

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

The Ark of the Covenant

Part One

By John C. Robertson

Was the ark of the covenant to be forgotten or remembered as a historical relic? What significance does the ark play in the bigger picture of God redeeming man from their sins? The answer to these questions begins at Exodus 25:10-22 and ends at Hebrews 8:5.

God tells Moses to make a sanctuary and furnishings, including the ark of the covenant, exactly as he showed him by pattern at Mount Sinai. It would be a box with a mercy seat and two cherubim facing each other at the top. God communed with Moses between the cherubim above the mercy seat (Exodus 25:22). Within the ark would be a golden pot of manna, two tables of stone with God’s law written, and Aaron’s rod that budded. The ark would be carried before Israel as they marched to Canaan (see Joshua 3:4).

The ark of the covenant, as well as the rest of the sanctuary and its furnishings, have great significance as relates to Christ, the new covenant, the church, and the heavenly realm of holiness. The Hebrew writer explains that what Moses saw on Mount Sinai was the true sanctuary, church, or Christ, that he was to pattern all the first covenant sanctuary things after (see Hebrews 8:5). God’s people must contemplate Christ, New Testament principles, the church, and salvation to see the mysteries behind the first covenant items (Matthew 13:11).

The “*ark*” (LXX κιβωτ ς) is “a wooden box, chest, or coffer {treasure chest}” (LS 432). God’s ark of the covenant is deemed the ark of “*testimony*” (see Exodus 30:6 and Hebrews 9:4). God wrote his “*testimony*” with his own finger upon tables of stone (see Exodus 31:18). The ark contained these two tables of stone and was consequentially named “*ark of the testimony*.”

The *shadows* are clear (Hebrews 9:4-5). The ark of the covenant is the *shadow* of the treasure of truth it holds (see Proverbs 2:4 and Matthew 6:21). The body of Christ casting the *shadow* of the ark of the covenant is clearly seen in treasures of truth that reveal the conditions one must meet to be a recipient or heir of God’s promised salvation, holiness, righteousness, church, and or Christ (see Colossians 2:16-17).

The pot of manna, within the ark, was a *shadow* of the bread of life (Christ). Those that ate the manna died while those that eat the bread truths of Christ live forever (John 6:48-51). Aaron’s rod that budded revealed God’s choice of high priest. God caused Aaron’s rod to bud and bear fruit at Numbers 16. The incident *shadows* Christ’s resurrection (a dead stick comes to life and bears fruit) (Hebrews 5:5-6).

Furthermore, the two tables of stone that God wrote his laws and gave to Moses were within the ark. The two stones of law *shadow* the first and second covenant laws of God. Putting the ark of the covenant together we see an interesting picture. The overall picture of the conditional rich inheritance of forgiveness of sins or righteousness is revealed through law and realized in the resurrection of Christ. ■

The Ark of the Covenant

Part Two of Two

By John C. Robertson

The ark of the covenant had a top referred to as the “*mercy seat*” (Hebrew *kapporet* or Greek LXX *ἱλασθριον*)

(Exodus 25:17-22). The Greek *ἱλαστρον* means “cover of the ark of the covenant or propitiation (appeasing)” (LS 379). Moulton adds, “to show mercy, grace and or pardon” (Moulton 201). The ark’s covering, lid, or mercy seat, foreshadowed God’s mercy that he would demonstrate through the sacrifice of his Son for the forgiveness of man’s sins (see Romans 3:23-25 and 1 John 2:1-2). The treasure box of truth involves God’s grace and mercy.

God tells Moses, regarding the mercy-seat, “**22 And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment unto the children of Israel**” (Exodus 25:22). Moses would receive revelation from God at the mercy seat. It would be the place wherein God’s laws would be made known to his servant so that he may distribute it to the people. The world would come to know the grace and mercy of God by way of Moses. The mercy seat shadows God’s grace and mercy that is distributed to the world by way of preaching (Matthew 28:18-20 and Luke 24:45-49).

Above the mercy seat are two “**cherubim**” (*χερουβιμ* – “the emblematic figures representing *cherubim* on the ark” Moulton 436) with their wings “**spread out...on high**” toward each other (Exodus 37:8-9). God placed *cherubim* at the entrance of the Garden of Eden to guard the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). Ezekiel reveals the guardian work of the *cherubim* when giving the ode on the fall of the king of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:11-23).

David describes God as riding upon the wings of the *cherubim* and flying like the wind (2 Samuel 22:11). Ezekiel sees a vision of the throne of God with the Lord sitting above *cherubim* as though being supported by them and carried about as is indicated at 2 Samuel 22 (see Ezekiel 1:4-28 compared to 10:1-22).

The duties of guarding and carrying God and his throne about stand out in such a study. In the New Testament, it is the truth (Christ / John 14:6 and the Holy Spirit / John 16:13) that guards, protects (Psalms 61:7; Isaiah 31:4-5; Ephesians 6:10-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and 1 Peter 1:5), and is spread throughout the world by the teachings of the apostles (see Matthew 28:18-19).

One may compare Zechariah 4 to Revelation 11:3-5 to see a connection between the two angels over the mercy seat of the ark of the Covenant and the light of truth they reveal. These two angels (witnesses, candlesticks, or olive trees), as guardians and messengers of truth, fit well into the narrative of the ark of the covenant (compare Zechariah 4:10, 14 to Ezekiel 1:18-21 in its context). If one compares Ezekiel’s description of the *cherubim* at 1:4-21 and chapter 10, especially 10:15, 20, a clearer picture is set within the mind). These *cherubim* take the treasure truths of God’s grace and mercy and distribute to the world through preaching. ■

The Problem of Apathy

By Steve Cawthon

Problems facing the body of Christ are many and varied. The devil opposes us with persecutions, false doctrines, and all kinds of fleshly temptations. But one of his most successful devices is apathy - an attitude of indifference which afflicts Christians and eats away their zeal like a cancer. It is highly contagious and, if unchecked, is fatal to the souls of men and women. In many areas, it has now reached epidemic proportions.

Indifference was the problem with the church in Laodicea. To that dead congregation, Jesus said, “**I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot; I would that thou wert cold or hold. So, because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth**” (Rev. 3:15-16). How many churches of Christ are in that same condition today?

Brethren, when we spend more time watching TV and playing ball than we do studying and teaching the word of God, are we not indifferent? When we find time to go to the movies and other places of entertainment, but not to visit the sick and erring, are we not indifferent? The time has come for us to wake up and get to work. Our indifference will send us to eternal hell! ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250