

## ARK OF THE TESTIMONY

### “Put in the ark the Testimony which I will give you” (Ex. 25:16)

The “Testimony” was obviously the Ten Commandments. This is all that was in the ark. Moses called them the “two tables of the Testimony” (Ex. 34:19). Moses put the “Testimony” in the ark (Ex. 40:20). When he wrote Deuteronomy he said: “and they are there now” (Deut. 10:5). When Solomon put the ark in the Temple “There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb” (1 Ki. 8:9; 2 Chron. 5:10). When the ark was constructed it was first called the “ark of the Testimony” (Ex.25:21, 22). This designation is last mentioned in Joshua 4:16 when the priests carried the “ark of the Testimony” into the Jordan. Once they carried the ark out of the Jordan and into the Promised Land it was thereafter called the “ark of the covenant” (Joshua 4:18).

Before proceeding with this brief study let us consider Hebrews 9:4 which “seems” to say that the ark also contained the gold jar of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded. Actually the pot of manna was “before” the Testimony (Ex. 16:33, 34). So also was Aaron’s rod placed in front of the Testimony (Nu. 17:10). Remember Aaron’s rod, or staff, was a shepherd’s staff and the ark was only around 3 and a half feet long (Ex. 25:10). The simple explanation of this apparent contradiction is to note that the word translated as “contained” in Heb. 9:4 in the NIV is the Greek word “en”. This word is translated as “with” 139 times in the KJV. Certainly the manna and staff were “with” the Testimony but the Scriptures are clear that there was nothing “inside” the ark but the two stone tablets that Moses put there in Horeb (1 Ki. 8:9; 2 Chron. 5:10).

Please remember that the old covenant was written with the finger of God on tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18). The new covenant is written by God on the minds and hearts of believers (Heb. 8:10). Neither covenant can be seen! No one could look into the ark made by Moses without dying (1 Sam. 6:19). Neither can any man look inside your mind and heart. No man knows the things of a man save the spirit that it within him (1 Cor. 2:11). The only way we know about either covenant is by “testimony”. If Moses had kept his mouth shut no one would have known the Ten Commandments. When we keep our mouth shut no one will know what God has written in our minds and hearts. This is why “testimony” is such an integral part of overcoming the devil. We can overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our Testimony, and by loving our lives so little that we do not shrink back from death (Re. 12:11).

Since the new covenant is within us, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). We are therefore to glorify God in our body (1 Cor. 6:19,20). It was not difficult to know that Moses had been with God for there was an unmistakable glow on his face (Ex. 34:29). There is also an unmistakable glow on the faces of those who have been with Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18). We should never light a candle and put it under a bushel. In the same way believers are to let our light so shine that others may see our good works and glorify our Father Who is in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16).

There are many things that we do not know and about which we cannot be certain. We are, however, the world’s greatest authority on what God has done in our own lives. Paul’s “testimony” is found three times in the book of Acts (chapters 9, 22, and 26). It is probable that he repeated this testimony hundreds, if not thousands of times in the course of his ministry. The more we tell a story, of course, the better we become at telling it. In this regard please consider these inspired words of wisdom from Paul himself: **“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” (Col. 4:5,6)** Someone said that an egg without salt is an insipid thing. So is a testimony. Like a master chef we can season our testimony and make it “tasty”.

Man does not live by bread alone, but by “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Everything written in the past is timeless wisdom written to teach us (Rom. 15:4). Jesus said: **“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” (Lk. 9:25,26)**