

**[Wednesday, March 22, 2017] Exodus Series, Exodus chapter 25, verses 10-16,
The Ark of the Covenant – Craig Thurman**

The Israelites are directed of the LORD to give willingly to the construction of a sanctuary (v.8), an holy place called the tabernacle. (v.9) This structure will be located in the midst of the camp of Israel, and it shall accompany them in all of their travels through the wilderness. Because it is a tabernacle it is temporary. When once the children of Israel come into the land of promise the tabernacle shall be replaced with the permanent structure called the temple. Both structure present a type of Christ. The tabernacle pictures the Son of God in His first coming, during the time of His earthly ministry, in a lowly, rejected and suffering state of humanity and among national of Israel. The temple pictures the Son of God coming in His eternal glory, coming in His kingdom, and also among national Israel. The first is temporary, the last is eternal.

While we are considering the temporal and permanent state of the tabernacle and temple, it should be pointed out that the ark conveys the same truth. the ark is made so that can be transported with staves while the Israelites make their sojourn to the promised land. Those staves are removed only when it arrives to its final resting place, which is when it is stationed in Solomon's temple. Only after the ark of the covenant came to rest in Solomon's temple are the staves finally and permanently removed. (cf. 1Ki.8.3-10, **21**)

*1Ch 22:19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, **into the house** that is to be built to the name of the LORD.*

The ark of the covenant had been in a tent that David had made for it in the vicinity of Jerusalem, for some time. (2Sa.6.10;) What became of the tabernacle is not said. (cf. 2Sa.6.17; 1Chron.15.1; 16.1)

1Ki 8:21 And I (Solomon) have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

1Ki 8:8 And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. (also 2Chron.5.9)

Chapters 25-31 present sixteen features that relate in some way to the tabernacle construction. Sixteen is the number for *love*. The love of the Father was sent and dwelt among us. On two occasions the Heavenly Father spoke of His only begotten Son: at his baptism, and at his temporary glorification, called the transfiguration.

Mt 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Mt 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

In our present chapter, the 25th of Exodus, there are fifteen things listed that the children of Israel may give freely to the things related to the tabernacle. Fifteen is the number for *rest*. The giving of these are things are because they are *willing*. The LORD had in fact worked in their hearts to willingly give to the service of the tabernacle.

Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

He.4.11 ¶ Let us labour (be diligent, studious, forward, endeavor; of σπουδή, to haste) therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

You know, Christians want to serve the Lord. They do so willingly. They want to read his Word. They want to assemble with the saints. They want to worship, praise and give thanks to the Lord. They do the service of Christ willingly. The saints don't need gimmicks. The LORD works in us so that we are willing.

Of this tabernacle one man said in 1979, that the value of this temple in his day would have been about \$10,000,000.00. No matter what day it is, whether in

Moses' day, in this man's day, or in ours, it is clear that the value of Christ for sinners is eternally inestimable. Christ came to save sinners. Without Him none could be saved. By Him all are.

Remember the purpose for the tabernacle structure presents the present of God come in human flesh. God dwelling among men.

*Ex 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; **that I may dwell among them.***

One final thought before we begin. The entire matter of the tabernacle is by revelation. As Israel could not have known anything of the tabernacle apart from Divine and sovereign revelation of God to Moses, so no man can know Jesus Christ apart from that same Divine and sovereign revelation.

Mt 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

...

Mt.16.16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

*17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but **my Father** which is in heaven. [... hath revealed it to thee, that is, that Jesus is the Christ of God.]*

Man cannot and do not just stumble on the truth. All truth is a revelation.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

... (back up now to verse 12)

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

אָרוֹן שִׁטִּים עֲצֵי

10 ¶ And they shall make an ark of *shittim* wood:

an ark of, אָרוֹן, common noun אָרוֹן; this is first translated *coffin* (Ge.50.26); this is the second use and translation of this word in the O.T.; *chest* (2Ki.12.9).

eight times in this chapter (Ex.25)

twenty-six times in the Exodus: # the gospel of Christ

LXX: has *ark* (κιβωτόν) *of the testimony*: this is in Hebrew, the 16th **verse**.

κιβωτόν, acc. of κιβωτός; KJV N.T. Noah's ark (4); ark of the covenant (2).

The first item described is the ark. That is significant.

The English word, *ark*, into which Noah and his family came was made of gopher wood. The ark into which baby Moses was laid was made of bulrushes. These arks come from the Hebrew תֵּבָה, te-bah. The Septuagint (LXX) and the New Testament translate ark from Greek κιβωτός. Each, in its simplest state was a box, and certainly unattractive because both of these were slimed with pitch [the tabernacle was unattractive because of the outer covering of badgers' skins], that had either a top (Noah's ark) or a lid (Moses' ark and the ark of the covenant.) **But we should point out that the Hebrew in this text is different from the ark of Noah and the ark that Moses was put into. It is אָרוֹן, a-ron. And this ark is made of shittim wood overlaid with gold.**

Shittim wood is never mentioned in the Bible except in relation to the tabernacle (26 times in the book of Exodus [the number for the gospel]; once in Deuteronomy). Therefore it is a select wood for a select work. Shittim wood comes from the shittah tree, which is mentioned only once in the Old Testament at Is.41.19.

Shittim wood is a material utilized in the making of eight different parts of the tabernacle and its furniture.

Overlaid with gold:

¹ark of the covenant – ²table of showbread – ³altar of incense –
⁴staves – ⁵boards – ⁶pillars (four for the vail; five for the door) – ⁷bars

The material used for the pillars which surround the court, and upon which the curtains are hung, as far as I can find, is not revealed.

Overlaid with brass:

⁸brazen altar – ⁴staves

Note: Three pieces of furniture are of solid metals. The ¹laver is of solid brass. The ²mercy seat and ³candlestick are solid gold.

Mt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, ¹judgment, ²mercy, and ³faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

*Joh 12:46 I am come a ***light** into the world, that whosoever ***believeth** on me should not abide in darkness.*

*Ex 35:24 Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD'S offering: and **every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it.***

Shittim wood must have been a substantial product in Egypt. There is a place or places in the Bible named after the shittah tree. (Nu.25.1; Nu.33.49, Abel-shittim; Jos.2.1). The valley opposite Jericho which runs south along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea is called the valley of Shittim in Joel 3.18.

'... at present confined to the Sinaitic peninsula and to Egypt.'
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Eerdmans, vol. 3, p.2778.

This wood must have been a good furniture wood, but it was also very heavy.

‘Its wood is heavier than water, exceedingly hard, of fine grain, the sap-wood yellow, the heart-wood brown. It is not attacked by insects. It was therefore eminently suited for furniture such as that for which it was employed, in a climate where insects commit such ravages as in the desert and in Palestine.’ *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Hastings, vol.4, p.507

G. E. Jones wrote, ‘The shittim wood was a desert growth and pictures the human nature of Christ. Isaiah speaks of Christ as a root out of dry ground. “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground.” Isa.53.2.’ *Christ Revealed in the Tabernacle*, p.35.

As the shittah tree was abundant in Egypt, so Egypt is a type of the world, and a type of the flesh. Jesus Christ came into human flesh, and assumed human nature.

*Ge.16.1 ¶ Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, **an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.***

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

*Ga 4:23 But **he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh**; but he of the freewoman was by promise. (In other words, the birth of Ishmael was a product of Abraham and Sarah’s own doing, not because of faith in the promise of God.)*

*He.2.14 ¶ Forasmuch then as **the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same**; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Col 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

*1Ti 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

As we have already cited above of the Hastings Bible Dictionary, the fact that it is the wood of the shittah tree, was exceedingly hard, fine grained, and does not suffer the destructive effects of insects so our Lord was incorruptible, without weakness or flaw. He was sinless in his nature.

Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

And as the Israelites brought up the shittim wood with them as the LORD had called them to come out of Egypt, so also our Lord Jesus was called to come up out of Egypt.

*Mt 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, **Out of Egypt have I called my son.***

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.

The biblical standard of measurement for building materials is the cubit. A cubit is said to be about 18"; the average length of a man's forearm, from his elbow to the tip of his middle finger.

The ark has five panels (4 sides and a bottom). In our measurement it would be 45" long, 27" wide, and 27" high. The measurements appear to be from the perspective of one that would carry the furniture.

11 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it,

overlay, a Piel (intensive active) pret. and fut. of the root **צָפַח**; this verb in Qal refers to a *watcher*, i.e. a *watchmen*; in Piel (intensive active), and Pual (twice only, intensive passive), Ex.26.32, *overlaid* and Pv.26.23, *covered*; Piel is translated mostly as **overlay** (34), **cover** (4), **garnish** (1), and in very few instances *espy*, *watch* (Piel imperative), *watchman* and *look* (Piel participle), *look*, *watch*, *look up* (Piel fut.).

The shittim wood is covered with pure gold both inside and outside. What work was involved in order to overlay the wood with gold is not revealed in Scripture. How the gold was made to overlay the shittim wood we do not know. That being unrevealed means it is a mystery. And so it is also with the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture states the truth of His virgin birth, but it does not explain it. How the Son of God was laid upon human flesh in the womb of Mary we have no idea. We only know that it is true. That is a mystery.

We do not know whether the gold was beaten into thin plates, into a kind of foil, and then formed to cover the ark (Ex.28.36; 1Ki.10.16, 17), or, if it was cast into plates and fitted to each of the wood panels (Ex.25.12; 32.4, 24; Job 28.2; Is.30.22; 40.19) or, a combination of the two. (Jer.10.9) We don't know.

What we do know is this: that the gold never mixed with the shittim wood, and the shittim wood never mixed with the gold. These were two distinct features of the ark. In this way, God and humanity were unmixed mixed. Properly stated, God did not become a man and a man did not become God. (The Mormon heresy) The Word of God tells us that He was made in the *likeness* of men, and that the Word was made flesh. (Phl.2.7; Jn.1.14) God did not cease to be God, and His humanity did not cease to be humanity. Deity overlaid humanity and remained the same that He ever was everlasting. Correctly stated, Jesus Christ is the God-man. He is not the Person of the Son of God and a person of a man. He is one Person: the

God-man. God, having superadded to Himself the nature of man.
(He.4.15)

Now, concerning the gold that the Israelites possessed at this time, they certainly were not mining for gold ore during their sojourn. The gold that they possessed came as a result of spoiling the Egyptians when they departed Egypt. Most, if not all of the gold, was in the form of jewelry.(Ex.12.35)

So, the materials used for the construction of the ark are two: shittim wood and gold. It is the gold that brings great value to the shittim wood, and not the other way around.

Gold is proof of great wealth; the blessed of the LORD. (Ge.2.11, 12; 24.22, 30, 31, 35; 41.39-42; 1Ki.10.2; Zec.14.14)

Gold is of great value. Of those metals that the Bible acknowledges, gold is the most valued. The more pure, the more valuable. (Job 23.10; 28.1; Pv.17.3; 27.21; Zec.13.9; Re.3.18; 21.18; 21.21)

Gold ranks highest in the order of things among men or and among thing. (Lam. 4.2; Ez.27.22. Dan.2.32; 2Ti.2.20; Ja.2.2; 1Pe.1.7)

Dan.2. 31 ¶ Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

*32 This image's **head was of fine gold**, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,*

...

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

*37 **Thou, O king, art a king of kings:** for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.*

*38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. **Thou art this head of gold.***

Gold is a type for the Godhead, The Divine; or the **glory of the Divine**. (Ex.32.24, 31; 1Ki.12.28) Gold as a type of the **glory of the Divine** best aligns with what our Lord *emptied Himself of* in Phil.2.7.

*Ex 29:43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified **by my glory**.*

When the ark of the covenant, particularly, was taken by the Philistines we notice that it is written:

1Sa.4.17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

...

21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

*22 And she said, **The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.***

*Ac 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the **Godhead** (Divine; 2Pe.1.3, 4) **is like unto gold**, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.*

*Da 3:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an **image of gold**, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.*

...

*5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye **fall down and worship the golden image** that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:*

Shittim wood overlaid with gold is the revelation of the glory of Deity in human flesh.

*1Jo 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is of God:*

*is come, ἐληλυθότα, acc. sing. masc. part. perf. of ἔρχομαι, to come. **An already accomplished fact. The action is views as being completed.** So, the alternative position is as verse three indicates, to deny that Christ Jesus did come in the flesh is to reveal the spirit of antichrist.*

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

The phrase, *within and without*, is found only in the Old Testament, eight times. (Ge.6.14; Ex.25.11; 37.2; 1Ki.6.29, 30, 7.9; 2.10; 41.17) Eight is the number for the new birth. It is a birth which takes place *within* the heart. The focus is upon that change within. Christ is the glory of God, not only from an external perspective, but from an internal one as well. What you saw of God in Christ in the outward was what He was in the inward.

and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

*a crown, כִּי, zer; always translated with the English word *crown* (10), only used with reference to the tabernacle (Ex.25.11-37.27).*

The crown is probably a part of the work of overlaying the gold so that it is a sort of protruding *rib* consisting of pure gold. It probably leans outward and rises upward in such a way so that it can receive and hold that which will be placed upon it. In other words that which is placed on top of the ark will be *inset*. In this way these two pieces become as one complete unit; a union.

1Jo 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

12 And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof;

corners, פְּעֻמֹתָיו, fem. pl. noun w/ a3ps. masc. suff., פָּעַם, pa-[g]am; KJV, *times, corners*. The use of this word seems to require a multiplication or doubling. In this instance *four* ‘times.’ What would be four times in a box but the four corners.

Could this mean that the four rings are put in the four corners of the crown?

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,

staves, בָּדִי, masc. pl. noun of בָּד; looks like this is always in the plural [KJV, *staves, branches, strength, bars*]; plural for staff, **but the singular is never used, and staff is never translated from this word.**

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.

The staves compel us to consider the temporariness that there was in the first coming of the Christ of God. They are removed every time the tabernacle is erected. (cf. Nu.4.6)

The ark is lifted and portable by the insertion of the staves through the rings. The gold covered staves were used to lift up the golden ark, the golden table of showbread, and the golden altar of incense. And the brazen staves were used to lift up the brazen altar. All of this speaks of Christ being lifted up in some way before others.

Joh 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

The entire tabernacle structure is made portable. This presents a type of the temporary sojourn of our Lord in His first coming.

Mt 8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

The staffs are used for the transportation of the ark reaches. Israel was commanded that the staves were not to be removed. The meaning seems to be that as long as the ark of the covenant was in transit the staves must remain in place, because we read in Nu.4.6 that when the Israelites began to break camp to begin another leg of their 40-yr. sojourn they were to insert the staves. Finally, when once the ark of the covenant reaches its final destination, then the staves are permanently removed. (cf. 1Ki.8.8)

In the day of the second coming of Jesus Christ the sojourn of the saints through this life, and Israel through this world, ceases. When Christ sits upon the throne of His glory the sojourn of the church related saints and the Messianic Jew is over.

16 And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

The purpose of the ark is to be a testimony. In it will be placed three things.

*Heb 9:4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, **wherein was the golden pot that had manna** (Ex.16.33, 34), **and Aaron's rod that budded** (Nu.17.10), **and the tables of the covenant** (He. ...*

*De 10:1 At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, **and make thee an ark of wood.***

*2 And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and **thou shalt put them in the ark.***

3 And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.

4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

5 And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and **put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.**

First the manna, which is a witness of God come in human flesh.

Joh 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Second, Aaron's rod that budded testifies of the resurrection of Christ(?).

Re 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

And third, the tables of stone testify of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

*1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in **Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ...***

These are undeniable proofs that God would come among, be crucified & live again, and reconcile us to God.

Concerning the placing of the tables of the covenant in the ark:

The emphasis is not upon the fact that God can keep His own holy, just, and good commandment. Of course He does. But by placing the tables into the ark we know that there was a Man foretold who would come and keep the whole law of God in our place.

Mt 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Jesus, the promised Messiah of God, sent of the Father from eternal glory, by living among us, would provide a righteousness through His active obedience to the Law of God which would be imputed to all of the elect of God. Righteousness, without works, is imputed to all of the elect of God because Jesus Christ died for them. (Ro.4.5-8) This means that all of the elect of God have a righteous standing before God by Jesus Christ. And if they have such a standing before God there is none that can ever condemn us again.

Ro.8.32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

If you have believed that Christ came to die for you God accounts you righteous before Him without any works whatsoever. You cannot ever come into condemnation. You are His forever.

To close, the ark of the covenant witnesses that Jesus Christ is the Bread of Heaven, the Righteousness One, and Eternal life.