

Church of God

Sunday School



THE TABERNACLE #10 – THE HOLY OF HOLIES

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** God gave the exact pattern for the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:9-15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Arks are places of safety (Genesis 6:13-14, 17-19; Exodus 2:1-10).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The Ark of the Covenant's special contents (Exodus 25:16; 16:33; 1 Kings 8:9; Hebrews 9:3-4).
- ❑ **Thursday:** God's covenants include promises and conditions (Leviticus 26:3, 12; Hebrews 8:6-12; 1 John 2:1).
- ❑ **Friday:** Consider how important mercy is to God (Exodus 25:17, 21-22; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 2:4).
- ❑ **Saturday:** The Cherubims had straight feet to walk in straight paths (Ezekiel 1:7; Hebrews 12:13).

MEMORY VERSE: *"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."* —Exodus 25:22

The Ark Represents Jesus

The lessons of the Tabernacle show how far God went to restore His broken relationship with sinful people. When Thomas asked Jesus, "How can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:5-6). Every part of the Tabernacle points to Christ. These show that His birth, death, burial, and resurrection were all part of God's plan.

The second room of the Tabernacle (called the Holy of Holies) was where God's presence dwelled. Inside was only one piece of furniture—the Ark of the Covenant. God gave exact measurements for building this Ark (2½ cubits by 1½ cubits by 1½ cubits). It was made of acacia wood and covered with pure gold. Pure gold represents God's holiness and perfection. Notice, the value of the metals increased the closer they were to God's holy presence.

The wood represents Jesus' humanity, and the gold overlay reminds us He is God. Acacia was chosen because it is a strong wood that is resistant to decay. This reminds us that Jesus' body did not decay in the tomb—He rose on the third day! Christianity is the only religion whose Founder (the risen Savior) has an empty tomb.

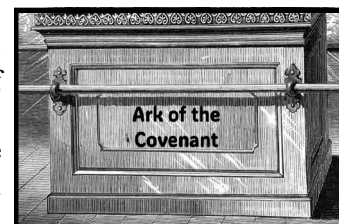
What Is the Purpose of an Ark?

In Genesis 6:14, God commanded Noah to build an ark. The Flood was coming, and the ark would provide a place of safety, preserving everyone who entered it. Noah and his family were saved because they had faith and obeyed God's Word.

In Exodus 2:3, a Hebrew mother (Jochebed) placed her infant son in an "ark of bulrushes." This was to save him from Pharaoh's order to kill Hebrew baby boys (Exodus 1:22). The baby (who was later named Moses) was protected and preserved because of his parents' faith. In both accounts, an ark was designed to be occupied, provide safety, and preserve its contents.

Another ark in the Bible was the Ark of the Covenant. Hebrews 9:4 lists the Ark's contents: "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

One example of the Ark's preservation is the Pot of Manna (representing the miracle of manna; Exodus 16:14-15). Except for the manna gathered for the Sabbath, manna saved for another day would have "bred worms, and stank" (verse 20). Yet, the manna



in the Golden Pot placed in the Ark never spoiled; it was preserved. This teaches that when we are saved from sin, we are "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17). As long as we stay in Christ ("abide"; John 15:4), we are protected and preserved from the dangers of a sinful life.

What Is a Covenant?

A *covenant* is a sacred agreement. The Bible describes two main covenants: (1) the old (given through Moses) and (2) the new (established by Christ). God's covenants include "promises" (Hebrews 8:6), but there were also conditions. The blessing of the old covenant (the Old Testament) is found in Leviticus 26:12. "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Leviticus 26:3 explains the conditions necessary to receive those blessings. "Walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them." A visible reminder of God's covenant with His people (the Ten Commandments) was placed in the Ark of the Covenant.

The new covenant (revealed in the New Testament) also has promises and conditions. The blessing of living in God's presence and a restored relationship with Him takes place when we confess and forsake our sins (Proverbs 28:13). To continue receiving this blessing, we must live a life free from sin ("sin not"; 1 John 2:1).

The Mercy Seat

The Ark had a cover called the Mercy Seat, which was made of gold. No wood was used, for mercy is a divine attribute. God's mercy was made possible by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. God's holiness and justice require sin to be punished. Yet, because of His great love, God made a provision (mercy) for forgiveness (Romans 5:8).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood (from the Brazen Altar) on the Mercy Seat. This symbolized the time when Jesus' blood would be shed for our sins. Just as the Passover lamb's blood protected the Israelites (because of their faith, the death angel passed over; Exodus 12:13), "faith in [Jesus'] blood" brings "remission [a passing over] of sins that are past" (Romans 3:25).

Jesus is called "a propitiation," a word that refers to the Mercy Seat. Though we deserved "death" (Romans 6:23), because of Jesus' sacrifice, God's "undeserved mercy" makes us "spiritually alive ... with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5 *Amplified Bible*).

The Bible gives the length and width of the Mercy Seat but not the height (or depth). Many believe this shows the fact that God's mercy has no limit. The hymn "Deeper Than the Stain Has Gone" says, "*The blood still reaches deeper than the stain has gone.*" No matter how deep sin has taken someone, God's mercy goes deeper. Ephesians 2:4 says, "God ... is rich in mercy."

Consider how important mercy is to God. When Revelation 4:3 describes "a rainbow round about the throne [God's presence]," the center color is "emerald" (representing mercy). The fifth Beatitude (in the middle) says, "Blessed are the merciful" (Matthew 5:7). In the plan of salvation, everything revolves around mercy.

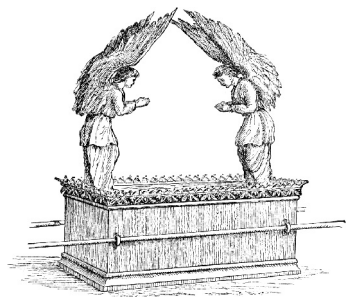
The Cherubims

STRAIGHT FEET: Two Cherubims "stood on their feet" (2 Chronicles 3:13) at each end of the Mercy Seat. Ezekiel 1:7 describes them as having "straight feet." Standing up for the truth requires "straight feet" so we can walk in "straight paths" (Hebrews 12:13).

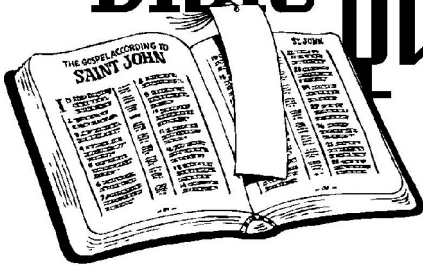
ONE PIECE OF GOLD: The Cherubims and the Mercy Seat (representing God's people and Jesus) were created from one piece of gold (Exodus 25:18). Through salvation, we are one with Christ. We have "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). We become His hands and feet (doing His will and going where He wants us to go).

FACES TOWARD THE MERCY SEAT: The Cherubims' faces are "toward the mercy seat" and looking "one to another" (Exodus 25:20), teaching our eyes are to be on Christ as we work together in unity with God's people.

When the Word of God (the Testimony in the Ark), the presence of Christ (the Mercy Seat), and God's people (the Cherubims) come together in unity, God has promised, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee." Through Christ, the way into the Holy of Holies has been opened, and we can be in God's presence continually!



Bible Quiz

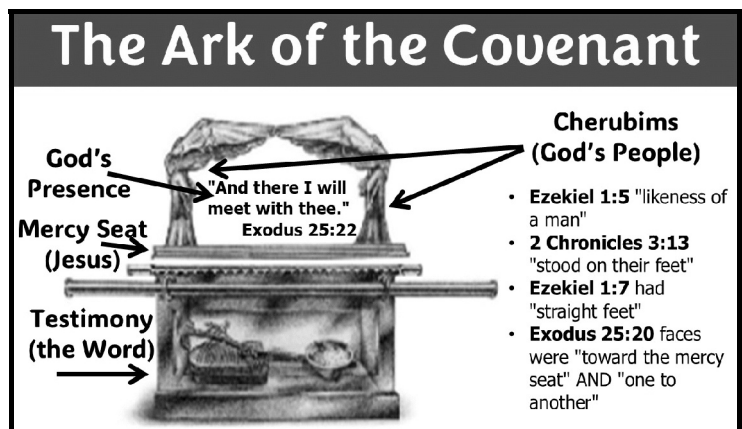


1. What was the Tabernacle's second room called? _____

2. Who does the Ark represent? _____
3. Why were Noah and his family saved from the Flood? _____

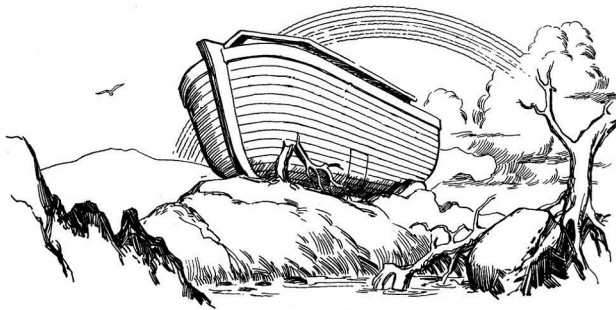
4. Where did Jochebed place her baby? _____
5. The Ark's contents were "the golden pot that had _____, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the _____ of the covenant."
6. God's covenants contain promises and also require _____ to receive those blessings.
7. On what day did the high priest enter the Holy of Holies? The Day of _____
8. When the Israelites were in Egypt, if the lamb's blood was applied to their doorposts, the death angel _____ over them.
9. What is the center color of the rainbow (representing mercy)? _____
10. Which Beatitude says, "Blessed are the merciful"? _____
11. Where did the two Cherubims stand? _____

12. The Mercy Seat and the two Cherubims were made from one piece of _____.
13. Through _____, the way into the Holy of Holies has been opened, and we can be in God's _____ continually!



THE PURPOSE OF AN ARK

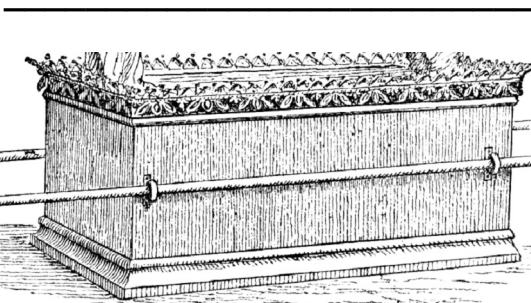
Arks were (1) made to be occupied; (2) a place of safety; and (3) a place of preservation.



Who OCCUPIED the ark?

How was it a place of SAFETY?

What were they PRESERVED from?



What were the contents of this Ark?

What were they preserved from?



Who OCCUPIED this ark?

How was it a place of SAFETY?

What was he PRESERVED from?

The Ark represents Christ. When we are saved, we are "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17)—safe, protected, and preserved!

"In the Old Testament, the New is hidden; in the New Testament, the Old lies open."