

## Message One

### **The Ark of the Testimony**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 25:10-16

#### **I. The Ark typifies Christ as the embodiment of God (Col. 2:9); it also signifies Christ as the presence of the Triune God with His people for the carrying out of His economy to establish His kingdom on earth:**

- A. The first item of the furniture of the tabernacle is the Ark of the Testimony, indicating that if we do not have Christ as the embodiment of God, we cannot have the enlargement of Christ, which is the church, His Body—Exo. 25:21-22; 38:21.
- B. The Ark contained the tablets of the law as the testimony of God, the expression and revelation of who God is—25:16; 31:18.
- C. The Ark in the Holy of Holies signifies the center of God's dwelling place, the church—Eph. 2:21-22.
- D. The Ark signifies the contents of the church as the house of God—1 Tim. 3:15-16; cf. 1 Sam. 4:22; Rev. 3:20.

#### **II. The Ark of acacia wood overlaid with gold signifies the pneumatic Christ as the embodiment of God and as the mingling of divinity with humanity, the building of God with man, dwelling in our spirit for us to contact God and enjoy God—2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 3:17; Col. 2:9; Heb. 9:4:**

- A. Acacia wood signifies Christ's humanity, strong in character and high in standard, as the basic substance for expressing God—Exo. 25:10; Matt. 3:16; 4:4; 8:20; 9:12-13; 11:29; 12:19-20; 17:27; 20:28; 27:12, 14; Mark 1:35; 6:39-40; John 6:12; 7:6; cf. Acts 16:7.
- B. Pure gold signifies Christ's eternal and unchanging divinity—Exo. 25:11.
- C. The acacia wood being overlaid with gold both inside and outside signifies the divine nature penetrating the human nature and resting on the human nature so that it may be expressed through the human nature—v. 11; Rev. 3:18a; 2 Pet. 1:4; cf. Rev. 17:4.
- D. The size of the Ark signifies that it is a testimony—Exo. 25:10; cf. Gen. 6:15-16.
- E. The rim of gold around the Ark signifies the glory of the divine nature as the divine keeping power and holding strength—Exo. 25:11; Heb. 1:3a; Phil. 1:20; 1 Pet. 4:14.

#### **III. The four rings of gold and the two poles on the sides of the Ark signify the move on earth of Christ as God's testimony—Acts 8:1:**

- A. The casting of the four rings of gold signifies that the eternal life-giving Spirit with the divine nature of Christ becomes the linking factor and power through the experience of the cross—Exo. 25:12:
  - 1. The number four signifies the four corners of the earth to reach all men—Rev. 7:1; 5:6, 9.
  - 2. Two rings on each side signify testimony and coordination—cf. Luke 10:1.
- B. The two poles for carrying the Ark signify the move of Christ as God's testimony—Exo. 25:13-15:

1. The poles being made of acacia wood overlaid with gold signify that Christ's human nature is the strength for His move as God's testimony and that His divine nature is the expression of His move—1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Cor. 2:15; 1 Tim. 2:2.
2. The poles being put into the golden rings for carrying the Ark signify that the move of Christ is by men bearing God's testimony in their bodies in the uniting power of the divine nature—Phil. 1:20-21:
  - a. We must be careful to use the proper means to bear God's testimony today—1 Sam. 6:7-8; 2 Sam. 6:3-7.
  - b. The proper way to bear the Ark is to have a direct connection with the Lord Jesus, without any distance between us and Him—Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 4:10-12.
3. The two poles staying in the rings of the Ark signify our readiness for the move of Christ as God's testimony—Matt. 4:18-22; Rev. 14:4; cf. Luke 17:32.

**IV. "After the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, having...the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant"—Heb. 9:3-4:**

- A. The hidden manna is the portion of Christ that we enjoy in the presence of God when there is no distance between us and Him; when there is no distance between us and the Lord, we enjoy Christ in the most intimate and hidden way; this is the enjoyment of the hidden manna, the hidden portion of Christ—Exo. 16:31-36:
  1. To overcome the condition of the church in Pergamos is to separate ourselves from the general practice of today's Christianity and to remain in the presence of God ministering directly to Him, not to anything else; here we enjoy something of Christ that all those who are far off from His presence cannot taste—Rev. 2:17.
  2. If we want to enjoy the hidden manna, there must be no distance between us and God; all the distance between us and the Lord must be eliminated.
  3. When we are ministering to the Lord and enjoying Him as the hidden manna, we have direct fellowship with Him and know His heart and His intention; it is in the presence of the Lord that we can be charged with Him, with His intention, and with all He wants us to do.
  4. When we are ministering to the Lord, we will have God's commitment because we are in His presence, realizing that there is no distance between us and God—Ezek. 44:15-18.
- B. The budding rod signifies that Christ, the resurrected One, should be our life, our living, and the resurrection life within us and that this life should bud, blossom, and bear fruit to maturity—Num. 17:8:
  1. After the children of Israel rebelled, as recorded in Numbers 16, God commanded the twelve leaders to take twelve rods according to the twelve tribes of Israel and put them in the Tent of the Testimony before the Ark; then He said, "The rod of the man whom I choose shall bud"—17:5.
  2. All twelve rods were leafless, rootless, dry, and dead; whichever one budded was the one chosen by God; here we see that resurrection is the basis of God's

- selection and that the basis of service is something apart from our natural life; thus, the budding rod signifies our experience of Christ in His resurrection as our acceptance by God for authority in the God-given ministry.
3. The principle to every service lies in the budding rod; God returned the eleven rods to the leaders but kept Aaron's rod inside the Ark as an eternal memorial; this means that resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God—vv. 9-10:
    - a. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us; it means that God alone is able and that we are not able.
    - b. Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves; all those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it.
    - c. As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation; as long as Sarah could conceive a child, Isaac would not come—Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-3, 6-7.
    - d. What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection; a man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness—Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27.
    - e. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability; resurrection means that we cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything—2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:7.
  - C. The tablets of the covenant, which are the tablets of the law, signify the law of the divine life, which is the spontaneous power, automatic function, innate ability, and divine capacity of the divine life—Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; cf. Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 10:12-13:
    1. The law, this divine capacity, of life can do everything in us for the carrying out of God's economy:
      - a. According to this capacity, we can know God, live God, and be constituted with God in His life and nature so that we may become His increase, His enlargement, to be His fullness for His eternal expression—Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19-21.
      - b. Furthermore, the capacity of the inner law of life constitutes us to be the members of the Body of Christ with all kinds of functions—4:11, 16.
    2. While the divine life grows in us, the law of life functions to shape us, to conform us, to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:2, 29:
      - a. The law of life does not mainly regulate us from doing wrong; it regulates the shape of life.
      - b. The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of telling us what not to do; rather, while life grows, the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, that is, conforming us, to the image of Christ.
      - c. Through the function of the law of life, we all will become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal expression—Heb. 6:1a.