FIRST KINGS

Chapter 6

***Solomon Builds the Temple***

**In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord. 2 The temple that King Solomon built for the Lord was sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty high. 3 The portico at the front of the main hall of the temple extended the width of the temple, that is twenty cubits, and projected ten cubits from the front of the temple. 4 He made narrow clerestory windows in the temple. 5 Against the walls of the main hall and inner sanctuary he built a structure around the building, in which there were side rooms. 6 The lowest floor was five cubits wide, the middle floor six cubits and the third floor seven. He made offset ledges around the outside of the temple so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls. 7 In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built. 8 The entrance to the lowest floor was on the south side of the temple; a stairway led up to the middle level and from there to the third. 9 So he built the temple and completed it, roofing it with beams and cedar planks. 10 And he built the side rooms all along the temple. The height of each was five cubits, and they were attached to the temple by beams of cedar. 11 The word of the Lord came to Solomon: 12 “As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. 13 And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel.” 14 So Solomon built the temple and completed it. 15 He lined its interior walls with cedar boards, paneling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling, and covered the floor of the temple with planks of pine. 16 He partitioned off twenty cubits at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from floor to ceiling to form within the temple an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. 17 The main hall in front of this room was forty cubits long. 18 The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with gourds and open flowers. Everything was cedar; no stone was to be seen. 19 He prepared the inner sanctuary within the temple to set the ark of the covenant of the Lord there. 20 The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty wide and twenty high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold, and he also overlaid the altar of cedar. 21 Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold, and he extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold. 22 So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.23 In the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. 24 One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits—ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. 25 The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. 26 The height of each cherub was ten cubits. 27 He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. 28 He overlaid the cherubim with gold. 29 On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. 30 He also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold. 31 For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood with five-sided jambs. 32 And on the two olive wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid the cherubim and palm trees with beaten gold. 33 In the same way he made four-sided jambs of olive wood for the entrance to the main hall. 34 He also made two pine doors, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. 35 He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings. 36 And he built the inner courtyard of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams. 37 The foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv. 38 In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it.**

**6:1–38** See drawing of “Solomon’s Temple”. (CSB)

**6:1** *four hundred and eightieth year … fourth year.* Synchronizations between certain events in the reigns of later Israelite kings and Assyrian chronological records fix the fourth year of Solomon’s reign at c. 966 b.c. (see Introduction: Chronology). If Israel’s exodus is placed 480 years prior to 966, it would have occurred c. 1446 (the chronology followed in this Study Bible) during the rule of the 18th-dynasty Egyptian pharaoh, Amunhotep II. On the basis of Ex 1:11 and certain other historical considerations, however, some have concluded that the exodus could not have occurred prior to the rule of the 19th-dynasty pharaoh, Rameses II—thus not until c. 1290 (see note on Ge 47:11). This would mean that the 480 years of this verse would be understood as either a schematic (perhaps representative of 12 generations multiplied by the conventional, but not always actual, 40-year length of a generation) or aggregate figure (the combined total of a number of subsidiary time periods, which in reality were partly concurrent, examples of which are to be found in Egyptian and Mesopotamian records). (CSB)

**6:2** *temple that King Solomon built.* The temple was patterned after the tabernacle (and, in general, other temples of the time) and was divided into three major areas: the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place and the outer courtyard. The Most Holy Place in the temple was cubical, as it probably was in the tabernacle. The dimensions of the temple in most instances seem to be double those of the tabernacle (see Ex 26:15–30; 36:20–34). (CSB)

**6:6** *offset ledges.* To avoid making holes in the temple wall, it was built with a series of ledges on which the beams for the three floors of side chambers rested. This accounts for the different widths of the rooms on each floor. (CSB)

**6:8** *entrance to the lowest floor.* Of the side chambers. (CSB)

**6:11** *The word of the Lord came to Solomon.* As the temple neared completion the Lord spoke to Solomon, perhaps through an unnamed prophet (but see 3:5, 11–14; 9:2–9). (CSB)

**6:12** *if you follow my decrees … I will fulfill through you the promise.* In words similar to those spoken by David (see notes on 2:1–4), the Lord assures Solomon of a continuing dynasty (see 2Sa 7:12–16) if he is faithful to the covenant. (CSB)

**6:13** *I will live among the Israelites.* In the temple being built (see 9:3). To avoid any apprehension among the Israelites concerning his presence with them (cf. Ps 78:60; Jer 26:6, 9; see note on 1Sa 7:1), the Lord gives assurance that he will dwell in their midst (see 8:10–13; Lev 26:11). (CSB)

**6:16** *Most Holy Place.* The same terminology was used for the inner sanctuary housing the ark in the tabernacle (see Ex 26:33–34; Lev 16:2, 16–17, 20, 23). (CSB)

**6:19** *ark of the covenant of the Lord*. The Ten Commandments are called the “words of the covenant” in Ex 34:28. The stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed are called the “tablets of the covenant” in Dt 9:9. The ark in which the tablets were kept (see Ex 25:16, 21; 40:20; Dt 10:1–5) is thus sometimes called the “ark of the covenant of the Lord” (see Dt 10:8; 31:9, 25; Jos 3:11). Elsewhere the ark is variously designated as the “ark of the Lord” (Jos 3:13; 4:11), the “ark of the Testimony” (Ex 30:6; 31:7) and the “ark of God” (1Sa 3:3; 4:11, 17, 21; 5:1–2). (CSB)

**6:20** *pure gold.* The extensive use of gleaming gold probably symbolized the glory of God and his heavenly temple (cf. Rev 21:10–11, 18, 21). (CSB)

**6:21** *gold chains.* The curtain covering the entrance to the Most Holy Place was probably hung on these chains (see 2Ch 3:14; Mt 27:51; Heb 6:19). (CSB)

**6:22** *altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.* The incense altar (see 7:48; Ex 30:1, 6; 37:25–28; Heb 9:3–4). (CSB)

**6:23** *cherubim.* See note on Ex 25:18. They were to stand as sentries on either side of the ark (8:6–7; 2Ch 3:10–13). Apparently these were in addition to the two cherubim which stood on the ark—one on each end of its atonement cover (Ex 25:17–22). (CSB)

*ten cubits high.* The Most Holy Place, where the cherubim stood, was 20 cubits high (v. 16). (CSB)

**6:29** *he carved cherubim.* Not a violation of the second commandment, which prohibited making anything to serve as a representation of God and worshiping it (see note on Ex 20:4). (CSB)

*palm trees and open flowers.* Early Jewish synagogues were adorned with similar motifs. The depiction of cherubim and beautiful trees and flowers is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, from which man had been driven as a result of sin (Ge 3:24). In a “sacramental” sense, readmission to the paradise of God is now to be found only by means of atonement for sin at the sanctuary. (CSB)

**6:36** *inner courtyard.* Suggests that there was an outer courtyard (see 8:64). 2Ch 4:9 refers to the “courtyard of the priests” (inner) and the “large court” (outer). The inner courtyard is also called the upper courtyard (Jer 36:10) because of its higher position on the temple mount. (CSB)

**6:37** *fourth year.* Of Solomon’s reign (see v. 1 and note). (CSB)

**6:38** *eleventh year.* Of Solomon’s reign (959 b.c.). (CSB)