



The Kingdom of God and the Parables

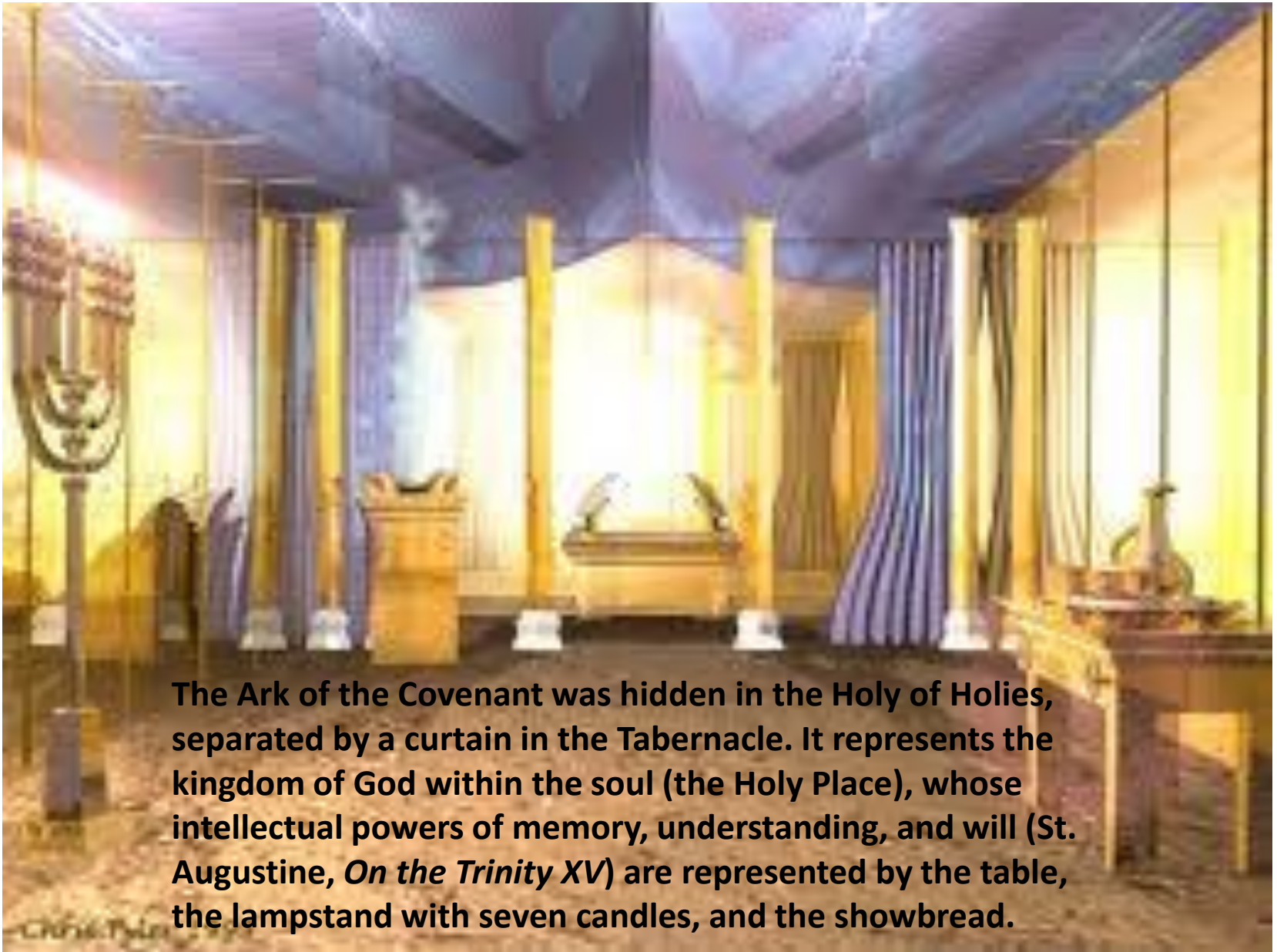
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What is the Kingdom of God?

- “You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a **holy nation.**”
—*Ex 19:6*
– N.B. “Holy” (Hebrew: *qodesh*) means set apart from the profane.
- “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
—*Mt 5:3*
- “Our Father... Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done** on earth as it is in heaven.”
—*Mt 6:9-10*

The Secret Kingdom

- “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Lo, here it is!’ of ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of (Greek: *entos*) you.” —*Lk 17:20-21*
- “Then the disciples came and said to him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ And he answered them, ‘To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.’” —*Mt 13:10-11*



The Ark of the Covenant was hidden in the Holy of Holies, separated by a curtain in the Tabernacle. It represents the kingdom of God within the soul (the Holy Place), whose intellectual powers of memory, understanding, and will (St. Augustine, *On the Trinity XV*) are represented by the table, the lampstand with seven candles, and the showbread.

The Nature of Parables

- A parable is a story or saying that makes use of ordinary things to communicate a mystery. It often has a strange twist. (Example: *Mt 13:31-32*)
- A parable is intended to both hide and reveal. It helps bring about the separation between the holy and the unholy that leads to God's kingdom. (Note Jesus' separation from the crowd on the beach in *Mt 13:1-2*.)
- Read *Mt 13:34-35*; *Ps 78:2*.
- Read *Mt 13:13-17*; *Is 6:9-10*.
- The Parables have their roots in the Old Testament (see *Mt 13:51-52*). "The New Testament is hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New (St. Augustine, *Questions on the Heptateuch* 2.73)."



The Mustard Tree

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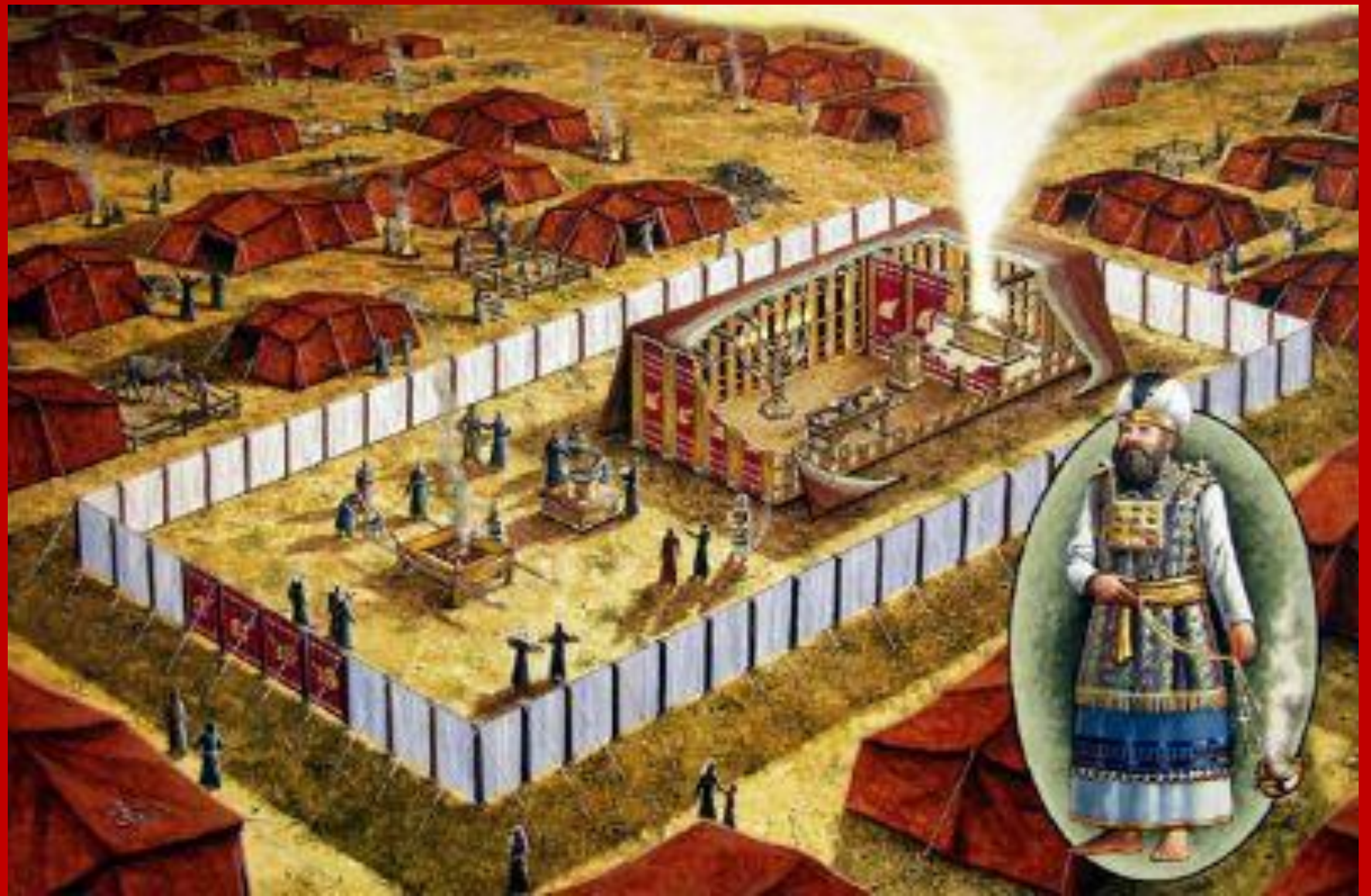


The Parable of the Sower

- St. Paul referred to hidden wisdom (*1 Cor 2:6-16*).
- We need the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit (the lamp of the Tabernacle) to make progress toward the kingdom of God (*Is 11:1-3*).
- The Parable of the Sower shows how the gifts of the Holy Spirit make fruitful the word of God sown in the **memory** (1st power of the soul).
 - Fear of the Lord, Piety (*Mt 13:3-4,18-19*)
 - Knowledge, Strength (*Mt 13:5-6,20-21*)
 - Counsel (*Mt 13:7,22*)
 - Understanding, Wisdom (*Mt 13:8-9,23*)

The Weeds, the Mustard Seed, and the Leaven

- These three parables speak of discernment of good and evil that must undergird the **understanding** (2nd power of the soul).
- The Weeds: *Mt 13:24-33, 36-43; 1 Cor 4:4-5.*
- The Mustard Seed: *Mt 13:31-32; 1 Cor 4:6-13; Ezk 31:3-14.*
- The Leaven: *Mt 13:33; Ex 12:15; 1 Cor 5:1-8; 1 Thes 5:23; 1 Jn 2:16.* (The body, soul, and spirit are represented by the 3 parts of the Tabernacle.)



The Treasure, The Pearl, and the Net

- These three parables speak of singleness of heart that must guide the **will** (3rd power of the soul).
 - “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
— *Mt 5:8*
 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” — *Mt 6:19-21*
 - “Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts.” — *1 Cor 14:1*
- Read *Mt 13:44-50; 1 Cor 3:11-15*.

Summary

- The Kingdom of God is a holy secret hidden within the soul, and entered only with humility and obedience to the will of God.
- The Parables of Jesus Christ communicate the mystery of the Kingdom through ordinary symbols that both reveal and hide the wisdom reserved by God for the holy.
- The Parables show us how to sanctify the three powers of the soul (memory, understanding, and will) aided by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.