

The Ark Of The Covenant

Long Beach Alliance Church • March 11th, 2012 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.
~Revelation 11:19 (NASB)**

1) The Centrality Of God's Presence

A) Remarkably, God chooses to use His people in constructing the tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-9). The tent (approximately fifteen feet wide by forty-five feet long, surrounded by a large fence) would be the place where God could "dwell" amongst His people (25:8).

B) You would think that God would describe the construction of the tabernacle from the large fenced area, and work downward toward the smaller items,



revealing how each item would fit into the larger picture.

- C) While this approach makes sense, it's completely the opposite of how God describes His tabernacle. God begins with the centermost object, the ark of the covenant.
- D) The construction of the tabernacle begins with its most significant object, the place where God's presence would physically "sit" amongst His people (25:22).

2) The Construction Of The Ark

- A) The ark itself was built from wood, and then overlaid with purified gold (25:10-11). The ark would have been quite beautiful, and probably quite heavy because of the amount of gold used in its construction.
- B) The poles, which allowed for the carrying of the ark, were permanently attached (25:12-15). This was significant, since no one was to ever actually touch the ark of the covenant (cf. Numbers 4:15-20).
- C) Since God made the ark of the covenant holy, touching the ark would bring death (see the story of Uzzah, 2nd Samuel 6:6-7). The holiness of God is significant, to be honored, revered, and worshipped (see 1st Corinthians 6:19-20).

3) The Significance Of The Ark

- A) The lid of the ark of the covenant had two cherubim angels (cf. Ezekiel 1:5-11, 13-14; 10:20) on it with outstretched wings and faces looking downward in reverence to God's holiness (Exodus 25:18-20).
- B) The wings of the angels created a seat (of sorts), called the "mercy seat" (25:17, 21). The Lord sits above the cherubim (also called "the cherubim of glory," Hebrews 9:5), enthroned (Psalm 99:1; 2nd Kings 19:15).



- C) Inside the ark, the “testimony” (the two tablets of the ten commandments, cf. 31:18) was to be placed, which God would provide to Moses (25:16, 21).
- D) The ark of the covenant was an earthly symbol of heavenly reality. God’s presence would come and sit upon the “mercy seat” between the reverent cherubim, and His footstool was His testimony, the Law of God which governed the agreement between God and mankind.
- E) God sits enthroned above the ark, the Law under His feet, written in stone. However, since man cannot keep the terms of the covenant, the ark only represents condemnation and death for man, rather than mercy.
- F) Symbolically, when God gazed down from His throne, He would see the Law, and it would leave mankind condemned. Thankfully however, God made a way for mankind to experience mercy, through atonement for sin.

4) Yom Kippur

- A) Once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the High Priest made sacrifices for his sins & the sins of the people, sprinkling blood on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16).
- B) When the High Priest sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat, this showed (physically) that atonement had been made upon the mercy seat. Perhaps you have heard the phrase “your sins are covered...” This is the picture of the blood on the mercy seat – sins are covered.
- C) The location of the blood upon the mercy seat is significant! Above the seat is God, in all His holiness. Set below is the Law, which exposes sin. In between came the atoning sacrifice of blood which covered the sins of the people.
- D) When God looked upon His people and their obedience to the Law, He would first see the atoning blood of the sacrifice. This turned God’s wrath away, and allowed God’s presence to be among His people.

5) One Sacrifice To End All Sacrifices

- A) The death of Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice which was acceptable to God. Jesus Christ gave His own unblemished life, spilling His own blood, providing forgiveness through His atoning sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-14; 21-22).
- B) Unlike Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), when sacrifices were made for the people every single year, the sacrifice of Jesus was “once for all” (Hebrews 10:11-14).
- C) As God always planned, through faith in Jesus Christ, we can dwell in relationship with God (10:19-25). When God looks at His people, He sees Jesus’ atoning blood!