

The Ark of the Covenant



The purpose of the Tabernacle was to house the Ark in which the tablets of the Ten Commandments were placed. The Ark was a 2 ½ x 1½ cubit rectangular wooden chest with its lid being the Mercy Seat with the Cherubim of glory facing one another with wings outstretched. The blood was sprinkled between the judgment angels who were looking down and when they would see the blood the wrath of God was stayed.

The Ark was overlaid with pure gold and had a gold crown.

'The Ark of the Covenant' (Ex 25:10-22)



only once per year on Yom Kippur could man enter beyond the veil. The veil separated man from the holy of holies. It was behind this veil and in the 10 cubit squared room called the holy of holies that the most sacred piece of furniture in the whole tabernacle structure was found. This was the Ark of the Covenant which was mentioned first before all the other furniture in the tabernacle. The lid on top of the ark was traditionally known as the Mercy Seat which was considered a separate piece of furniture but one with the ark. The ark was right in the center of the camp and the glory cloud was seen above the mercy seat and above the back portion of the tabernacle.

Exod 25:10-22 "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side. And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the

***cherubim* at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel."**

The ark was a rectangular wooden chest (acacia wood) overlaid with pure gold, inside and out. 2 1/2 cubits long by 1 1/2 cubits wide and high (3 3/4 feet x 2 1/4 feet) it had a gold molding or crown around the top (a different word in Hebrew than the rim of the table and incense altar).

The ark rested on the dirt floor of the Holy of Holies with its four gold rings that the gold poles were inserted through and left permanently in position.



Inside the ark were 3 things. The 2 tables of the Law.

A golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded.

The Ark of the Covenant was where Gods justice and judgement toward sin was satisfied. It is referred to almost 200 times in the Old Testament. Here are some names given in the Scriptures for the Ark of the Covenant:

Its Names

Ex 25:22 "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

Josh 3:6 Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

Josh 3:13 "And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in

the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap."

1 Sam 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god."

1 Chr 6:41 "Now therefore, arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, you and the ark of Your strength. Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let Your saints rejoice in goodness."

2 Chr 35:3 Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel."

Ps 78:60-61 So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent He had placed among men, And delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.

Its Contents

1. The 2 unbroken tables of stone (The 10 Commandments)

It is important to note that the ark contained the two tablets of the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments). Remember that God had made a covenant with Israel, but the people had broken it. In grace God renewed it and ordered that its enduring record (the unbroken tablets) should be deposited in the holy ark. The Book of the Covenant, which dealt at length with other aspects of law and procedure, was deposited alongside the ark. But the 10 commandments were stored within the ark itself.

Exod 25:16 "And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you."

2. A golden pot containing an omer of manna (Heb 9:4)

Two other items were also contained within the ark. One was a jar containing an omer (24 liters) of manna (Heb. 9:4) as a memorial of God's provision:

Exod 16:32-33 "Then Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.' And Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations."

It was also a type Christ who was the living bread which came down from heaven:

John 6:50-51 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from

heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

3. Later they put in it Aaron's rod that budded-(Num 17)

The third item which would be added was Aaron's rod that sprouted buds and blossoms and bore ripe almonds in a single night, authenticating God's choice of Aaron for the priesthood (Heb. 9:4).

Num 17:7-8 "And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness. Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds."



A Type of Christ

The ark of the Covenant was a picture of Jesus Christ. The Acacia wood speaks of the indestructible humanity of Jesus. He was 100% man. God Himself became flesh and suffered the agonies of the human experience. He was tempted, He was weary, He thirsted, He had to learn the Scriptures and learn obedience and to hear God's voice and be led by the Spirit as a man. Not only does the Acacia wood tell us that He was 100% man but the pure gold that overlayed the wood teaches us that He was 100% God. Jesus said "unless you believe that I AM you will die in your sins." He used the same words (Heb. eheyay asher aheyay) as when the Lord spoke to Moses at the burning bush. The Jewish Messiah was none other than Jehovah Himself visiting His people and becoming their savior by dying for the sins of the world and that is the etymology of the name Jesus (Heb. Y'shua 'Yaweh has become salvation'). Jesus condemned the religious leaders for not recognizing "the day of their visitation."

The crown of gold around the top of the ark speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus overcame the onslaught of opposition that was set against Him His whole life by the religious leaders, the wealthy Jewish aristocracy, Rome itself, and even all the power of the enemy. He overcame even death itself and rose triumphantly and was given a crown, and glory, and honor, because He is the King. According to John it was Jesus who Isaiah saw seated on the throne of glory with the angels crying 'holy, holy, holy.'

The unbroken tables of stone set forth Jesus as the One who perfectly kept the Law and never broke God's Commandments. The Bible says that He "committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth." Jesus felt the pressure of temptation at its full intensity yet he never sinned. Even the look in His eye and the tone of His voice reflected the very perfections of the holiness of God Himself. Aaron's rod that budded also speaks of Jesus. Something that had died and supernaturally came to life again. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." The golden pot of manna speaks of Jesus as the bread of life who came down from heaven to bring food, the Word of God, to a world in darkness and dying of hunger.

It all points to Jesus. Even the golden poles speak of the ever living and ever present Savior who is with us in all our journeying and will never leave us nor forsake us. If you were to examine the history of the ark there would be striking resemblances to the ministry of Jesus our Lord:

The ark went before the people - Jesus went before them:

John 10:4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

The ark was in the middle of God's people - Jesus is in His people:

John 14:20 "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

The people were to follow the ark - We are to follow Jesus:

Luke 5:27-28 After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

And on and on, the ark was always first to lead them. It was death to those that were enemies of God. The ark brought blessings and curses.

Isa 53:2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

Isa 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Matt 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

1 Pet 2:22 "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth";

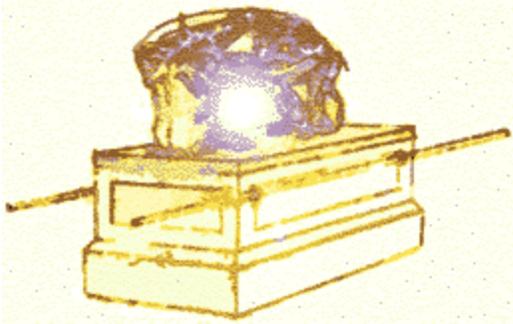
Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Jn 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

Jn 6:32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

Jn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jn 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



The ark was representative of the real ark in heaven.

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