

The Ark of God's Strength

"Behold, we heard of it in Eprathah; We found it in the fields of the woods. Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O Lord, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength." (Psalm 132:6-8)

It is called at various times, "the ark of the covenant" and the "ark of testimony". Here, it is referred to as the "ark of Your (God's) strength". The titles are all equally appropriate. It contained the testimony of God, the tablets of stone upon which the Ten Commandments were given. God's law is His word and the testimony of His righteousness, the grounds of our acceptance before Him. It also contained a golden pot with manna. This testifies of the Great Shepherd's faithfulness to feed His people in whatever circumstances they may be led. The only other object in the ark was "Aaron's rod that budded". When imposters rose up claiming to be God's instrument of His deliverance, the Lord instructed the head of each tribe to take a cutting from an almond tree, and lay it up before the Lord. The one that budded would testify of the one anointed. The following morning Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. Everyone else had only a dead stick.

Each and every one of these items is fulfilled in the appearance of the promised Messiah, the Redeemer, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Being the express image of His Person and the brightness of His glory, He is personally the incarnation and revelation of the invisible God. He is the eternal Word of God. God's law, His express will, all He has to say and reveal to us, is embodied in His life and His teachings. He is the Good Shepherd (feeder) Who gives His life for His sheep; those whom He feeds never hunger and never thirst. He is the Door to the fold whereby the sheep have liberty to go and come and lie down and safely rest. In His resurrection from the dead, He is Aaron's rod that budded, blossomed and brought forth fruit. All other religions are dead men's fantasies. Our Lord conquered that last enemy and reigns triumphantly.

He is the "ark of God's strength". Seeing there was no man, no other, no intercessor, His own Arm brought salvation, and He trod the winepress of God's wrath alone. The Ark was crowned with a "Mercy Seat" with cherubim's wings overshadowing. It was here that the atoning blood was sprinkled, forever sheltering us from the punishment that our sins earned.

This is the resting place of which we heard, not in the world's halls of academia or philosophical search. Not in the feverish pursuit of fame, riches, pleasure and fun which enslaves unregenerate masses of peoples. Not in the big cities of culture, trade, and commerce. Not in the emptiness of popular, fleshy external religion. No, Christ is found far away from all of that. "in the fields of the woods" so to speak. John the Baptist came out of the wilderness heralding His arrival. He had to take His disciples apart to teach them His gospel. We who find Him must come out of the world and every idol that vies for our souls, give Him our hearts, trust and allegiance. There, in the quietness of simple faith and trust in Him, His strength, His salvation, His peace, joy, life abundant shall be discovered.

- C. M.