

THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY

FACILITATOR GUIDE

This lesson brings to an end our tour of the Old Testament Tabernacle. We will take a look at the last piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies—the ARK OF THE TESTIMONY.

Exodus 25:10-12;16— They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. 11 You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside shall you overlay it, and you shall make on it a molding of gold around it. 12 You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. ...16 And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you.

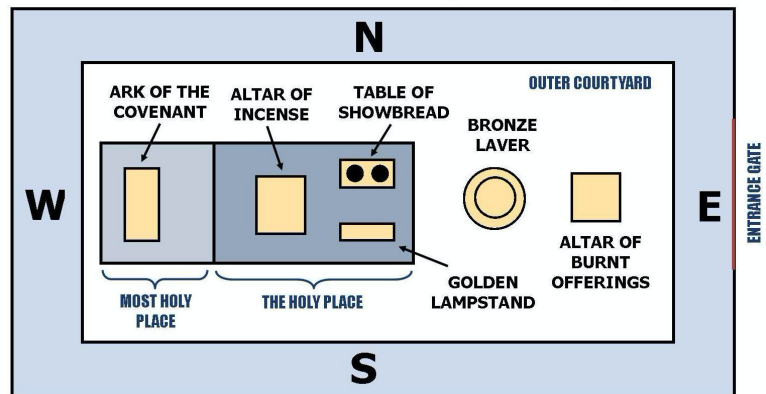
We all know the image of a whip-wielding archeology professor who runs to avoid a group of nazi soldiers while pursuing clues to discover the lost Ark of the Covenant. Though we may not see it with our eyes, we will take a peek inside the golden chest to discover its secrets.

WHO BUILT THE ARK?

Have you ever wondered who made the Ark of the Testimony and all the other holy furniture in the Tabernacle? We can find the answer in Exodus 31.

Exodus 31:2-11 — Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 “See, I have called by name Bezalel (**bez-el**) the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, 5 in cutting jewels for setting, in

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES (EXODUS 35-40)



carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. 6 “And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab (**a-holy-ab**) the son of Ahisamach (**a-hi-zim-awk**), of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you: 7 the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle— 8 the table and its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, 9 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base— 10 the garments of ministry, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, 11 and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy place. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do.”

What is something that you do well?

Would you find it an honor to have your work noticed by God?

Do you consider it an honor when you are called on to use your gifts to serve God or do you think of it as an inconvenience?

What did God do for Bezalel and his team of artisans? [v6—”...and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans that they may make all that I have commanded...” God equipped them to do the work.]

Do you believe God will equip you to do whatever He calls you to do?

God truly blessed Bezalel and his team of gifted artisans to design all the items in the Tabernacle. Do your best to serve God so that your gifts and talents will get the attention of Heaven!

THE TESTIMONY

Numbers 10:33—So they departed from the mountain of the Lord on a journey of three days; and the **Ark of the Covenant** of the Lord went before them for the three days’ journey, to search out a resting place for them.

We have all heard that the special chest in the Holy of Holies was called the Ark of the Covenant. Let’s look at the word “covenant” for a moment.

COVENANT= a formal **AGREEMENT** between two or more persons to do or not do something specified.

So what was the “covenant” made between God and Israel?

Exodus 19:5-6— If you will carefully listen to Me and keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is Mine, 6 and you will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.’ These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.”

THE COVENANT: God promised to make the Israelites His **TREASURED POSSESSION** among all people and “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”, **IF** they follow God’s commandments.

God established this covenant with the nation of Israel, but here is what Paul wrote to the Romans:

Romans 8:14-15— For all those led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father!”

Who did Paul say are God’s children? **[All those led by God’s Spirit]**

The Israelites were **BORN** into God’s favor, but those of us who believe have been **ADOPTED**.

What does the word “Abba” mean? **[Aramaic equivalent of “Daddy!” It expresses an intimate familiarity.]**

What is the stipulation for us to receive God’s blessing? **[We must obey God’s commands.]**

Do you think that is a fair deal?

Do you think God’s commands are too hard?

The Ark is also called the **Ark of the Testimony**.

Exodus 25:22—I will meet with you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony;

TESTIMONY= A statement or declaration of a witnessed **TRUTH**.

So, we have to decide what truth is the Ark telling us? Let’s take a closer look at what’s inside.

Hebrews 9:4—Having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron’s staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.

What's in the Box?

1. Bowl of **MANNA** [This was the bread God provided to Israel for food]
2. Aaron's **ROD** [In Pastor Chris' message, he explained that Aaron's rod was a dead stick that budded almond blossoms overnight as a sign of God's selection of Aaron as the High Priest.]
3. Ten Commandments **TABLETS** [The tablets were the stone slabs upon which the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai were written.]

SYMBOLISM:

MANNA — **PROVISION** [Manna testifies of the daily provision God gives us. Just as the Israelites had to go back every morning and gather their daily portion of food, so Jesus reminded us to go to God daily for the provision that God has for us.]

Matthew 6:11— Give us today our daily bread.

ROD — **RESURRECTION** [New life coming from a dead stick.]

John 11:25—Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live.

TABLETS — **LIFE** [The Word of God is life to those who obey it.]

Proverbs 4:20-22— ... Listen closely to my sayings. 21 Don't lose sight of them; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to one's whole body.

If you had an "Ark" what are some items you would put inside to testify of who God is to you?

How often do you consider the events in your life that testify of God's goodness to you?

ON YOUR SHOULDERS

Numbers 7:6-9— So Moses took the carts and oxen and gave them to the Levites. 7 He gave the Gershonites two carts and four oxen corresponding to their service, 8 and gave the Merarites four carts and eight oxen corresponding to their service, under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. 9 But he did not give any to the Kohathites, since their responsibility was service related to the holy objects carried on their shoulders.

The wheel was first invented around 3500 BC, but likely not used for transportation until 3000 BC. In Moses' day (around 1440 BC), wheels would have been fairly common, and wooden wagons and pulling carts would have been used to move heavy loads.

So as the Israelites were getting ready to move, Moses gave carts to the priests responsible for moving the Tabernacle's linen curtains, poles and pegs. However, the holy furniture was not to be put on a cart. All the pieces of furniture that we have studied in this series were designed to be carried with poles on the shoulders of the priests.

Why the shoulder? The shoulder is a place of power and near the heart and face. There is a holy reverence given to the sacred furniture. As each piece was set apart in its service, so it was given respect and honor while on its journey.

Consider this:

How much respect and reverence do you give to God in your service to Him?

What do you do for God that sets Him apart from the familiar and common duties in your life?

Is your prayer/devotion/worship life set on auto-pilot? Do you do what is most convenient or what is most reverent?

Will you shoulder more of what represents God's presence in your life?

PRAYER TIME

As you pray, consider these prayer points:

- Thank God for your journey through the Tabernacle—from salvation to sanctification to personal relationship with Him.
- Offer your gifts and talents in service to God. Ask Holy Spirit to give you all the wisdom and understanding you need to glorify Him through your talents.
- Consider your testimony of His goodness to you. Ask God to help your life become an Ark where His provision, new life, and Word is kept in your heart.