

# Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the  
Mission Field Worldwide.

## TYPES AND SHADOWS: CHRIST THE SUBSTANCE

From the beginning, God designed Israel’s worship, sacrifices, and ordinances with divine purpose. They were not random ceremonies, but symbolic pictures pointing forward to a greater reality.

The Scripture speaks of certain Old Testament ceremonies, events, and people as shadows, figures, and patterns that pointed forward to Christ; these are called “types.” They foreshadowed a spiritual reality in the New Testament. Hebrews 10:1 declares, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” Paul explained again in Colossians 2:17 that these things were “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

These shadows were not given to confuse, but to teach. In every offering, ritual, and sacred place, God was teaching His people lessons of holiness, sacrifice, and approach to Him. The repetition of sacrifices, the holiness of the priesthood, and the separation of the Holy Place all pointed to the perfection that would only be found in Christ. The entire system was a schoolmaster to prepare hearts for the Messiah.

In the Old Testament, the type was the shadow, while the antitype—the corresponding New Testament fulfillment—is the substance. What was material and historical under the Law

finds its true fulfillment in Christ as a spiritual and eternal reality. Through these God-given figures and patterns, the way of redemption was foreshadowed so that when Christ came, His people might recognize Him as the promised Savior.

The Bible itself gives us clear examples. Adam, the first man, was “the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:14). He was a type of Christ, the “last Adam,” who brought life where the first Adam brought death. Adam yielded to temptation and brought sin upon humanity; Christ overcame and brought righteousness and hope.

The Passover lamb is another well-known type. The blood of the lamb on the doorposts in Egypt spared Israel from the destroyer. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is revealed as our Passover, sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7). The lamb was only the shadow; Christ is the substance, whose blood delivers us from sin and death.

The bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness was also a type. When the Israelites were bitten by serpents, they were healed by looking upon it. Jesus said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14). Just as they looked in faith to the serpent, so we must look to Christ for eternal life.



“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

(continued on page 2)

# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

## **Word of God**

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## **Relationship of Love**

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## **Repentance**

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## **New Birth**

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;  
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## **Freedom From Sin**

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## **Infilling of the Holy Spirit**

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## **Holiness**

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;  
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## **Kingdom of God**

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## **The Church**

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 1:18

## **Unity**

John 17:20-23; Gal. 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## **Ordinances**

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;  
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## **Divine Healing**

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## **Sanctity of Marriage**

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;  
1 Cor. 7:10-11

## **Outward Appearance**

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## **End of Time**

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;  
Matt. 25:31-46

## **Pacifism**

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## **Worship**

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## **Great Commission**

Mark 16:15

The Tabernacle itself, with its furniture and services, was another great type. Hebrews 8:5 tells us that it served as “the example and shadow of heavenly things.” Every detail, from the Altar of Sacrifice to the Most Holy Place, pointed forward to Christ and the plan of salvation. It showed that the way into God’s presence was not yet open; but in Christ, the veil was torn and access to the Father made possible.

The priesthood itself was also a type, pointing to Christ’s eternal ministry. The high priest who entered once a year into the Most Holy Place foreshadowed Jesus, our great High Priest, “after the order of Melchisedec”



(Hebrews 6:20), who offered Himself once for all and ever lives to make intercession for us. Likewise, when Israel drank from the rock in the wilderness, Paul explained that “that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:4). As the water sustained their natural life, so Christ gives the living water of the Spirit to all who believe.

The Old Testament system was temporary, unable to perfect those who served under it, but the shadow prepared the way for the reality—Christ Himself. The history of Israel

shows these lessons: Egypt pictured the bondage of sin, Moses was a type of Christ the Deliverer, and the land of Canaan foreshadowed the inheritance and victory of a Spirit-filled life. Hebrews 9:11 declares: “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands.” The shadows have given way to substance; the outlines to reality.

These types reveal the unity of Scripture and the wisdom of God’s plan. The Old and New Testaments are not separate stories, but one divine revelation unfolding from beginning to end. What God gave to Israel in figures has now been revealed in fullness through Jesus Christ. Through the study of types and shadows, we see how carefully God prepared the way of salvation and how beautifully the promises are fulfilled in His Son. What was once hidden in patterns and ceremonies is now revealed in the gospel.

The study of types confirms the divine authorship of Scripture. The shadows were temporary; the substance is eternal. In Christ, every type is fulfilled—He is the true Lamb, the eternal High Priest, and the living Tabernacle. Through Him we have access to God, forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the glorious reality once hinted at in shadows, now revealed in Christ.

The *Gospel Truth* is a quarterly periodical published in the interest of the Church of God for instruction and encouragement in the truths of the Bible. Visit us online at [www.thegospeltruth.org](http://www.thegospeltruth.org) and subscribe to the email notification list to receive current publications. The *Gospel Truth* is printed in many countries for local distribution and is supported by free-will offerings. A tax receipt will be sent upon request.

—Editor, Michael Smith

Gospel Truth, P.O. Box 2042, Nixa, MO 65714 USA  
[editor@thegospeltruth.org](mailto:editor@thegospeltruth.org)

# Editorial



*For the law having a shadow of good things to come. —Hebrews 10:1*

The glorious plan of salvation through Jesus Christ was foreshadowed by the worship of God's people under the Mosaic Law. The Old Testament beautifully typified the wonderful experience fulfilled in the New Testament.

This quarter is a study of types and shadows, specifically the types of the Tabernacle and its furniture. The symbolism found in the Tabernacle was not accidental but orchestrated by God to show the beauty of the divine plan.

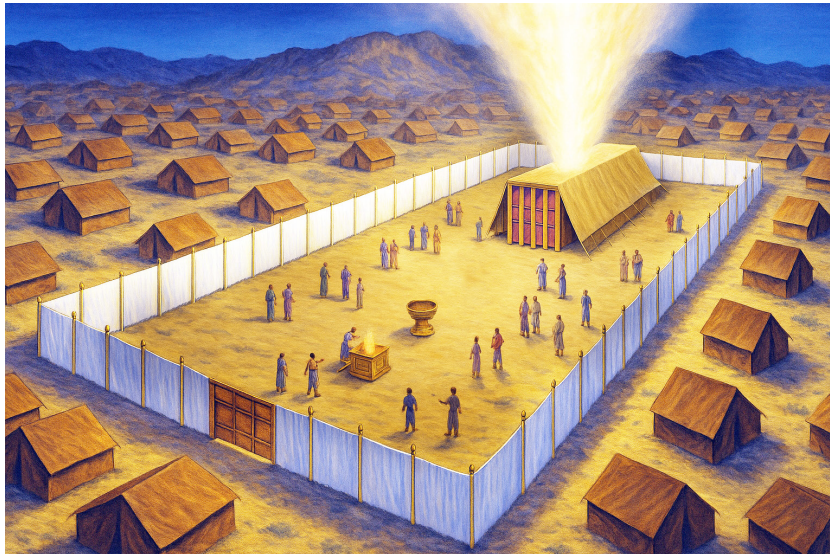
The types revealed in the animal sacrifices for sin, the washing at the Laver, and the burning of incense at the Golden Altar are enlightening. Communion with God at the Mercy Seat inspires awe and reverence. The typological interpretations in this paper are drawn from Scripture and are intended to illuminate the redemptive work of Christ. While many aspects of the Tabernacle clearly point to spiritual truths, not every detail is meant to carry symbolic meaning beyond what the Bible itself affirms. Readers are encouraged to approach typology with care, always keeping Christ as the true substance.

If I were a songwriter, I would pen the wonder and inspiration that swell within my heart with the lessons and truths of a New Covenant experience. When studied from the foundation of types and shadows, the truths of God's redemptive plan today become even clearer.

Thank God, we have access to better things today than the Israelites had in tabernacle worship. Are you still standing in the Courtyard, or have you entered into the Most Holy Place? The way is open through the blood of Jesus, step in!

Michael W. Smith

October 2025



**“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster  
to bring us unto Christ,  
that we might be justified by faith.”**

**Galatians 3:24**



*Visit us at*

[www.thegospeltruth.org](http://www.thegospeltruth.org)

*to subscribe and access*

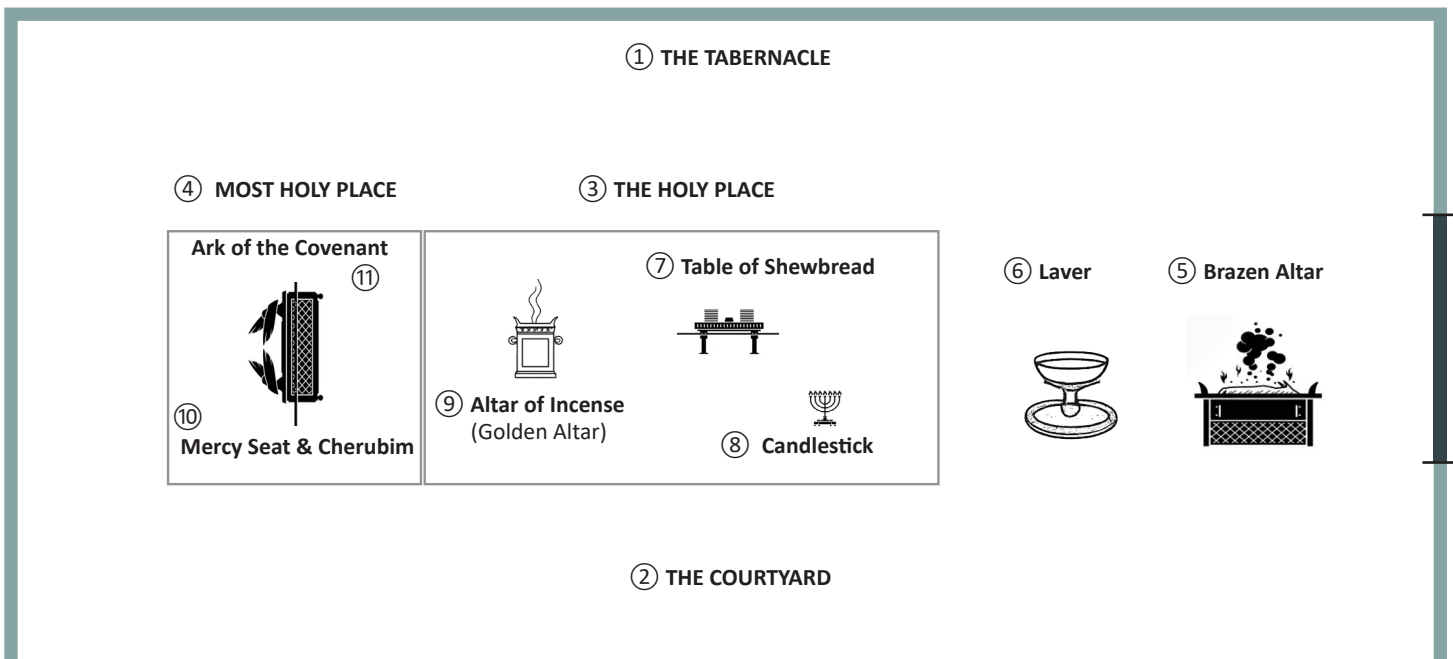
*publication archives.*



# The Tabernacle

## Types & Fulfillment

God could not dwell in the hearts of unholy people, so He gave Moses a pattern by which to build a Tabernacle, and there He dwelt among His people (Exodus 25:8–9). The Tabernacle, its sacrifices, its furniture, and its worship were all divinely appointed types, pointing forward to something far greater. It was but a shadow of the true reality that would be fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1). In its design and service, we behold a beautiful illustration of God’s work of salvation in the believer through Jesus Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.



### ① The Tabernacle

#### Description:

The Tabernacle was constructed precisely according to the divine pattern God revealed to Moses—not by human design. It included both the Sanctuary (the tent with two rooms) and the surrounding Courtyard (Numbers 3:7–8). The Sanctuary measured 30 × 10 × 10 cubits (45 × 15 × 15 feet), divided into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The Courtyard was enclosed with linen hangings (Exodus 27:9–18). The Sanctuary was covered with layers of curtains and skins. Its entrance faced east, signifying that God’s presence must be approached in the way He has appointed.

#### Purpose:

It was God’s dwelling place among Israel and His meeting place with man (Exodus 25:8, 22). Through its structure, furniture, and services, God revealed His holiness, man’s need for atonement, and the steps of salvation. At its completion, the Tabernacle was filled with the presence and glory of the Lord (Exodus 40:34). His presence remained in this tabernacle for about 480 years, from the Exodus until Solomon built the temple.

#### Fulfillment:

Christ is the true Tabernacle (Hebrews 8:2), and in Him believers become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Tabernacle, in its fulness, reveals God’s plan of salvation through Christ. Its very structure—with two distinct rooms—can be seen as illustrating God’s two great works of grace: justification through His blood, and the sanctifying infilling of the Holy Spirit.



## ② The Courtyard

### Description:

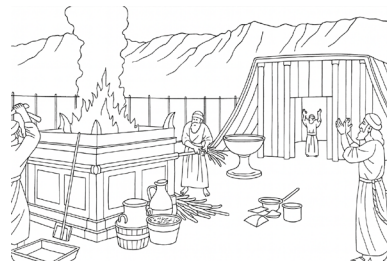
The outer court measured 100 × 50 cubits (150 × 75 feet) and contained the Brazen Altar for burnt offerings (Exodus 27:1–8) and the Laver for washing (Exodus 30:18–21). Its entrance, on the east side, was a gate of blue, purple, scarlet, and white linen (Exodus 27:16).

### Purpose:

Here was the place of sacrifice and cleansing—the only way into God’s dwelling. Sin required atonement through blood, God’s appointed means of access. The priests were then required to wash before ministering.

### Fulfillment:

The Courtyard represents access to God and separation from the world. Through the one door, Jesus Christ (John 10:9), the penitent finds pardon and forgiveness by His sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22; Romans 5:1)—foreshadowed by the Brazen Altar, where blood was shed. At the Laver comes cleansing and new birth (Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5). Thus, through justification, the believer is prepared to enter the Holy Place.



## ③ The Holy Place

### Description:

The Holy Place measured 20 × 10 × 10 cubits (30 × 15 × 15 feet) and contained the Table of Shewbread, the Golden Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense (Exodus 25:23–40; 30:1–8). It was separated from the court by the first veil, a hanging of fine linen with blue, purple, and scarlet (Exodus 26:36). Only priests entered here, ministering daily before the Lord.

### Purpose:

This chamber was for continual service. The bread signified God’s provision, the candlestick His light, and the incense the prayers of His people. The first veil reminded Israel that access to God required both sacrifice at the Altar and cleansing at the Laver, reinforcing that spiritual life begins with repentance and renewal.

### Fulfillment:

The Holy Place represents the justified state of the regenerated life. Here the believer feeds on Christ the Bread of Life (John 6:35), walks in His light (John 8:12), and offers prayers made acceptable through His intercession (Hebrews 7:25; Revelation 8:3–4). The Holy Place signifies the new birth and the life of daily communion with God.



## ④ The Most Holy Place

### Description:

The inner chamber was a perfect cube, measuring 10 × 10 × 10 cubits (15 × 15 × 15 feet). Within it stood the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat, and the overshadowing Cherubim (Exodus 25:10–22; Hebrews 9:3–5). It was separated from the Holy Place by the second veil, richly embroidered with cherubim (Exodus 26:31–33). Only the high priest could enter—and only on the Day of Atonement, which was observed annually (Leviticus 16:2, 14).

### Purpose:

This was God’s immediate dwelling, where His glory appeared between the cherubim. The second veil barred all others, declaring that sinful man could not enter God’s holy presence. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered with blood to sprinkle the Mercy Seat—making atonement for himself and for the people, bearing their names before the Lord (Leviticus 16:17, Exodus 28:29).

### Fulfillment:

The Most Holy Place represents the believer’s heart filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit, where God dwells in the fullness of His grace (1 Thessalonians 5:23). This symbolizes the second work of grace—sanctification by the Spirit. Through Christ’s atoning blood, the way beyond the veil has been opened. When Jesus died, the veil was “rent in twain” (Matthew 27:51), declaring that by His sacrifice, believers now have access into God’s presence (Hebrews 10:19–20).

# The Furnishings of the Tabernacle

## ⑤ The Brazen Altar

### Description:

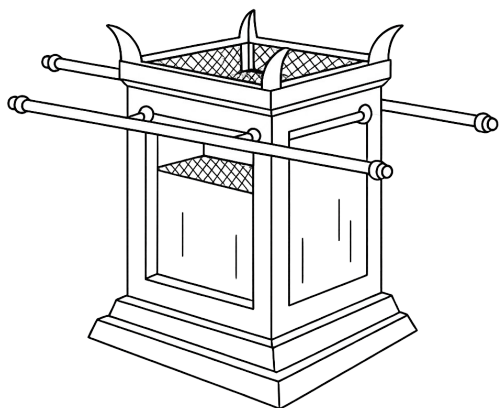
The Brazen Altar stood in the court, just inside the Tabernacle gate (Exodus 27:1–8). Made of acacia wood overlaid with brass, it measured  $5 \times 5 \times 3$  cubits (about  $7.5 \times 7.5 \times 4.5$  feet). Four horns projected from its corners, with a brass grate inside. It was the largest piece of furniture, plainly visible to all who entered.

### Purpose:

Here the sacrifice was offered for sin. Its blood testified that atonement was required (Leviticus 17:11), for without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). The Altar stood at the entrance, teaching that no one could approach God except by sacrifice.

### Fulfillment:

The Brazen Altar points to Christ, “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). By His one perfect sacrifice, He secured eternal redemption, and no other offering is needed (Hebrews 9:26). “We have an altar” in Him (Hebrews 13:10), and no one can enter fellowship with God without beginning with repentance and faith in His atonement (Romans 5:9). The Brazen Altar signifies the first great work of grace: salvation through repentance and faith in the crucified Christ.



## ⑥ The Laver

### Description:

The Laver of brass stood between the Brazen Altar and the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:17–21). It was fashioned from the polished mirrors of the women (Exodus 38:8) and was filled with water.

### Purpose:

After sacrifice, the priests were required to wash in the Laver before ministering in the Holy Place. They were required to cleanse their hands and feet, “that they die not” (Exodus 30:20–21).

### Fulfillment:

The Laver pointed to self-examination, cleansing, and regeneration of the believer (Titus 3:5) by the Spirit and the Word (Ephesians 5:26; John 15:3). As the priests washed before entering the Sanctuary, so the believer must be cleansed from all defilement to serve God acceptably. “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7, 9).



*Together, the Brazen Altar and the Laver portray the inseparable work of justification and regeneration—sin forgiven and the heart cleansed, making the believer a “new creature” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:2).*

## ⑦ The Table of Shewbread

### Description:

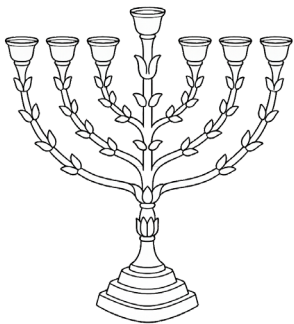
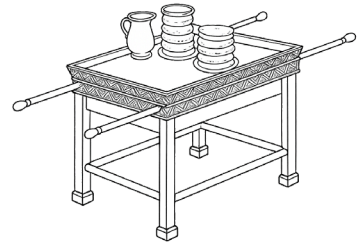
Made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold (Exodus 25:23–30), the table measured  $2 \times 1 \times 1.5$  cubits (about  $3 \times 1.5 \times 2.25$  feet). Upon it were twelve loaves of bread, set in two rows, eaten by Aaron and his sons, then replaced each Sabbath.

### Purpose:

The table symbolized God's continual provision for His people. The bread, called the "Bread of Presence," was always before the Lord (Leviticus 24:5–9).

### Fulfillment:

The table points to Christ, the Bread of Life (John 6:35). As the priests ate the shewbread, so believers feed on Christ by faith, receiving spiritual nourishment through His Word and by His Spirit (Matthew 4:4). It teaches that only ongoing fellowship with Christ, the living Bread from heaven, can sustain His people.



## ⑧ The Golden Candlestick (Menorah)

### Description:

Beaten from one talent of pure gold (Exodus 25:31–40), the candlestick had a central shaft with three branches on each side, forming seven lamps in total. Traditionally, it was about five feet tall. It was adorned with golden almond blossoms, buds, and flowers.

### Purpose:

Set in the Holy Place opposite the Table of Shewbread, it provided the only light within the Sanctuary (Exodus 27:20–21). The lamps burned continually, fueled by oil supplied by the people and tended by the priests morning and evening.

### Fulfillment:

The candlestick represents Christ, the Light of the World (John 8:12). Believers have no light of their own; true illumination comes only from Christ through the oil of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:6). Christians are called to reflect His light in a dark world (Matthew 5:14–16), for He is the one who gives light to His church (Revelation 1:20).

## ⑨ The Altar of Incense (Golden Altar)

### Description:

Made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold (Exodus 30:1–10), the Golden Altar measured  $1 \times 1 \times 2$  cubits (about  $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 3$  feet). It stood directly before the veil, in front of the Holy of Holies. Incense was offered upon it every morning and evening.

### Purpose:

The rising incense symbolized the prayers of God's people ascending before Him (Psalm 141:2). Because it was kindled with sacred fire from the Brazen Altar, it testified that prayer must be joined with sacrifice. Blood of certain sin offerings was applied to its horns (Leviticus 4:7, 18), reminding Israel that even the place of prayer required cleansing through atonement. On the Day of Atonement, this blood was applied only after the high priest had entered the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:18). Positioned before the veil, in front of the Ark of the Covenant, the Altar of Incense stood as a constant reminder that prayer and worship were the appointed way of approach to God's presence.

### Fulfillment:

The Golden Altar pointed to prayer and intercession (Revelation 8:3–4). Christ, our great High Priest, "ever liveth to make intercession" for us (Hebrews 7:25), and through Him the prayers of the saints rise acceptably before God. The applied blood foreshadowed that only through Christ's sacrifice is worship cleansed and made acceptable. For the believer, the Altar signifies a life of prayer and communion with the Father flowing from a consecrated heart (Romans 12:1).



## ⑩ The Ark of the Covenant

### Description:

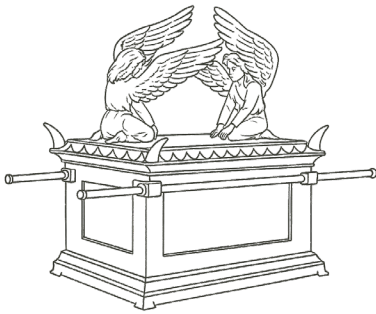
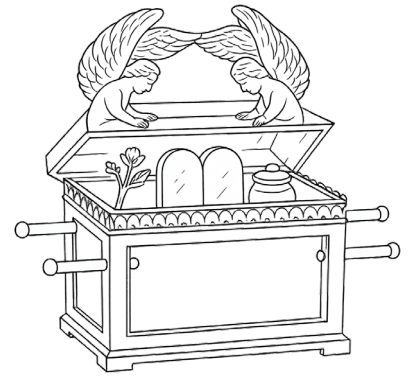
The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold (Exodus 25:10–22). It measured  $2.5 \times 1.5 \times 1.5$  cubits (about  $3.75 \times 2.25 \times 2.25$  feet). Inside were the tablets of the Law, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4). Rings with staves were fixed for carrying, for it was never to be touched directly.

### Purpose:

The Ark was the most sacred vessel of the Tabernacle, the visible center of God's covenant with Israel. It housed the testimony of God's provision, law, and priesthood—symbols of His enduring relationship with His people. Wherever the Ark was, there also was the manifested glory of God.

### Fulfillment:

The Ark points unmistakably to Christ. In Him the Law is perfectly fulfilled (Matthew 5:17); He is the true Bread from heaven (John 6:51); and He is the eternal High Priest with an unchanging priesthood (Hebrews 7:24). All that the Ark contained finds its reality in Him. In the New Covenant, the Ark signifies the indwelling Christ—abiding not in a box, but in the sanctified heart of the believer.



## ⑪ The Mercy Seat and Cherubim

### Description:

The Mercy Seat, made of pure gold, formed the lid of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:17–22). It measured  $2.5 \times 1.5$  cubits (about  $3.75 \times 2.25$  feet). Two cherubim of gold overshadowed it with outstretched wings, facing one another and looking toward the Mercy Seat.

### Purpose:

This was the throne of God's presence in Israel. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled blood upon it to make atonement for the people (Leviticus 16:14–15).

From above the Mercy Seat, between the cherubim, God manifested His presence and communed with Moses—His voice issuing from the Most Holy Place, though Moses remained outside the veil (Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89).

### Fulfillment:

The Mercy Seat finds its fulfillment in Christ, our Propitiation (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2). The cherubim emphasize the holiness and majesty of God's presence, where divine judgment and mercy meet in the sacrifice of Christ. In the New Covenant, the sanctified believer becomes God's dwelling place—where mercy and glory abide—not in gold, but in a heart made holy by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16). Through Christ's atoning work and by the indwelling of His Spirit, continual communion with God is now made possible.

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make  
with the house of Israel;  
After those days, saith the LORD,  
I will put my law in their inward parts,  
and write it in their hearts;  
and will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.”  
Jeremiah 31:33