

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 25:10-22
“Reminders of His Presence: The Ark”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19329
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

Exodus 25:10-22

Verse 10

“Have them make a chest of acacia wood – two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high.”

- The Hebrew word translated “chest” in this verse is translated “ark” throughout the rest of the book of Exodus, as it is in 25:14. The translators use the word “chest” here in an attempt to describe the function of this article of furniture. Basically, it served as a chest to hold specific items of importance that will be described later in the Bible.
- In two other places the Bible translators translated Hebrew words using the English word “ark.” The first is to refer to the boat that Noah built. The second is to refer to the basket in which Moses’ mother placed him to keep him safe from Pharaoh. The Hebrew word is the same in each of these passages and refers to a watertight vessel. The word translated “ark” relating to the article of furniture found in the Tabernacle and later the Temple, is not the same Hebrew word.
- The box referred to in this description is to be two and one half cubits by one and one half cubits by one and one half cubits. A cubit is about 18 inches in length. Therefore the ark was to be 45 inches long by 27 inches high by 27 inches deep.

Verse 11

“Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it.”

- Pure gold is gold that has no hint of imperfection in it. The ark was to be overlaid in pure gold on both the outside and the inside.
- It was to be decorated with a molding of some kind. The description of the molding is unclear except that it was also to be fashioned from pure gold.

Verse 12-15

“Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest to carry it. The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed.”

- Four brackets were to be fashioned from pure gold. These were to be placed on the long side of the ark, two on each long side, at its feet.
- Poles made of acacia wood were to be made, overlaid with gold and put through the brackets. These poles were to remain in place permanently. They were never to be taken out of the brackets.
- The purpose of this apparatus was to allow the ark to be moved. It was not to be touched by human hands. The poles were so that it could be moved without being touched directly. The poles were to be in place all the time so that no one would ever be tempted to move the ark by touching it directly.
- Because the brackets were put on the feet of the ark, when it was carried on the shoulders of the priests, as it would be each time Israel broke camp, it would always move above the heads of the people as a symbol of God’s presence with them.

Verse 16

“Then put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you.”

- The first items placed in the ark were the tablets of stone upon which God inscribed the 10 commandments. This was the Testimony hereto referred.

Verse 17-19

“Make an atonement cover of pure gold – two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends.”

- The ark was to have a lid of pure gold as wide and long as the box. This lid would be known as the “Atonement Cover.” This name is an indication that by his grace God called Israel into relationship with him. It is an indication of his desire to identify himself with this particular group of people.

- The lid was to have two cherubim mounted on each end. Cherubim are winged creatures something like angels whose sole purpose it is to wait to do the bidding of God. The cherubim are to be hammered out of pure gold and are to be of the same piece of gold as the rest of the lid. They are formed from the lid and not fashioned apart from it.

Verse 20

“The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover.”

- The cherubim are to face each other from opposite ends of the lid. Their wings are to be spread over them so as to form an arch over the lid.

Verse 21-22

“Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.”

- The tablets are to be put in the ark and then the ark is to be covered with the lid as described above.
- God promised that in the future, he would speak his commands for Israel to Moses from above the lid of the ark under the overarching wings of the golden cherubim. This would be the place where Moses heard from God.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Reminders of His Presence: The Ark*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)