

The Ark of the Covenant



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Exodus 25:10-22

I don't know how you do it as a grandparent, but we have some traditions we have already started as grandparents with our grandchildren when they come over to the house. One of the traditions that we have is when it comes time to put the grandboys in bed, we put the youngest to be first then the middle one then the last one. Each one of the grandchildren gets to pick a book that they want Memish to read to them and I love it when G picks his books. G is the youngest one. G is following in the footsteps of Crider and Finley. I remember when Crider was his age or Finley was his age and Memish would read them a book. She always lets them pick the book and when G picks his book, he always picks the biggest book with all pictures. There are hardly any words at all. Now, what I'm noticing is that Crider used to do that and Finley used to do that, but as they're getting older they are beginning to choose books that have more words and less pictures. But, little G, God bless him, he just wants to see those pictures. He understands that thought that a picture is worth a thousand words.

This morning, so that you fully understand this passage, you have to remember that Israel is in early childhood, infancy, if you will. Therefore, what's happening at Mount Sinai is God is getting ready to give Israel a picture of their redemption. So what we are going to be reading over the next few months is meant to draw a picture in your mind as it drew a picture in Israel's mind ultimately of their redemption. But, now, you have to remember this, according to the writer of Hebrews what God revealed to Moses on the mountain- that Moses led the children of Israel to build for

God- was called a shadow, a type, a copy of the heavenly reality. Now, you're like me. Sometimes you see shadows and sometimes if you're too close to the shadow, if you're actually in the shadow, if you just look at what is before you on the ground you sometimes can't pick out details of the substance. But generally, we can tell that it's a shadow of a tree or a shadow of a barn or the shadow of a human being or the shadow of a car. But, boy, sometimes if you're not looking at the substance it's hard to figure out the details of the shadow. But isn't it amazing when you turn around and look at the substance and then you look at the shadow on the ground how much clearer the shadow looks when you see the substance? Please note this. The writer of Hebrews is going to say that everything in the Old Testament under the law- the tabernacle, the furniture, the sacrifices, the priesthood- were just shadows of the ultimate redemption that we have in Christ.

So, please remember this. For the next couple of months we are going to be studying shadows. But, I think it would be quite foolish to be really general about a shadow when you could be more detailed about the shadow if you know the substance. So, I have the advantage of the New Testament and knowing what these shadows point to. Therefore, we are going to interpret the shadows in light of the substance of Jesus Christ. Now, Israel, God bless them. They didn't get it because they had a shadow and what they forgot was that the shadow wasn't the substance. So they substituted the shadow for the substance so that when the substance did come- Christ- they held onto the shadow and totally missed it. I don't want us to miss this. So what God is going to do for us is describe in a shadow the substance of the redemption you and I have in Christ. And it is awesome!

Scripture:

10 "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. 13 You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 14 And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them. 15 The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16 And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you. 17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. 18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. 20 The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. 21 And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. 22 There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

Isn't it just like God not to do it the way you and I would do it? Last week they took up an offering to begin to build a tabernacle, a meeting, where God was going to dwell with his people in a holy place where he would actually meet and commune with them. Now, you would expect God to begin to describe the tabernacle, but he doesn't. The first thing God begins to give Moses the pattern for is a piece of furniture. You don't do that, do you? You don't actually go buy your furniture, then look at your furniture, and then build your house. You build your house, then sometime when it starts coming together then you start looking for the furniture and usually the furniture fits the rooms. But you know, we always get it backwards. God never starts outside in. He always starts inside out. Have you ever noticed we have this bad tendency to try to get the outside right, looking really, really good, and sometimes we cut corners on the inside? Not God.

See, right here in the very beginning, let's just understand that God always puts first things first. He has the furniture in mind and then he builds the house to accompany the furniture. God doesn't work from the outside in. God works from the inside out. And the first thing he tells Moses is "they shall make an ark."

Now, before we get into the details of this, I want to make sure you see the format of verses 10 through 22. Sometimes I need to confess my weakness. I did not see this until this week and I like to think I've studied my Bible my whole life, but the more I studied this, here is what I came to see. Verses 10 through 15 describe an ark and then verse 16 says what they're supposed to put in the ark once you get the ark built. Then, in verse 17 through 20 God tells Israel to make a mercy seat. After they make the mercy seat, he tells them where to put the mercy seat. Does everybody see that flow? Verses 10 through 15 are the description of the ark. Verse 16 is what goes in the ark. Verse 17 is the mercy seat. Then once we have the description of the mercy seat, once we get the picture of the mercy seat, he tells us where to put the mercy seat. Then once the mercy seat has been put where it's supposed to be and what is supposed to be put in the ark is put in the ark then he says in verse 22, "There I will meet with you..." Now it sounds like we're making an ark and a mercy seat, yet both the ark and the mercy seat make one piece of furniture. Does everybody agree with that? There is just one piece of furniture in what is going to be called the holy of holies, the most holy place of the tabernacle. It's a cube fifteen by fifteen and there's going to be one piece of furniture, but when you read the description of the one piece of furniture, it has two parts. So, can I say this? The one are two, but the two are really one. Does everybody get that?

Why is that important? It's important because this ark and this mercy seat are a picture of Christ- his person and his work. So in verses 10 through 15 God is giving you and I a shadow of the person of Jesus Christ. Then in verse 16 he tells us what is on the inside. Then starting in verse 17 through verse 20 he describes for us not the person of Christ, but the work of Christ. Then he tells us where this work takes place. And then he puts

the two together- the person of Christ and the work of Christ- and says in the person and work of Christ, there I will meet you and there I will speak to you. Does that make sense? Now, did Israel understand that? No. Why? Because that was a shadow. But the New Testament clearly teaches us that these realities of the shadow point us to the substance and the substance is Christ.

“They shall make an ark...” Now, I know the story of Noah’s ark of how God saved a family from the waters of the flood. Then I remember about another ark where a mother was going to put her baby in the Nile River. She made a little ark of brush and Moses was saved from the alligators of the Nile. Now we have the third ark except here is the problem. It’s not the same word. It’s a different word altogether that is translated to ark. As a matter of fact, the only other time we see this word used and the first time we see this word used in the Bible is in Genesis 50:26. It’s the last verse of Genesis. The Bible says Joseph was 110 years old and he died. Where was he when he died? He was in Egypt. So what does the Bible say they did to his body? The embalmed him and put him in a coffin. Yeah, that is the word- coffin. Wow! So, if we were to translate this literally, as it was translated in Genesis, here is what it would say- they shall make a coffin, a rectangular box. Can it be any clearer? When Mary looked into the face of her son, Jesus, if she knew who he really was, she knew he wasn’t born to live. He was born to die. Is this eerie or is this eerie? They shall make a box, they shall make a coffin, literally, of acacia wood.

Now, please understand that when I look back at shadows, I look at the shadow in light of the substance and I am very conservative. I have read and studied under men and scholars who are very liberal and they see types all over the place in the Old Testament; I don’t. But, there are some that are just unmistakable. And here is what we know about the wood that God chose for the ark, it’s going to speak about the humanity of Christ. It is acacia wood. It was a wood that grew in the wilderness area where the children of Israel were. It was a hard wood. It was a dense wood. As a matter of fact, the nature of this wood was so dense that it literally repelled water the entirety of its life, which means when exposed to the

elements of nature this wood just hardly ever rotted. As a matter of fact, when the Greek scholars were translating the Hebrew Old Testament to put a copy into that famous Alexandrian library for the Greeks, when they came to this word "acacia" or "Shittim" in the King James Version, they didn't translate it with words that mean that, they translated this word to mean incorruptible wood. Those Greek scholars who were translating the Hebrew Old Testament so knew this area of the world that when they described this wood they described it in their Greek version of the Bible as incorruptible wood. And the Septuagint, this translation, was the Bible of the New Testament.

So, get this picture. The wood is going to picture the humanity of Christ. Even in his humanness, he was not sinful; he was sinless. Did you know that if you strip back the bark on this wood and you put your little plug into the wood that gum would begin to drain out of this wood after nightfall? And, do you know what the locals did with the gum that came from this wood? They made their medicines from it. So this wood not only had properties that made it incorruptible, but it had properties that made it great for healing and for medicine. Does anybody see the shadow? Do you see the picture? You know, the Pharisees struggled with Jesus in his humanity. They couldn't just figure out why he hung with the crowd that he hung with and why he didn't hang more with them. One day he just had to say to them, those that are well have no need for a physician. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. On another occasion, he would say for the Son of man did not come to be served but to seek and to save that which was lost. You get it, don't you? In the very wood of the ark, it pictures the humanity of Christ.

This box was two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits high, and one and a half cubits wide. Now, I struggle here. Can I just be honest with you? We have modern translations of the Bible that are supposed to take the archaic language of the Old and New Testaments and put it in a version that we understand, right? How many of you measure with cubits? None of us! So, why didn't the translators just tell us what it means in English? Well, they didn't. So, we're going to have to figure this out. First of all, you

need to realize that the word "cubit" comes from a Hebrew word from where we get our word "mother." So the cubit was the mother of measurement so to speak. It was the standard. And here's what the cubit was in the biblical world, a cubit was the distance from your elbow to the tip of your finger. Generally, depending on if you're a Cunningham or a Lowe, you go from sixteen inches to about nineteen and a half inches, but the scholarly standard in the biblical world was all of those people who had eighteen inches between their elbow and the tip of their finger. So, when you get home, if you will get out a tape measure and measure your forearm you will see if you are standard or not. Some of you won't be surprised to know that your husband is not standard. So, here's what we've got, we've got two and a half eighteen inches, we've got one and a half eighteen inches, and another one and a half eighteen inches which means this box is forty-five inches by twenty-seven inches by twenty-seven inches. If you use feet as the mother standard it's three feet nine inches by two feet three inches by two feet three inches.

Does everybody have a picture of this box? It's not a cube like the room that it is in, but it's a rectangle. "You shall overlay it with pure gold..." Wow! Can you imagine them taking gold that had been refined, that was pure, and them taking those gold strips and them laying it over this acacia wood. You know where I'm going, right? Just as this box is one but two, not two but one, both the person and work of Christ, even in the ark, is made of wood and gold. The wood speaks of the humanity of Christ. The pure gold speaks of what? The divinity of Christ. Not just overlaid on the outside, but overlaid on the inside so that if we examined this box the wood and the gold never comingled. In their oneness, they were still distinct as wood and gold. See, when you look at this shadow and you now look at the Christ in his person- fully man, yet fully God. Two distinct natures- humanity and God- never half man and half God, never part man and part God, but fully man and fully God. It had a little strip of gold molding around the top of it. In our home, when we have molding where our ceiling and our wall meets we call that crown molding. Do you call it crown molding? Is this not just like God to put a crown on the person of his son, Jesus Christ? Not a crown of thorns, but a crown of gold speaking of the true person he really is-

eternal God, king of kings, Lord of Lords, and Jesus is his name! The word became flesh!

On each corner was a foot. So there was to be a golden ring made that was connected to the foot of the ark. Then there would be two acacia poles also covered with gold and there would be two rings on each side of this box. Please note that when they carried the box they did not carry this box as you and I would carry a rectangular table through a doorway. With a cherubim's back and a cherubim's face they packed it this way. There were also poles connected. Those poles could not ever be taken out of the box. Throughout the oriental world, four corners stood for the vastness and the completeness of the known world. Here we have a ring at each corner where a pole will be thrust through it so that when the transporters of the ark reached down and picked it up they never touched the box. But...you do remember the man that touched the box, right? Israel had gotten so careless with the ark that they put it on an ox cart. Instead of four priests grabbing those poles and marching with the ark, they put it on an ox cart, the ox stumbled, the ark started to fall over, and one of the guys grabbed the box so that the box wouldn't fall on the dirt and get dirty or muddy. The moment he touched it he died! Meaning what? It would be better for the ark of the covenant to fall on the ground than to be touched by sinful man. Notice in the description that the poles never come out of the ark. Why? Because the ark will never rest totally here on earth. It will always move as God's people move.

Can I just say this? God designed the ark to picture that he would always be with his people to guarantee that his people would get ultimately where he was taking his people and they will never be without him. Can I just remind you that you're not there yet? But, some of you are in a place where you've never been before and here is what you need to know, as a believer the person of Christ is always with you. But, please live with this truth- you're not there yet. I can't tell you how many people I've seen where they get to that place in life where they look around at how God is using them and they believe they've arrived. The next thing you know they

are in sin. Please know, just like Israel you are not there yet. hat a shadow, but what a savior.

Then, he tells them what to put in the box- "the testimony that I shall give you." Now, you remember that God is going to actually take some stone and he's going to write on the stone the testimony-the commands- that God gave Israel as the foundation of their covenant because this covenant was based on their faithfulness to God's law. Moses came down off of the mountain, he's got those two tablets, he's coming down, and all of a sudden, Israel, at the bottom of the mountain, had already broken the law of God and they hadn't even left Sinai yet! The preacher hadn't even gotten through meeting with God yet and they were already making graven images and whoring after false gods. Moses comes down off the mountain, he takes the testimony that God has given him, and he shatters them on the ground. Can you imagine what a picture that had to be to the children of Israel? ...*You have WHAT?! You have broken God's law! ...No, YOU broke God's law; I just showed you what you did.* Now Moses has to go back up on the mountain. Praise God for the God of the second chance, amen? And he gives him another set. Now we have to make a choice here. Which law went into the box? The broken set or the set that wasn't broken? I'm presenting something that you've never thought about because most people paint the picture of the testimony in the box as the broken law of God, but what I submit to you is if this box really pictures the person of Christ, the law was not broken. He did what you and I could not do.

Have any of you read through the hymn book of the Old Testament, the book of Psalm? Have you come to that fortieth song which is a messianic song that has that stanza in there in verses six through eight where it talks about the Messiah and how he came to do God's will. Then he says this, "thy law is written within my heart." The Messiah as man would not be a man who would live under the external law of God, but he would be a man, the God man, who had the law of God written in his heart. Therefore, he could say in the sermon on the mount he did not come to destroy the law, but he came to fulfill the law. What I suggest to you is when we look at the testimony that was placed within the ark, see that it's a picture of

the true innerness of the God man. He did God's will perfectly because from the heart he followed God's law. So, if you're going to measure yourself don't do it Brother Ricky. Don't do it by Brother Chris or Brother Kory. You measure yourself by the revelation of the person of God's son. And like Paul, come to understand that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

They shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. See, we are switching emphasis here. This almost sounds like as if the mercy seat is separate from the ark. Yet, together they make the one piece of furniture. I had never caught this until I read and I read and I read and I read. All of a sudden, it was...whoa! This isn't talking about the person of Christ anymore. This is now shadowing the work of Christ. The two are one and the one are two. See, when John announced that the word was God and the word became flesh and the word pitched his tent among us, his tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, a little later he would have John the Baptist announce to the crowd... *behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*. In other words, behold the person of Christ as the lamb of God who takes the sin of the world. The work of Christ! So now, in the mercy seat we do not see the person of Christ, but we see the work of Christ. Does that make sense?

Pure gold. It's going to be the work of God, not the work of man. It is two and one half cubits long and two and a one half cubits wide, but the Bible doesn't tell us how deep it is. It's pure gold. Can you imagine a sheet of pure gold forty-five inches by twenty seven inches? I just read in USA Today that yesterday a man in California was prospecting for gold and in one of the streams in California he picked out a slab of gold that was the size of your palm and it weighed 18 ounces. It was valued at \$70,000. You have been in slavery for hundreds of years and now you are asked to take gold and from that gold, make a slab that will perfectly fit inside that crown molding. Hammered. Beaten. Does that describe anything for you about the work of Christ?

At each end of that mercy seat there was to be a cherub on one end and the other end. Each one was to stretch its wings out and lower its face so that they are looking down at the mercy seat. Now please don't picture what artists picture as a cherub, that little, fat child with wings. No. If you want to read a description of the cherubim of God then read Ezekiel chapter 1 and Ezekiel chapter 10. Israel throughout their prophetic writings and Israel throughout their psalm book, talks about God dwelling among the cherubim and about God being enthroned in the cherubim. If you remember, a cherub was placed to guard the entrance into the garden of Eden once man sinned so that man could not go back after he had sinned. If you remember in Isaiah chapter 6 we see God sitting on the throne in his temple and the train of his robe is filling the temple. Then, all of a sudden, we see these special created beings in heaven who are called seraphs. They are seraphim and they have six wings: with two they cover the face, with two they cover the feet, with two they fly, and they are crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" The cherub didn't have six wings as the seraphim did. The cherubim had four wings and in Ezekiel, with two of the wings they cover their bodies and with the other two wings they reach them out so that they touch the tip of the other cherub who are in the presence of God. So God is surrounded by these special created beings, but even these special created beings who have been created to minister in the presence of God have to cover their feet and their face because they can't look at the glory of God. Even the cherubim have to cover their entire bodies because they are ministering in the presence of God!

So now on this mercy seat, please make sure you understand this slab had to be longer than forty-five inches because these two cherubs on the ends have to be made out of the same slab of God. And even the golden cherubim can't look up into the face of God. They have to look down at the mercy seat. Please note that in the Hebrew this word "mercy seat" means a lid, a covering. It means to cover or to appease or to satisfy. The word "mercy seat" actually got coined not in the biblical world, but by Martin Luther as he studied the tabernacle and the propitiatory work of Christ causing Tyndale to use this word in his English translation of the Bible- a

mercy seat, a place of mercy. Do you know where God said to put the mercy seat? He told them to put it on top of the ark. You get this picture, don't you? Guess who is going to dwell between the cherubim? Almighty God.

Then he reminds them again what to put on the inside of the ark. On the inside of the ark they were to put the testimony. Now, the writer of Hebrews will tell us later that they put the golden pot of manna in the ark. We could go into Jesus being the bread of life, but we won't. Then they put the rod of Aaron that budded. We could go into that but we won't. But, that is a cool story! Do you remember when the people said to Moses, "who gives you the right to pick who is the high priest"? They had a showdown and a lot of people died. Then Moses said I'll tell you what we will do. Just so you know that I didn't pick my brother Aaron, but God did, why don't all of you leaders of the tribe bring your sticks tomorrow. Lay the sticks out before God tonight and let's see what happens because one of these sticks that don't have life will bud. And the one that buds, we will know that's the one God has chosen. They wrote Aaron's name on a stick and they wrote all of the leaders' names on the stick, and that night, guess what happened? Aaron's stick that had no life in it, not only budded, but it blossomed and before the sun came up the next morning it produced fruit. Does anybody see the picture? Where did our high priest ultimately come from? Not from the tribe of Levi or the family of Aaron, but a priest after the order of Melchizedek who is our high priest because God brought his dead body back alive.

Now this passage doesn't deal with it, but when we get to Leviticus, you know what is going to happen on this mercy seat, don't you? On the day of atonement the high priest and only the high priest ever saw this piece of furniture. And he only saw it one time a year yet there was no light in the room. Even though there was no light in the room, when they pulled the curtain back, before he could step into the utter darkness he had to take the incense, swing it back and forth, and fill that room with a dark cloud so that in darkness with a dark cloud he stood before that box. Does everybody get it? NOBODY saw God. But the only man that could literally

go into his presence was the high priest. When they moved the ark with those poles they would take the veil and we don't have time to talk about that this morning, but there was a veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies. And just so you get this in your mind, what I've been talking about is a piece of furniture that was in this certain part of the tabernacle. There was a veil that separated the first 30 foot from the last 15 foot of the tabernacle. When they got ready to move the ark they would wrap that veil around the ark. Then they would put badger skins over that veil. Then they would put a blue cloth over that veil so that when they moved that ark NOBODY saw the ark! But one time a year the high priest would take a ram, kill it, and take blood into the presence of God for his sin. Then he would come back out and he would take the blood of a goat. He would take that blood in and atone for the sin of the people.

Now here is what is neat. This place of propitiation, this mercy seat is talked about in Hebrews 9:5 that it is a shadow. But the same word that is used and translated as "mercy seat" there is used by Paul in Romans 3:25 when it talks about God put forth Christ as a propitiation, but we translate that with a different English word, propitiation, instead of the same word that we translate in Hebrews 9:5, mercy seat. So, here is what scholars tell us. What Paul is saying is this- God put forth Christ to be a mercy seat by his blood through faith. Does everybody get that? Why is this important? Here is why this is so, so, so, so very important. The writer of Hebrews says that Christ was our faithful high priest so that he could make propitiation, a propitiatory offering on the mercy seat for the people. John says that Christ is our advocate. He is the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins and not for our sins only, but the sins of the whole world. John also says in the fourth chapter in this did God manifest his love when he sent his to be the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. Here is what you have to understand—in the person and work of Christ, Christ is not only the offering. He is the mercy seat. So that in Christ, God meets with us. So that Christ being fully God can take the hand of God and being fully man can take the hand of man and Jesus can put God and man back together again because he brought himself into the very presence of God himself and made atonement for our sin!

I have to close with this thought because we have to close. This ark stood for the manifested presence of God. If you want to see the manifested presence of God look in the face of Jesus- both his person and his work. But in the day of the shadow, they would take this shadow and when it started to move, they had to stay behind it 3,000 feet. That is 2,000 cubits because God told the children of Israel that they had never been where they were going so they couldn't get ahead of the ark. Can I just say to some of you? You haven't ever been where you're getting ready to go. Please don't get ahead of the presence of God! Here's what happens. When they get ready to go into the promised land after the spies brought back the report and the nation rejected. Do you remember that group that tried to go in after God judged them? The Bible in Numbers 14 said that the ark didn't go with them and the Amalekites kicked... well, I just need to stop right there.

Now, that generation dies out and the new generation gets ready to go in. When they get ready to go in the priests take the ark- and it's flood stage for the Jordan- and they go down into that water with the presence of God the water stopped flowing and the mud did what water can't do in the presence of God. It immediately dried up and the children of Israel marched across on dry ground. And then, that story that we all teach our children, we teach it all wrong. What caused the walls of Jericho to fall? It wasn't the children of Israel marching around the city once per day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. If you read your Bible, the Bible says what marched around the city first. What was it? The ark of the covenant. God's presence caused the water to do what the water can't do. And God's presence caused walls to do what walls can't do. Those walls came tumbling down at the presence of God. Please hear me! If you will follow the presence of Christ, he can do with your water what none of you can do with your water. And he can do with the walls of your enemy what only he can do if you'll trust in the person and work of Christ.

Now, one of the saddest stories in the Old Testament is when Ezekiel sees the glory cloud leaving the ark and he writes "Ichabod" on the temple. Today, everybody wonders where is the ark? Did Nebuchadnezzar destroy

it? Did Jeremiah take it down to Egypt? Is Indiana Jones looking there for it? Is it in Ethiopia as the Ethion church says it is? They've built a special building? The question is: where is the ark? I want to close this sermon by telling you where the ark is because Brother Ricky knows where the ark of God is! I really do, but nobody asks me! Would you open your Bibles to Revelation chapter 11 with me? Revelation 11:15, "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. 18 The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." Does this not picture the second coming of Jesus Christ when the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of Christ, the lost stand before God and are judged, and the saints of God stand before God and they receive their reward for the life they've lived for his honor and his glory? Amen? This pictures the second coming of Christ. I have to tell you this, when Jesus Christ died on the cross that veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom so that for the first time the priest who went into the holy place could see into the holy of holies, but only the priest. The Jew couldn't go into the holy place so he couldn't see into the holy of holies. Tell me what the next verse says. Verse 19, "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen..."

So, where is the ark right now? It's in heaven and one day at the second coming of Jesus Christ God's true temple in heaven is going to be open and when it's open we will clearly see in God's temple the true ark of the covenant. And what I'm proposing is at the second coming of Christ God is going to let all of us behold his true presence and then we are going to see not by faith, but by sight the person of Jesus Christ! Where is the ark that guarantees our covenant? It's seated at the right hand throne of God! And one day he's coming for you and he's coming for me. So, let's not take our

eyes off of the ark of God which is none other than the person and work of Jesus Christ.

What a shadow! Can we just leave and do this? Tonight, when the sun starts going down and you're going wherever you're going and you see that shadow, would you look for the substance? Then say to God, from now on when I read my Old Testament, let me realize I'm reading a shadow and I'm looking for the substance of Christ.

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