

Exodus 37:1-9

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The ark, the items required to carry the ark, the mercy seat, and the cherubim are constructed. The specifications for building these items were given in [Exodus 25:10 – 22](#).

The construction of the tabernacle was completed ([Exodus 35](#)). Now, the furniture and other items that were to be placed in the tabernacle were built. First, *Bezalel* the chief craftsman *made the ark of acacia wood*. It was appropriate to begin the construction of the items in the tabernacle with that which was most sacred—the *ark*. Its dimensions—*its length was two and a half cubits, and its width one and a half cubits, and its height one and a half cubits*. A cubit was approximately eighteen inches (or 45.2 centimeters), so the ark was around forty-five inches long (3.75 feet or 1.1 meters) long, twenty-seven inches (2.25 feet or .68 meters) wide, and twenty-seven inches (2.25 feet or .68 meters) in height. Because it was so sacred, *Bezalel overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, and made a gold molding for it all around*.

Verses 3 – 5 describe the making of the items that would be used to carry the ark. They consisted of *four rings of gold for it on its four feet*. There would be *two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it*. These rings would be used to thread poles through so the priests could transport the ark when Israel relocated. Along with the rings, *he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold*. Once built, *he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry it*. This would make it efficient for the priests to carry the ark to the Promised Land.

Then, *he made a mercy seat* (v. 6). The *mercy seat* was the place where God had said He would “meet with you” and “speak to you” ([Exodus 25:22](#)). This will be the place where the High Priest sprinkles the blood of a bull each year to atone for the sins of Israel, as will be directed in [Leviticus 16](#). This *mercy seat* was made of *pure gold*, and was *two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide*. This made the *mercy seat* around three and three quarters feet long (1.14 meters) and two and one quarter feet wide (.68 meters). Therefore, the *mercy seat* covered the entire area of the top of the ark, as the ark was also *two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide*. The *mercy seat* was made of *pure gold*, rather than wood overlaid with gold.

This speaks to the high value and importance of the *mercy seat* in Israel's worship.

After making the ark, Bezalel *made two cherubim of gold*(v. 7).As stated in the commentary for [Exodus 36:8](#), the *cherubim* (the word is plural) appear to be a type of angelic being the Lord dispatches to do His bidding. *Cherubim* guarded the entrance to Eden ([Genesis 3:24](#)). *Cherubim* also attended the departure of the glory of the LORD's presence from the temple ([Ezekiel 10](#)). Like the mercy seat, they were works of *gold*, not an overlay of gold on wood.

The *cherubim* that adorned the ark were made as follows:

They were made of hammered work. This probably means that the gold was beaten into the shape of the two cherubim. They were placed at the two ends of the mercy seat, in other words one cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end. In addition, he made the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at the two ends. This probably means the mercy seat and cherubim were a single piece of hammered work.They were placed in such a way that the cherubim had their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward each other. Lastly, the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

To sum up, the *ark* was the holiest and most important object in the tabernacle. The presence of the LORD descended upon it, and the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments were placed in it. It was to be placed in the Holy of Holies, separated from the other part of the tabernacle (the Holy Place) by the veil.

In the New Testament, this *ark* is called the “ark of the covenant.” It is referred to in [Heb. 9:4](#), where it is said that the ark and other aspects of the tabernacle built under Moses were copies of the true things in heaven ([Hebrews 9:23](#)). The “ark of His covenant” appears in the heavenly scene when the seventh trumpet sounds in [Revelation 11:19](#).

Biblical Text:

¹ Now Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; its length was two and a half cubits, and its width one and a half cubits, and its height one and a half cubits; ² and he overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, and made a gold molding for it all around. ³ He cast four rings of gold for it on its four feet; even two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other

side of it. ⁴ He made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. ⁵ He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry it. ⁶ He made a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. ⁷ He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat; ⁸ one cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at the two ends. ⁹ The cherubim had their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward each other; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.