

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

TEXT: Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9; Leviticus 16:13-15

### **A. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE ARK:**

Into the Holiest of Holies we are confronted with its sole piece of furniture, the Ark of the Covenant. The word “ark” means chest, coffin, boat or vessel, or a chest to keep something hidden or secret.

#### 1. The Are Three Arks Mentioned in Scripture:

- a. The Ark of Noah (Genesis 6:13 - 9:18) — made of gopher wood pitched within and without. This Ark is a type of the New Testament Church.
- b. The Ark of Moses (Exodus 2:3-6) — made of reeds, also pitched within and without.

Both of the above Arks were built for protection and preservation. The Hebrew word used was **TEBAH**, meaning boat, box or vessel.

- c. The Ark of the Covenant — the Hebrew word here is **AROWN**, which means chest or ark, along with other connotations.

This Ark is referred to directly at least 185 times, and indirectly many other times.

This Ark also carries the thought of preservation. This is seen particularly when Israel crossed the Jordan (Joshua 3 & 4). The Ark led the way, remaining in the middle while all Israel passed through Jordan safely, then brought up the rear. Secondly, preservation is seen in regard to the items stored within the Ark: The Table of the Law, The Golden Pot of Manna and Aaron’s Rod that Budded.

THE LAW - THE WAY  
Jesus Christ THE MANNA - THE TRUTH JOHN 14:6  
THE ROD - THE LIFE

This Ark is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In God's sight, the Ark was the main thing, and the entire Tabernacle was built around it. God begins the whole Tabernacle picture with these words: "...*Let them make me an Ark.*" God presented His Glory and then gave instructions to build the house to suit it. God sent His Presence and then gave His Son (John 1:14) to house it. God sent the Holy Ghost and is building His Church to house His Presence.

2. "...*AND THEY SHALL MAKE AN ARK...*" (Exodus 25:10).

It represents the following:

- a. The Throne of God upon earth.
- b. The Presence of God in Christ.
- c. The Glory of God revealed in Divine order and worship.
- d. The Fullness of the Godhead Bodily revealed in Jesus.
- e. The Church of God housing the Holy Ghost.

## **B. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARK: (Exodus 25:10-15).**

1. OF SHITTIM WOOD: (Exodus 25:10)

This wood most likely comes from the Acacia trees that are still common in the Sinai desert region. The Acacia tree grows in arid conditions, and a medicinal gum comes from it. It is a hard, orange-brown wood that is extremely durable. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament translates the word as "incorruptible" or "non-decaying" wood.

This wood is a descriptive type or symbol of the sinless, incorruptible humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was "*a root out of a dry ground*" and "*hath no comeliness...no beauty that we should desire him*" (Isaiah 53:20). In the midst of a spiritually dead and dry nation and world, HE remained uncorrupted, incorruptible and unstained in His nature and character (Psalm 16:10; Luke 1:35; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:5).

2. THE MEASUREMENTS OF THE ARK: (Exodus 25:10)

Length — 2-1/2 cubits

Width — 1-1/2 cubits

Height — 1-1/2 cubits

The height measurement is the same as the Table of Shewbread, and the Grate of the Brazen Altar.

3. THE COATING OF THE ARK: (Exodus 25:11)

- a. Overlaid with pure gold — deity of Christ.
- b. Overlaid within and without — not only covered externally with God's Glory, but also indwelt by Almighty God! No other piece of furniture coated within and without.

4. THE CROWN OF THE ARK: (Exodus 25:11)

The Crown always speaks of Kingship:

The Holiest of All was the Throne Room for the King of Kings.

Jesus Christ is King of Kings.

He was born King of the Jews.

He was revealed as King to the Jews.

He was crucified as King.

He is King — High Priest forever in Glory.

He is King in Zion, the Church.

5. RINGS, STAVES OF GOLD OF THE ARK: (Exodus 25:12)

A total of four rings, one at each corner, were built to hold the staves. The Gospel is to go to the four corners of the earth (Acts 1:8). The staves, unlike on other pieces of furniture, were left permanently on the Ark, until Solomon's Temple was built where the Ark was finally set up permanently. This was significant to Israel that the wilderness wanderings and their journeys were over and also typified the pilgrimage and strangership of the church on earth. This world is not our eternal home—we are just passing through.

**C. THE MERCY SEAT: (Exodus 25:17, 21, 22)**

This was the “lid” or “covering” of the Ark. It formed the top. It was not a “seat” at all as we understand the word, but literally meant “propitiation.” Christ is our propitiation, our mercy seat.

It was here, from above the Mercy Seat that God spoke to Aaron. This is where the blood of the slain bullock was sprinkled as atonement for the sin of the nation (Leviticus 16) yearly, thereby pushing their sins ahead yearly to the cross. The High Priest would never enter the Most Holy Place without the blood.

All Israel was judged at the Brazen Altar, but was reconciled at the Mercy Seat. In summary, the Mercy Seat involved the following:

1. A place of holiness, justice and righteousness.
2. A place of atonement and propitiation.
3. A place of mercy and reconciliation.
4. A place of communion of God with redeemed man.
5. A place of the Glory of God.
6. A place where God recorded His name (2Samuel 6:1, 2).

The Cherubim and the Mercy Seat were one piece of gold. Between which dwelt the very Presence and Glory-Brightness of God in visible manifestation upon the Blood-stained Mercy Seat. This manifestation was called “THE SHEKINAH.” The word “Shekinah” means “the one who dwells.” See Exodus 34:29-35; Numbers 10: 35-36; 1Samuel 4:21-22; Isaiah 37:16.

## LESSON TWELVE

### SELF HELP TEST

A. Write a brief paragraph describing the Ark of the Covenant and its significance.

B. The Shittim wood is typical of Christ in what way?

C. What were the measurements of the Ark?

1. LENGTH:

2. WIDTH:

3. HEIGHT:

D. The Ark was overlaid with gold \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

E. The Crown on the Ark spoke of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

F. The staves for the Ark were \_\_\_\_\_.

G. What does the mercy seat signify?