

Series: Exodus
Title: Christ in the Ark
Text: Ex 25: 10-22
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Exodus 25: 10: And they shall make an ark of shittim wood:

The gospel of God's sovereign grace is declared even in the order in which God gave Moses the pattern to build the tabernacle and its furnishings. Here God begins with the ark then the mercy seat which covered it—this was God's dwelling place in the holiest of holies—a picture of God's dwelling in heaven upon his throne.

Next, God will give the pattern for the table of shewbread then the candlestick then the curtains then the boards (26:15) then the separating veil (26:31) then the brazen altar (27:1) then the hangings of the outer court (27:9). So God begins in the holiest of holies where God dwells and proceeded out to the exterior where the children of Israel dwelt

What is significant about that order? Due to our sins, we could not go from earth inward to God's dwelling place, but rather, God came from his dwelling place in heaven to us in the earth. Even in the order in which God gave the pattern—beginning with the holiest of holies and working out to the exterior to the people—God teaches us that we are saved by God's seeking us in sovereign grace. In our sins, we do not seek God, God seeks his sinful people (Luke 10: 33; 15:4).

So today we begin in the holiest of holies with the ark of the covenant.

Exodus 25: 10: And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11: And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 12: And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13: And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 14: And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. 15: The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. 16: And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. 17: And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18: And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19: And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20: And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21: And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22: And 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, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Proposition: The ark of the covenant typifies our Lord Jesus Christ and the propitiation he accomplished for his people and the propitiation that he, himself, is through faith in his blood.

TWO NATURES

Exodus 25: 10: And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11: And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

Our Lord's two natures is typified in the wood and the gold. His human nature is typified in the shittim wood and his divine nature in the pure gold.

The incorruptible, imperishable *shittim wood* which never rotted typifies our Savior's perfect human nature (Is 53:2). If Christ would represent his sinful people in obedience to God under the law, and as our sin-bearer, then he must be a Man like his people, yet without sin. He is the holy, sinless, incorruptible Man—the Holy One—the Head of his people.

The pure gold with the crown typifies the gold of His Deity spread over His perfect humanity. Christ is King. King Jesus is holy Man and holy God—the GodMan. Don't try to figure that out or explain it. Simply believe it. *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh... (1Ti 3:16)*

As eternal God, everything he accomplished in his humanity is eternal. He accomplished eternal redemption and satisfied eternal justice for his people.

Again, the order speaks volumes. God begins with that which typifies our Redeemer's person, which is, the wood and the gold of the ark. Then God will speak of that which typifies Christ's work, the mercy seat. The reason for this is because it is the blessed person of Christ that gave value to his work. On the day of atonement the priest first entered the holy of holies with sweet incense (Leviticus 16:12,13) before he took in and sprinkled the blood (Leviticus 16:14). What does this say? God would first be reminded of the fragrant perfections of Christ's person. Then, the priest placed before him that which spoke of Christ's redemptive work. John the Baptist pointed to the person of Christ before he stated his work (John 1:29). Thus it

was in the order of the tabernacle furniture: first the wood and gold of the ark which speaks of Christ's person then the mercy-seat which points to his work. It is not only his death, but who died that saves his people.

NO HELP

Exodus 25: 12: And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *shall be* in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13: And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 14: And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. 15: The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. 16: And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

Christ accomplished his work of redemption by himself without the help of his people. Two things combine here to typify that one very important truth. One, is the fact that no one could touch the ark. Two, is the law within the ark.

One, the ark was to be carried by these staves because no man could touch the ark. A man touched it once.

2 Samuel 6: 6: And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. 7: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

Two, within the ark was the testimony—the stone tablets on which God wrote the law. It pictures how Christ had the law of God in his heart. It typifies how Christ is the fulfiller of God's covenant law for his people. These two things combined typify the truth that Christ alone fulfilled the law for his people without the help of our hand at all. He said,

Isaiah 63:3: I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me:

No sinner can fulfill God's law—our hand only corrupts due to our sins. But that is why God sent his Son, to fulfill the law for his people. The law was in Christ's heart—"I delight to do thy will, thy law is within my heart." It is by Christ's will—by Christ fulfilling the law for his people—that God's elect are sanctified and perfected forever!

Isaiah 42:21: The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable

Therefore, concerning our works, God says,

Isaiah 57:12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

Therefore, if you and I put our hand to the ark—if we put our hand to Christ's finished work—the anger of the LORD will be kindled and he will smite us and we shall die! Believe on Christ and rest from trying to do what Christ has already finished!

THE MERCY SEAT

Exodus 25: 17: And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18: And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19: And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: *even* of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20: And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21: And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22: And 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, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

The cherubim's (also called seraphim) typify Christ's preachers. I say that because throughout scripture cherubim and seraphim are always directing the eye of needy sinners to the Lord Jesus, giving God all the glory, as do Christ's preachers.

At the edge of the garden, God placed "*Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*" (Gen 3:24)—Christ is the Tree of Life which his preachers declare to his people.

Isaiah was a needy sinner to whom the Lord revealed himself. He heard the seraphim, "*one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*" (Is 6: 3)

John saw the cherubim "*and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come...they gave glory honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne.*" And that one John saw on the throne was a Lamb as it had been slain. The result of their proclamation was the elders fell down to worship. (Rev 4: 1-11). Christ preachers declare God holy and give Christ all the glory, honor and thanks. Through their preaching the Holy Spirit causes Christ's redeemed to fall down and give Christ all the glory in faith.

Ezekiel saw them "*And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.*" The Spirit of God move Christ's preachers. Therefore, they cannot be turned from preaching Christ and him crucified alone. (Eze 1: 12)

Here, over the mercy seat there was two cherubim, each facing from different directions, representing Christ's prophets of old and his preachers in this new day.

They were like the mercy seat and one with it—"of gold, [Christ's preacher is valuable because he preaches Christ] *of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat.* [Christ was a man of sorrows and his preachers are made to experience sorrow too] 19: *And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof* [Christ and his ministers are one with Christ, even as Christ and his people]

Each faced the mercy seat—"And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be." So if you walked in to the holiest of holies, their faces and wings would draw your attention to the mercy seat. Christ's preachers are always drawing our attention to Christ our Mercy Seat.

As we see these cherubim pointing us to the mercy, remember, God is pleased to save through the preaching of the gospel of Christ crucified for these three reasons: so that no flesh shall glory in his presence, so that of God are we in Christ and who of God is made all unto us and so that we glory only in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1: 17-31)!

Most importantly, we see that Christ is the Mercy Seat, the Propitiation, God has provided for his people.

Romans 3:25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [mercy seat] through faith in his blood,...

The word mercy seat is propitiation—the true propitiation is the sacrifice by which God's injured honor is vindicated, his justice is satisfied, his law upheld, so that God's wrath is appeased toward his people. How amazing is this! The very God we offended, the very God whose law we broke, provided his people the propitiation, the mercy seat—Christ Jesus. And that propitiation is God's own only begotten Son!

On the day of atonement—the high priest, by himself, took the blood of a lamb (a lamb slain in place of the children of Israel) into the holiest of holies—a picture of Christ our High Priest entering God's presence with his own blood which he shed in place of his people. In the ark the law was unbroken because in Christ the law is fulfilled. But it is the same law his people broke. Yet, the mercy seat was the same dimensions as the ark so it exactly covered the law which was in the ark (vv10, 17). The high priest sprinkled the blood seven times upon the mercy seat covering that law, meaning perfection. But because the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, he had to do it again next year. This is one way the old differed from the new. Christ only had to offer one sacrifice because he accomplished the work by his precious person and blood.

Hebrews 10: 12: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13: From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Brethren, Christ exactly fulfilled all the law for his people. Christ made perfect propitiation to God. He perfectly satisfied God by his blood. Christ perfected his people forever by his one offering. Through his blood, God promises to meet with sinners through faith in Christ our Mercy Seat—"And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat."

The mercy seat was made of pure gold—if you are a true sinner—Christ our mercy seat is more valuable to you than gold.

1 John 2: 1: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Amen!