuaries, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. <sup>30</sup> And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and outer sanctuaries.

<sup>31</sup> For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood; the lintel and doorposts were one-fifth of the wall. <sup>32</sup> The two doors were of olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. <sup>33</sup> So for the door of the sanctuary he also made doorposts of olive wood, one-fourth of the wall. <sup>34</sup> And the two doors were of cypress wood; two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door. <sup>35</sup> Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers on them, and overlaid them with gold applied evenly on the carved work.

**Open:** What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen?

→What words in the passage need to be explained for you?

1. When did Solomon begin to build the house of the LORD? (v. 1)
2. How big is the House? The vestibule? (vv. 2-3)
3. What promise does the LORD make to Solomon in vv. 12-13?
4. In vv. 14-18, *cedar* is the main word mentioned. What all is made of cedar?
5. In vv. 19-22, *gold* is the main material mentioned. Where does the gold go?
6. In vv. 23-28, *cherubim* are the main objects. What are we told about the cherubim?
7. What do the walls look like? (v. 29)
8. What does the floor look like? (v. 30)
9. What does the entrance look like? (vv. 31-35)

### Apply

- The temple is the place where God is worshiped and where God dwells. Why does it need to be so fancy?
- What does the decoration of the temple tell us about God?
- When you see something beautiful, how does it affect you? Do you keep looking? Or look away?

*Beauty, like justice, slips through our fingers. We photograph the sunset, but all we get is the memory of the moment, not the moment itself. We buy the recording, but the symphony says something different when we listen to it at home.*

N T Wright

