



ARK OF THE COVENANT

December 18, 2025 | *Exodus 25:1-22; Mark 15:37-38*

The Holy of Holies

For the last three days, we have studied the tabernacle, that desert sanctuary in which “God dwelled” with His people.

The tabernacle had three areas — the courtyard, the Holy Place (first room in the tent), and the Holy of Holies (the second room in the tent). The two rooms in the tent were separated by an inner veil (*Ex. 25-26*). On the other side of the veil was the holiest place, the “throne room” of God, which included the Ark of the Covenant (a box) and the Mercy Seat (the lid to the box).

The dimensions of the Holy of Holies were ten cubits wide, ten cubits tall, and ten cubits long. Thus, the holiest place, which represented heaven, was a perfect cube. The Apostle John later described heaven as a cube (*Rev. 21:16*).

In the Holy of Holies were the two most important pieces of furniture — the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat. The Ark was the first item that God described to Moses, and it is the first item constructed (*Ex. 25:10-22*). It is the only piece of furniture to have its own room, and if the Ark were removed, all the other pieces would be useless and meaningless. The entire structure is centered around the Ark, as it represented the presence of God (*Ex. 25:22*).

Notice that there was no light source in the Holiest Place, so how was the High Priest able to see? In the courtyard, the sun provided natural light. In the Holy Place, the lampstand provided light. In the Holy of Holies, God provided the light by His presence (*1 Tim. 6:14-16*).

This presence was often called the Shekinah glory by the Jews. The word *shekinah* means “one who dwells,” referring to God who dwelled among His people (*Num. 10:35-36; Ps. 80:1*).

The Ark of the Covenant

The Ark was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold (*Ex. 25:10-16*). It was 2.5 cubits long, 1.5 cubits wide, and 1.5 cubits tall, and had a molding around the edge.

The Ark had a ring on each corner at its feet, to carry poles. The poles were not to be removed, signifying that the Tabernacle was not God's permanent resting place. Even when Solomon built the Temple, the poles of the Ark were left in the rings (*1 Kgs. 8:8*). The Holy of Holies was a temporary location.

While in transit, the Ark was covered with three cloths – the inner veil, badger's skin, and a blue cloth (*Num. 4:5-6*).

The Hebrew word for the Ark of the Covenant is *arōn*, which is a chest that holds or preserves something of value. There were three items of value placed in the Ark — the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron's budding staff (*Heb. 9:3-5*, Aaron was Moses' brother and the first high priest).

The tablets of the Commandments were a sign of the covenant with God. The jar of manna was preserved as a reminder to future Israelites of God's provision during their desert wandering (*Ex. 16:12-25*). Aaron's budding rod was to be a witness against any rebels who might complain about God's leaders (*Num. 17:1-10; 1 Kgs. 8:9*).

How do these three items relate to Christ? First, Jesus was the embodiment of the Ten Commandments (the law of God). He came not to condemn the law, but to fulfill it.

Second, Christ called Himself the "bread of life," the manna that spiritually sustains His people. Third, the blooming rod of Aaron represented Christ's resurrection (new life).

To Israel, the Ark of the Covenant represented God's presence, His throne, His power and might, and His glory. Thus, it was treated reverently. In fact, its presence was so ominous that it was covered while in transit, so that the people would not see it or touch it.

In *Romans 3:23*, Paul wrote, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Because of our sin, we cannot see God or stand in His presence. We are separated and worthy of His judgment.

However, although the Ark was intimidating to the people of Israel, today we can see that it was a picture of Christ. Note the similarities.

The Ark was at the center of Israel's camp. Christ is the center of the Church.

The Ark was anointed with oil. Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

The Ark was the glory of God on earth (Shekinah). Christ was the glory of God on earth (the Transfiguration).

The Ark symbolized the Old Covenant, consecrated by blood. Christ consecrated a New

Covenant by His blood.

The Ark was covered with three layers. Christ was the Godhead in bodily form — three in one.

The Philistines (enemies of God) captured the Ark. The Pharisees (enemies of Christ) arrested Jesus.

When the Ark was taken, Israel fled. When Jesus was taken, the disciples fled.

The Philistine gods bowed before the Ark. Every knee will bow before Christ.

There was great joy when the Ark returned to Israel. There was great joy when Christ was resurrected.

The Ark and the Shekinah glory returned to the earth in the form of Christ. He is the New Testament Tabernacle, the God who dwelt among us in the flesh. But His glory far surpassed that of any tabernacle or temple (*Hag. 2:9*).

When Jesus was sacrificed on the cross, the Temple veil was torn in two (symbolizing His torn flesh), thereby granting access to God for all who believe in Christ. When Jesus declared, “It is finished,” He ended the sacrificial system and the need for temples.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell His followers. We don’t need an Ark or temple today because God dwells in us. We, the Church, are His temple, and we will dwell with Him forever (*1 Cor. 3:16*).

What Child is this in the manger? The Child is the Ark of a New Covenant — our free access to the presence of God.

Ponder and Pray

Why does it matter to us that the Temple veil was torn?

With total access to God's presence, how should we pray? Practice now.

Have you missed some days?
Click [here](#) to access previously emailed devotions.

The reading plan and devotions were developed by Aaron Ferguson, one of our Elders and author of the *Study Guide and Daily Reflections for the One Year Chronological Reading of the Bible and the New Testament*. For more details, visit his website at BiAY.org.



