

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

By Keith Greer

"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay: it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay: it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around.
"{Exodus 25:10,11}

In the Old Testament we read of the instructions for the Ark of the Covenant. It was also known as the ark of the testimony, ark of the Lord, and the ark of God. This object was very sacred to the Jews. What did the ark look like? From Exodus 25:10-22, the instructions given for the building of the Ark of the Covenant, we can have some concept of it. It was a box about 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high. Two poles were inserted into four rings on each side of the ark so it could be carried when transported. It was made out of acacia wood.

The lid of the ark, called the mercy seat, was made of fine gold. Hebrew tradition refers to it as the "place of atonement." According to Leviticus 16:15, the high priest would sprinkle blood once each year on the Day of Atonement as the atonement price for sin. What was in the ark? Two tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments, which Moses received from God on Mount Sinai, a golden pot of manna, which fed the Jews in the wilderness and Aaron's rod which budded to show he was God's choice for the priesthood, Numbers 17:6-1:3.

The ark was carried ahead of them when they left Mount Sinai, Numbers 10:33. It was carried when they crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promise Land, Joshua 4:9- 11. When they took the city of Jericho, before the walls fell, it circled the walls with them, Joshua 6:1-20. They brought it when they battled the Philistines, 1 Samuel 4:4- 11. It was captured because God oppressed them for their disobedience. It finally rested in the temple in Jerusalem, which Solomon built, 1 Kings 8:1-9. It disappeared after the destruction of Jerusalem by the hands of the Babylonians in 586 B.C. ***