

Title: **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**

Text: Exodus 25:10-22

Subject: *Christ our Ark and Propitiation*

Date: Tuesday Evening — November 18, 2008

Tape : Exodus #86

Readings: *Psalm 27:1-14 — Bobbie Estes*

Introduction:

Open your Bibles to Exodus 25. Our subject tonight is **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**. After commanding Moses to take offerings from his people, the Lord God told his servant to use those gifts of the people to make a sanctuary for him, that he might dwell among his chosen people. Then he proceeded tell him exactly how he was to make the Tabernacle and everything to be put in it. In verses 10-22, God told Moses to make an ark of shittim wood, overlay it with gold, and place a mercy seat of pure gold upon it. Let's read the Lord's instructions to Moses, beginning at Exodus 25, verse 10.

10. "And they shall make an ark *of* shittim wood: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof."
11. "And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about."
12. "And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *shall be* in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it."
13. "And thou shalt make staves *of* shittim wood, and overlay them with gold."
14. "And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them."
15. "The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it."
16. "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee."
17. "And thou shalt make a mercy seat *of* pure gold: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof."
18. "And thou shalt make two cherubims *of* gold, *of* beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat."

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

19. “And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: *even* of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.”
20. “And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.”
21. “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.”
22. “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

What heart can conceive or tongue describe the blessedness of this word from our God? What a wonderful, heavenly revelation this is! — At all times, under all circumstances, and in all places the God of all grace has provided and established a mercy seat, a throne of grace; and he bids sinners meet him there! — There is a place where God and sinners can meet, a place where God can meet me and I can meet God, freely and without hindrance of any kind!

No place is at a distance so far from the mercy seat that we cannot meet God there immediately. No circumstance is so dark that the penetrating eye of God who sits upon this throne of grace cannot to see through it. — No covering is too thick that it can obscure me from his sight. — No circumstance is gloomy and dark, so heavy and black that my God cannot behold me. — “*Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD*” (Jeremiah 23:24). — “*If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yes, the darkness hides not from you; but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to you*” (Psalm 139:11).

By night upon our bed, by day in our various occupations, in the crowded streets, or alone in the open field, surrounded by the ungodly, or in the company of God’s saints, we may, if God the Holy Spirit enables us, lift our hearts to heaven and meet our God upon his throne of grace, upon the mercy seat. With a sigh or a groan, with a heartfelt word, a groan of confession, or a deep desire that cannot be put into words, we may

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

instantaneously meet God, the God of all grace, our heavenly Father. He bids us do so (Hebrews 4:16), and promises, — “*There will I meet with you!*”

- We meet him with sin; he meets us with forgiveness!
- We meet him with guilt; he meets us with pardon!
- We meet him with need; he meets us with grace!
- We meet him with misery; he meets us with mercy!
- We meet him with heaviness; he meets us with strength!
- We meet him with darkness; he meets us with light!
- We meet him with confusion; he meets us with direction!
- We meet him with sorrow; he meets us with solace!

How? How can this be? How can God and sinners meet together? If God the Holy Spirit will graciously teach us the meaning of this ark and its mercy seat, if he will show us the typical significance of this piece of furniture that was made to be put in the Tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, this center piece of Old Testament ceremonial worship, we will see clearly how it is that God and sinners can and do meet together on the mercy seat.

Proposition: God the Holy Spirit uses the tabernacle and the furniture in it as typical things to show us the excellence, pre-eminence, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Divine Redeemer and Savior (Hebrews 9:1-5).

(Hebrews 9:1-5) “Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. (2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. (3) And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; (4) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (5) And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

These are the things we read about in Exodus 25.

- The Golden Pot that had Manna.
- Aaron’s Rod that budded.
- The Tables of the Covenant.
- The Cherubims of glory.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

- And the Mercy Seat.

In its day, under the ceremonial, typical religious service of the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant was one of those “*ordinances of divine service*” which beautifully typified and pictured the Lord Jesus Christ and our redemption by him. John saw this clearly. — “*The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament*” (Revelation 11:19).

Tonight, I want to stir up our hearts to seek him of whom the ark speaks, the Lord Jesus Christ, by showing you what can be found in him.

All the “*ordinances of divine service*” all the rites and ceremonies, and the “*worldly sanctuary*” itself, the tabernacle, were types of Christ. You will never understand the Old Testament Scriptures until you see that everything in the Old Testament Scriptures represents, points to, and pictures Christ, our Substitute (Luke. 24:27; 44-45).

- The Tabernacle – Christ – Glorious within/Humble without.
- The Brazen Altar – Christ’s sufferings and death.
- The Laver – Christ our Fountain, opened for cleansing.
- The Candlestick – Christ the Light of the World.
- The Table of Shewbread – Christ the Bread of Life.
- The Altar of Incense – Christ our Intercessor.
- The Veil – Christ the Door.
- The Ark of the Covenant – Christ our Reconciliation.

Tonight we will go into “*the Holiest of all*”, by the “*golden censer*” of our Savior’s merits, asking God to show us Christ our Ark, and let us see what can be found in the Ark.

I want you to see, and see clearly, that the ark of the covenant was a beautiful type of Christ. It was made out of shittim (cedar like) wood, overlaid on the inside and the outside with pure gold, representing both the incorruptible humanity and glorious deity of our Savior. The ark was the symbol of God’s holiness, power, and glory. It was carried about from place to place upon the shoulders of the priests by staves, fitted into rings attached to the ark. **Even so Christ is carried throughout the world upon the shoulders of chosen men through the preaching of the gospel.**

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

There are many good studies of the tabernacle and its furnishings, showing the correspondences that may be drawn from the materials by which those things were made and our Lord Jesus. But I want us to look beyond those factual comparisons, good as they are, to the message those things are intended to declare. With that in mind, let's do by faith what no mortal was ever allowed to do with physical eye. Let's look inside the ark. What can be found in the ark, Christ Jesus? – **Six Things:**

GOD'S PREACHERS

1st — If you could go behind the veil with the High Priest on the day of atonement, into the holy of holies, the very first thing that would strike your eye would be “*the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat.*” **Those cherubs represent God's preachers** (Exodus 25:18-20; Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 6:1-7).

(Exodus 25:18-20) “And thou shalt make two cherubims *of gold, of beaten work* shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. (19) And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: *even of the mercy seat* shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. (20) And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.*”

(Psalms 80:1) “O Shepherd of Israel, thou that ledest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between the cherubims, shine forth.*”

(Isaiah 6:1-7) “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.* (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe *is me!* for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

We know that these cherubs represent gospel preachers because they are the same as those living creatures before God’s throne which John saw, when he was called up to heaven to behold the throne of God (Revelation 4:6-11).

(Revelation 4:6-11) “And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. (7) And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. (8) And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. (9) And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, (10) The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

Now hear what I say: — It is not possible for a sinner to find, know, or come to God apart from the instrumentality of a gospel preacher (Romans 10:14-17; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 1 Corinthians 1:23; Hebrews 4:12).

(Romans 10:14-17) “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? (17) So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Illustration: *Philip and the Eunuch*

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

God's preachers are not priests. We detest idolatrous priestcraft, be it Roman, Anglican, Mormon, or Baptist. But **God's preachers are his angels**, his messengers of mercy and grace to his people in this world. And they ought to be treated as such (Isaiah 52:7).

(Isaiah 52:7) “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

- Their eyes are always toward the Mercy-Seat!
- They all see eye to eye (Isaiah 528).
- Their message is the message of sins forgiven by blood atonement!
- The glory of God is revealed by the message they proclaim!

GOD'S PROPITIATION

2nd — You would not look long at the cherubim. Their eyes, their faces, their wings direct your attention away from themselves to the mercy-seat. **That mercy-seat represents Christ, God's propitiation** (Exodus 25:17, 21-22; 1 John 4:9-10; Romans 3:24-26).

(Exodus 25:17) “And thou shalt make a mercy seat *of* pure gold: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.”

(Exodus 25:21-22) “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. (22) And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

(1 John 4:9-10) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

(Romans 3:24-26) “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Illustration: Aaron on the Day of Atonement. — The Publican — The one room school – That is Propitiation!

The Mercy-Seat is the place of Hebrews 9:12)...

- Substitution!
- Sacrifice!
- Satisfaction!

(Hebrews 9:12) “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.”

GOD’S PRESENCE

3rd — Standing in the holiest of all with Christ, our Aaron, our great High Priest, suddenly, we realize that we are standing before the mercy-seat, the symbol of **God’s presence**. With blood upon the mercy-seat, covering the broken tables of the law (Exodus 25:16), there we see the glory of God in the pardon of sin by the sacrifice of Christ (Leviticus 9:23-24; Isaiah 6:1-6; Psalm 85:9-11).

(Leviticus 9:23-24) “And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. (24) And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

(Psalms 85:9-11) “Surely his salvation *is* nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. (10) Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*. (11) Truth

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.”

(Isaiah 6:1-6) “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:”

God not only meets us upon the mercy-seat – In Christ, God abides with us. No matter where you are, if you are in Christ, the name of the place is Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is There. Your life is hid with Christ in God! (Isaiah 43:1-5).

(Isaiah 43:1-5) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. (5) Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;”

GOD’S PURPOSE

4th — Now, let’s do by faith what no mortal man could ever do, let’s lift up the mercy-seat and look inside the ark. Remember now, I am talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. What do you see? I see the two tables of the law of

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

God, which we have broken. The broken law, our sins, is under the mercy-seat, under the blood. This broken law, under the blood, represents **God's purpose**.

- The Law was written upon tables of stone, representing both the hardness of our hearts and the inflexibility of God's law.
- The law represents our curse and condemnation by reason of sin.
- This law was always kept in the ark, under the mercy-seat (Exodus. 25:16, 21), representing perfect redemption by Christ.

(Exodus 25:16) “And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.”

(Exodus 25:21) “And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.”

- And that perfect redemption of his elect is the purpose of God (Romans 8:28-31).

(Romans 8:28-31) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

NOTE: The law of God, being perfectly satisfied by Christ, cries as strongly for our salvation as the grace of God. In Christ we are free from the law!

GOD'S POWER

5th — Look again, there is something else inside the ark. There is Aaron's rod that budded. That rod represents **God's power**. Aaron's rod that budded is the gospel of Christ, the Man whom God has chosen (Numbers 17:10).

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

(Numbers 17:10) “And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.”

- Christ our Rock was smitten by Moses’ rod – The Law.
- The Water of Life flows out to sinners by Aaron’s rod – the Gospel.
- The Gospel of Christ is the power of God, before which Dagon must fall! (Romans 1:16-17).

(Romans 1:16-17) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

GOD’S PROVISION

6th — I see one more thing inside the ark, the golden pot which had manna. That golden pot of manna is a picture of Christ **God’s provision**. (Exodus 16:33-34).

(Exodus 16:33-34) “And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. (34) As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.”

- It was a golden pot.
- It was a big pot – holding an omer of manna.
- It had manna – The Bread of Heaven.

All God’s provision for sinners is in Christ Jesus. His name is Jehovah-jireh – The Lord will provide (Ephesians 1:3).

- Provisions of Grace!
- Provisions of Providence!
- Provisions of Eternity!

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

APPLICATION: Come to the Ark Christ Jesus! — The way is open. — All who come to God by Christ are forever saved! — All you need, all God requires, all that heaven can bestow is in the Ark Christ Jesus.

(Psalms 61:1-4) "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. (2) From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I. (3) For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy. (4) I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah."

Amen.