



## Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant was named from its contents - the Mosaic Covenant (the two tablets of the Ten Commandments or Law, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden jar of manna. Moses had the jar of manna placed in the Ark as a reminder of God's faithfulness and the sin of rejection of God's grace provision. God also commanded Moses to place Aaron's rod that budded into the Ark as a sign of man's rebellion against God authority and His promises. Heb. 9:4; Deut. 10:3-5; Exodus 16:33; Num. 17:10.

*"having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant;" (Hebrews 9:4, NASB)*

*"So I made an ark of acacia wood and cut out two tablets of stone like the former ones, and went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. He wrote on the tablets, like the former writing, the Ten Commandments which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the LORD commanded me." (Deuteronomy 10:3-5, NASB)*

*"Moses said to Aaron, Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations." (Exodus 16:33, NASB)*

*"But the LORD said to Moses, Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die." (Numbers 17:10, NASB)*

The Ark of the Covenant was a small box. It was approximately 2.5 cubits long (3.9 feet), 1.5 cubits wide (2.3 feet), and 1.5 cubits tall (2.3 feet). It was made of acacia wood overlaid inside and out with gold. Exodus 25:10-11; Exodus 25:22; Exodus 37:1-9.

*"They shall construct an ark of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make a gold molding around it." (Exodus 25:10-11, NASB)*

*"There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel." (Exodus 25:22, NASB)*

*"Now Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; its length was two and a half cubits, and its width one and a half cubits, and its height one and a half cubits; and he overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, and made a gold molding for it all around. He cast four rings of gold for it on its four feet; even two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. He made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry it. He made a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat; one cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at the two ends. The cherubim had their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward each other; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat." (Exodus 37:1-9, NASB)*

Wood speaks of the humanity of Christ. Gold speaks of the deity of Christ. The two together speak of



the uniqueness of the God-man Jesus Christ. The Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat on top was kept in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. The Ark speaks of redemption for our sins through the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Over the top of the box was a Mercy Seat, a solid gold throne, and on each end of the throne was a cherub, the highest angelic rank prior to the Satan's fall and those of the angels that chose to follow him. The first cherub represented the perfect absolute righteousness (+R) of God. The second cherub represented the Justice of God. The righteousness of God looks down and condemns. The justice of God looks down and places a penalty. Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23.

*"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, NASB)*

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23, NASB)*

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies twice - once for himself and once for the people. He sprinkled the blood of the animal sacrifice on the altar over the top of the Mercy Seat. The righteousness of God looked at the blood, which spoke of Jesus' substitutional spiritual death on the Cross and was satisfied. God's justice looked at the blood and was satisfied based on Christ being judged for us. We have, in the Ark and the Mercy Seat, a picture of God's satisfaction with the work of Jesus Christ (Propitiation) or the divine viewpoint of salvation. God's righteousness and justice were satisfied.

The Ark was a symbol of God's presence and was carried at the head of the column of the army of Israel, thus indicating divine protection of the Jews. Num. 10:33; Deut. 1:33; Psalms 132:8.

*"Thus they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD journeying in front of them for the three days, to seek out a resting place for them." (Numbers 10:33, NASB)*

*"who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go." (Deuteronomy 1:33, NASB)*

*"Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength." (Psalms 132:8, NASB)*

The Ark was involved in the miraculous crossing of the Jordan where God held back the river until the entire nation had crossed. Joshua 3:10-11; Joshua 3:17; Joshua 4:7.

*"Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite. 'Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.'" (Joshua 3:10-11, NASB)*

*"And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan." (Joshua 3:17, NASB)*

*"then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.'" (Joshua 4:7, NASB)*

The Ark was used as an offensive weapon on Jericho in Joshua 6:4-5 and Joshua 6:20-21.

*"Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day*



*you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. "It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead." (Joshua 6:4-5, NASB)*

*"So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword." (Joshua 6:20-21, NASB)*

The Ark was captured by the Philistines who thought it would be a powerful weapon against their enemies. However, they soon learned that the Ark was nothing but trouble for them. 1 Sam. 4:3; 1 Sam. 5:7; 1 Sam. 5:11.

*"When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies." (1 Samuel 4:3, NASB)*

*"When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god." (1 Samuel 5:7, NASB)*

*"They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there." (1 Samuel 5:11, NASB)*

The Ark stayed at Kiriath-jearim for 20 years until David moved the Ark to Jerusalem. A soldier was killed for handling it. 1 Sam. 7:2.

*"From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD." (1 Samuel 7:2, NASB)*

Solomon put the Ark in the temple when it was built in Jerusalem. It stayed there until it was destroyed in 586 B.C. under the Fifth Cycle of Discipline by Nebuchadnezzar. There is no record of it ever being replaced.