

THE ARK AND THE ALTAR

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.

2½ x 1½ x 1½ cubits

Exodus 27:1 And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits.

5 x 5 x 3 cubits

The Ark of the Covenant stood alone inside the mysterious place called the Holy of Holies, visible only to the High Priest one day a year. It was the first piece of furniture God gave instructions for in the building of the Tabernacle, because it was the most important piece of furniture. It was on this piece of furniture that the High Priest sprinkled the Blood of Atonement on the Great Day of Atonement. It was from this piece of furniture that God's audible voice was heard. This was where His Shekinah presence dwelt between the Cherubim.

Among other names, the Ark was called the Ark of the Testimony, the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark of the Lord, the Ark of God, the Holy Ark, and the Ark of Thy Strength. It was, quite literally, the Throne of God in the earth, and the glory of God in the midst of His redeemed people. It is absolutely accurate to say that the Ark represents the SUPERNATURAL.

If the Ark had been removed from the Tabernacle, what remained would have been just an empty ritual. **God literally sat on that Mercy Seat!** The word "Shekinah" simply means "the one who dwells" – it refers to God visibly manifesting His presence among His people.

Psalms 80:1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

Exodus 29:43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.

Exodus 40:35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

2 Chronicles 7:2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house.

If there was great supernatural manifestation under the Old Covenant, there should be great supernatural manifestation NOW!

2 Corinthians 3:6-18 ⁶ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. ⁷ But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: ⁸ How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ⁹ For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. ¹⁰ For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. ¹¹ For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. ¹² Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: ¹³ And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

THERE IS NO VAIL UNDER THE NEW COVENANT – WE CAN WALK BOLDLY INTO THE SUPERNATURAL PRESENCE OF THE LORD!

It stood outside in the busy courtyard of the Tabernacle, among the clutter, noise and dirt of animals. Its smoke was visible to all in Israel, and it was used by the priests multiple times every day of the year. The Brazen Altar was not the only altar in the Bible, but it was the most important one in the Old Testament. Unlike the pagan altars that dotted the countryside, God's altars were to have no STEPS. Why? Because God didn't want FLESH to be exposed during worship!

Exodus 20:26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

The Brazen Altar was the very first piece of furniture that you came to upon entering the Tabernacle, and the sacrifices made there impacted every other ceremony and every other piece of furniture. The FIRE on this altar was never allowed to go out. The fire was supernaturally ignited by God, but it was man's responsibility to MAINTAIN it daily through the morning and evening sacrifices.

Leviticus 6:13 The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

There was nothing beautiful about the slaughter of animals – the altar was an ugly, repulsive sight. It was not meant to be pretty, because it was a place of judgment. And it is this scene that points us to the sacrifice of Calvary, and then to our own sacrifice in prayer and repentance. Altars are not attractive to the world, but they are the only thing that can offer a sacrifice that attracts God’s attention!

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

God instructed that the Brazen Altar was to have four HORNS. Horns in Scripture are figurative of power and strength, since they are the chief source of attack and defense for animals that have them.

Psalms 18:1-2 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Luke 1:68-69 (*Zacharias’ prophecy*) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

To be on the altar means enduring the blood, the stench of sacrifice, and the continual heat from the coals ... **but it is worth it to attract God’s attention ... because God’s attention brings the supernatural!**

BUT MY FLESH REBELS AGAINST THE ALTAR! And the problem with “living sacrifices” is that they can choose to climb down from the altar. That’s why Paul says, “I beg you brethren, STAY ON THE ALTAR!”

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

LOOK AT THE DIMENSIONS OF BOTH PIECES OF FURNITURE AND LEARN THIS – **YOUR ALTAR MUST BE BIGGER THAN YOUR ARK!**

God will not allow your ARK (supernatural) to be bigger than your ALTAR (prayer) - we want big arks with little altars, but the ark fits inside the altar - **we must increase our altars if we want to increase our arks!**

DON’T PASS THE ALTAR! Prayer must precede service) – the priests were not allowed to do anything else until they sacrificed at the altar.