

The Ark of the Covenant

By: Benjamin Cocar, VPAA, American Leadership Institute and Seminary

A couple of days ago, one of the workers that had to do some work in our school was asked by some, what elements were in the Ark of the Covenant. The man answered that „originally were four elements, but later on, only the tables of the law were there.” This sparked a discussion among our faculty, and we went back and forth with „what was in the Ark?”

Here is an attempt to clarify this matter!

In Exodus 16:33-34 we find the story of the manna being placed in front of the Ark. To commemorate the manna, Moses commanded Aaron to put a quantity (an *omer*) in a jar to be kept for all future generations (Ex 16:33) in front of the future Ark.

When Moses was on the Mountain, God instructed him to build the Ark, and place in it the testimony, the law that was about to be given by God to Moses (Exodus 25:21).

After the work was completed, Moses placed the tablets in the Ark (Exodus 40:20).

What about Aaron rod? According to Numbers 17:10, the rod was placed by Moses in front of the Ark.

Many believers assumed that all these four elements, two tablets of stone, one pot of manna, and Aaron's rod were in the Ark. The reality was a little different. The rod and manna were placed in front of the Ark, not in the Ark.

In 1 Kings 8:9, Solomon brought the Ark in the new Temple. The writer said that „in the Ark was nothing *except* the two stone tablets, that Moses placed there at Horeb, when God made a covenant with the children of Israel.”

What was the writer saying in this text? After so many years, the children of Israel did not add anything else in the ark, but preserved the law of the testimony!

The Hebrew word translated „only” is רָקַח (resh koph). In Genesis 14:21, we find the same word, and it has the same meaning. Abraham did not want anything from the king of Sodom, *except* what his soldiers eat during the incursion. The same is true in Exodus 8:5, Judges 6:39, etc.

We do not know if Solomon had Aaron's rod or the omer of manna there, in front of the Ark, but we can assume that those two elements were of a temporary significance, not of a permanent significance, as the Law of God has.