

The Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant is what everything is about; it is the normal Christian life. The Ark of the Covenant is our life inside of God; it is God's way through us into His creation, into being seen and known by all.

The ten ruling verses of the Bible are primarily about this Ark, its place and its function.

[A picture of a simple Ark of the Covenant.]

Learning the Ark. Just as the Ark of the Covenant was a picture of Jesus in His life and ministry on this earth, so it is now the same picture of us, of Jesus in and through us.

The Mercy Seat is very much a part of the Ark itself as the lid covering the box. We will study them together as well as separately.

Our learning of this Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat upon it has three phases. The first phase is our approach to the Ark and the Mercy Seat. The second is the meaning of both as a description of our lives. And third is the going forth of this Ark as the journey of God into His creation.

The Ruling Verses of the Bible. Two of the ruling verses of the Bible reference our approach to becoming the Ark, Christ our life and entering boldly.

Four reference our life in God as the Ark, symmorphosed with His image, living inside of Jesus, being filled with all of God, and loving one another.

And four reference the going forth of this Ark as God through us, walking in confidence, sending forth rivers of Spirit, casting down accusation, and setting creation free.

Our first season of time in the Holiest is about learning what everything is about, our full and precious union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Wooden Box. In the next two lessons, we will look first at the meaning of the Pillar of Fire into whose presence we have come, and second at living inside of the Ark, what that means for us. In this lesson, however, we want to look “at” the Ark (as students) so that we might know what it is and means.

We must never “look at” the Ark as believers, for we live only inside of Jesus and we see always out from His eyes. But as students in the classroom, our job is to study and to learn.

Moses’ description of the Ark is in Exodus 25:10-22. – **Have them make an ark of acacia wood—two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high.**

Covered with Gold. Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry it. The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. Then put in the ark the tablets of the covenant, which I will give you (This is from the NIV).

Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover.

Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the tablets of the covenant that I will give you. There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.

A wooden box, acacia wood, encased on the inside and on the outside with gold, covered by a lid of pure gold beaten into the shape of Mercy, and containing that Word that is the Covenant between God and man.

Jesus as the Ark. Here is the Ark of the Covenant in the gospels. – **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we looked upon His glory... full of grace and truth** (John 1:14).
– Filled with God-with-me and filled with honesty. –

Jesus modeled for us what being the Ark of the Covenant is and means – **See that you make all things according to the Pattern** (Hebrews 8:5).

Jesus explained carefully the essence of being God's Ark. – **Believe Me that I (wood) am inside of the Father (gold) and the Father (gold) inside of Me** (John 14:11). Person inside of Person and Person inside of Person.

Father with Me. The Ark of the Covenant – a human covered on the inside and on the outside with God. Then we add these things concerning Jesus. – **Behold, I have come, in the scroll of the book it is written of me, to do that which You desire, O God** (Hebrews 10:7).

Then you will know that I Am, and that out from myself, I do nothing, but as the Father taught Me, that I speak. And the One having sent Me, is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to Him (John 8:28-29).

I made Your name clear and visible – the words that You have given Me, I have given them (John 17:6-8).

Covered with Mercy. Jesus said, many times, “Of Myself, I can do nothing.” This is the honesty and truth in which He walked – that is, Jesus never imagined that connecting with God

was something He could do; rather, He walked in the joyful confidence that God was ALWAYS connecting with Him.

The task of the Altar of Incense is to make us just like Jesus, so that never again would we imagine that we could ever “do God’s will” ourselves.

All who approach Mercy have chosen against their own poor performance and against their own INABILITY to “do what God says.”

Refusing All Accusation. You see, the real meaning of Jesus’ modeling for us the Ark of the Covenant is that Jesus by Himself cannot be the Ark God intends. Jesus is the One who connects Father with us, that we together might be God’s final Ark of the Covenant.

But you and I CANNOT ever know, in pure and certain rest, that we are the Ark of the Covenant until we have refused all voices of accusation against us and against God.

We approach inside of Blood; we are covered over by Blood; we are seated upon Blood. And in the presence of that Blood, Keep and Make Holy are always our protection. – **NO consciousness of sins.**

How We Become Like Jesus. If a grain of wheat having been planted into the ground **should not die** {that is, the appearance of death}, **it abides alone.** If it **should die, however** {that is, become something entirely different – the plant}, **it bears much fruit** {many more seeds just like itself} (John 12:24).

Jesus is showing us how He, the One Seed of God, planted into our earth and becoming us as the plant, causes us to be, with Himself, this Ark of the Covenant.

Because, you see, this Ark of the Covenant, now us together, is the full expression of what God wants – **God manifest in the flesh** (1 Timothy 3:16).

What Is in the Ark? Let us continue, then as students looking at this most wondrous reality of the gospel given to us in the New Testament, that Jesus IS become us together.

Here is where we must begin – **For we have this treasure inside of earthen vessels** (a box of acacia wood), **so that the surpassing beyond-ness of the power may be of God and not of us** (2 Corinthians 4:7), that is – just like Jesus.

What, then, is this treasure that we possess inside of us? It is the Covenant.

If I could, I would make that word, the Covenant, to be the most important thing to you inside the human experience.

The Covenant. It is fully made visible that you ARE a letter of Christ, with us under your service, having already been written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God – not on tablets of stone, but inside tablets of hearts of flesh (2 Corinthians 3:3).

We look first at this incredible expansion of “**Christ lives inside of my heart through faith,**” in its entirety because it is evidence that Paul is transferring the ENTIRE meaning of the covenant carved in stone to our human hearts.

Then, we say it this way. – It is clear to me that I AM a letter of Christ, having already been written with the Spirit of the living God inside of the tablets of my heart of flesh.

The Real Bible. The tablets of stone carved by the finger of God were God’s covenant. Jesus, the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, was God’s covenant.

Your human heart, made entirely of flesh and carrying all the attributes of human and earth, is now, not that Covenant in type, nor that Covenant in Pattern, but now that Covenant in full. – Your heart is more the Bible than the Bible ever could be.

Christ lives in my heart through faith; my heart IS God's Covenant with His creation. Here, inside of my heart, God Himself meets together with me and I with Him.

The Only Place We Live. Then, the gospel of our Salvation continues out from this one central Word of Christ our heart and our only life. **KNOW that I AM inside of My Father AND you inside of Me AND I inside of you** (John 14:20).

Person (Father) inside of Person (Jesus) inside of persons (you and me); persons (you and me) inside of Person (Jesus) inside of Person (God the Father).

[A diagram of the concentric circles that illustrate this living relationship of persons together.]

Fellowship With. What on earth are we doing inside of God and God inside of us? God's answer will blow your mind.

That all (who believe into Me) might be one, as You, Father, are inside of Me, and I inside of You, that they also might be inside of Us... And the glory which You have given Me, I have given them, that they might be one as We are one; I inside of them, and You inside of Me, that they might be brought to full completion inside of one... (John 17:20-23).

So that you also might have fellowship [koinonia] with us, and truly our fellowship is with and among the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

That All Might Know Me. Jesus and John are making the beyond-believable claim that you and I share together inside the fellowship of Father and Son.

And what is God's purpose for this shared fellowship that is the Ark of the Covenant? – **that the world might know** (John 17:23) – **that all might know Me** (Hebrews 8) – the Covenant. – **God manifest in the flesh.**

It does not stop there, though, the clear New Testament description of our glorious Salvation, that is, being the Ark of God's Covenant, the revelation of Father to all. What about the gold on the inside and on the outside?

Filled Full and Flowing Out. To know even more the surpassing, beyond-all knowledge of the love of Christ, that you might be filled unto and with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). – **He who believes into me, as the Scripture has said, Rivers of living water will overflow out of his belly [his womb, his innermost being]** (John 7:38).

Humans – filled with ALL of God, revealing God to all.

BUT – inside creation's reality, God remains invisible. What does all creation see when they look at God manifest in the flesh, God revealed? They see you and me, silly and bumbling humans, loving one another with pure hearts fervently.

A Human. This is a representation of a true human being, filled with all of God, revealing God to all.

[A diagram depicting a true human being, Jesus always first, and we always just like Him.]

You and I together are the true Ark of God, the Ark of His Covenant.