

The Ark of the Covenant

Where God Meets Man

Exodus 25:10-22

The Ark of the Covenant is the central piece of the entire Tabernacle. It is the first article God commanded Moses to build. It is simply a wooden box (2.5 cubits long, 1.5 cubits tall and broad) covered with gold on the outside and the inside. The “cover” of the ark (KJV “mercy-seat”) had two angels (“cherubim”) on each end, spreading their wings and looking down onto the mercy-seat. This Ark of the Covenant is the only piece of furniture transferred from the tabernacle into Solomon’s Temple (I Kings 8:6). It is extremely important to understand its significance.

I. The Ark of the Covenant Represents the Place Where God Meets Man . . .

A most incredible statement is made by God concerning the ark; **“There will I commune with thee . . .”** (v.22). It is at the Ark that God spoke audibly to Moses and the High Priest (Numbers 7:89; Judges 20:26-28).

Nobody could enter the Holy of Holies except the High Priest, and then only once a year on Yom Kippur.

- (1). When carried through the Wilderness, the ark was always veiled or covered (Numbers 4:5,6).
- (2). None but those divinely appointed by God (the Levites) could even carry it (Numbers 4:15).
- (3). It was immediate death for anyone to touch it, or even attempt to look into it (Numbers 4:15).
- (4). Between the cherubim, on the mercy-seat, the Shekinah (revealed) presence of God appeared.

This appearance of God was sometimes called “the glory” for it was a brilliant light that resembled fire.

Why could people not approach? *“For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

(A). It is impossible for sinners to approach a holy God except on His terms.

God does not ignore sin, He does not excuse sin, and He does not permit sin --- He punishes sin.

(B). Coming to God on your own terms leads to death.

“There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof is the way of death.”

II. The Ark of the Covenant Represents the Power of God Over All His Enemies . . .

The Ark, representing God’s presence, exhibited God’s power in defeating all of Israel’s enemies.

- (1). The Ark destroyed Dagon, the god of the Philistines, in his own temple.
- (2). The Ark, carried before the people, parted the waves of the Jordan for Israel.
- (3). The Ark brought down the proud walls of the oldest city in the world --- Jericho.

Everywhere the Ark went, representing the power of God, every enemy of God was disposed.

The lessons for the believer are numerous in number:

- (A).** When God chooses to move in your life the strong man, Satan, is defeated and expelled.
- (B).** What churches and people need is the power of God, not more programs or motivation.
- (C).** When God chooses to remove His power, the enemy may be allowed to reign for a season.
The Philistines captured the ark for a season because of Israel’s rebellion (I Samuel 4:11).
- (D).** Praying people are powerful people because praying people are dependent people.

III. The Ark of the Covenant Represents the Purpose of God in Saving Sinners

The top of the Ark was called the mercy-seat (lit. “covering”). Underneath this covering were:

- (1). The tablets of stone: God’s moral covenant with the nation of Israel --- “Do this and live.”
Thus the Ark is called the “Ark of the Covenant.”
- (2). The rod that budded: Aaron’s rod that represented God’s sovereign choice of Aaron.
- (3). A pot of manna: a symbol of God’s continuing provision for Israel.

God’s standard --- “the law.” God’s sovereignty --- “Aaron’s rod.” God’s supply --- “the manna.”

All three things reminded us of the character of God --- and how little man is compared with Him.

How does this Holy, Omnipotent God allow sinners like you and me to approach Him?

Only when the blood of an innocent lamb is taken and sprinkled on the mercy seat of God’s throne.

The tabernacle is a pattern of heavenly reality --- an impression of a solid truth. Innocent blood saves!

Romans 3:23-26 is a truth of Scripture that is really only understood by understanding the Ark.