

# BIBLE STUDY WEEK 98

## The Ark of God: His Presence, Holiness, Covenant, and Glory

### Introduction

The "Ark of God," often called the **Ark of the Covenant**, was one of the most sacred objects in the Old Testament. It represented the manifested presence of God among His people, His covenant relationship with Israel, His holiness, authority, mercy, and kingship.

Many people misunderstand the Ark as merely a religious artifact or mystical object. Biblically, however, the Ark pointed beyond itself to deeper spiritual truths ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the believer's relationship with God today.

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### 1. What Was the Ark of God?

#### Definition

The Ark of the Covenant was a sacred chest built according to God's exact instructions during the days of Moses.

#### Main Scripture

##### Exodus 25:10–22

"And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof...

And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold...

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat..." — Exodus 25:10–22 (KJV)

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## 2. What Was Inside the Ark?

The contents of the Ark were deeply symbolic.

### Hebrews 9:3–4

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was

the golden pot that had manna,

and Aaron’s rod that budded,

and the tables of the covenant.”

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### A. The Stone Tablets — God’s Law

#### Meaning

The tablets represented:

- God’s covenant
- His righteous standard
- His authority
- Divine truth

#### Scripture

### Exodus 31:18

“And he gave unto Moses... two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”

#### Study Point

God’s presence is connected to His truth and holiness. The Ark reminds believers that God is not only loving but righteous.

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## **B. The Golden Pot of Manna**

### **Meaning**

The manna represented:

- God's supernatural provision
- Sustaining grace
- Dependence upon Him

### **Scripture**

#### **Exodus 16:32–34**

"Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations..."

### **Connection to Christ**

#### **John 6:35**

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life..."

### **Study Point**

God provides both physically and spiritually. Jesus became the true Bread from Heaven.

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## **C. Aaron's Rod That Brought Forth Buds**

### **Meaning**

The rod symbolized:

- God's chosen authority
- Resurrection life
- Divine priesthood

### **Scripture**

## **Numbers 17:8**

"...behold, the rod of Aaron... was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

### **Study Point**

God confirms whom He appoints. Dead things can live again through God's power.

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## **3. The Mercy Seat — The Place of Atonement**

On top of the Ark sat the "Mercy Seat."

### **Leviticus 16:14–15**

"And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward..."

This was where the high priest sprinkled sacrificial blood on the Day of Atonement.

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### **Symbolism of the Mercy Seat**

The Mercy Seat represented:

- God's throne
  - Mercy over judgment
  - Atonement for sin
  - Reconciliation
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### **Fulfillment in Christ**

#### **Romans 3:25**

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood..."

Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice and mercy seat for humanity.

## **Study Point**

The Ark teaches that sinful humanity can only approach a holy God through atonement.

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### **4. What Did the Ark Represent?**

#### **A. The Presence of God**

The Ark symbolized God dwelling among His people.

#### **Exodus 25:22**

“And there I will meet with thee...”

#### **Numbers 10:35–36**

“Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered...”

When the Ark moved, Israel moved.

## **Study Point**

God desired relationship and fellowship with His people.

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#### **B. God’s Holiness**

The Ark could not be approached casually.

#### **2 Samuel 6:6–7**

“And Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God... And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah... and there he died by the ark of God.”

#### **Why Did Uzzah Die?**

Because God had commanded the Ark only be carried in a specific holy manner.

#### **Numbers 4:15**

"...they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die."

### **Study Point**

God is loving, but He is also holy. Familiarity must never remove reverence.

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### **C. God's Power and Victory**

The Ark often went before Israel in battle.

#### **Joshua 6:6–20 — Jericho**

The Ark circled the city before the walls fell.

### **Study Point**

Victory comes from God's presence, not human strength.

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### **D. God's Kingship and Throne**

The Ark symbolized the throne of God on earth.

#### **1 Samuel 4:4**

"...the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims..."

### **Study Point**

God alone is King. The Ark represented divine rule over Israel.

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### **5. The Danger of Misusing the Ark**

Israel eventually treated the Ark like a lucky charm instead of honoring God.

#### **1 Samuel 4:3**

"Let us fetch the ark... that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies."

But Israel still lost the battle.

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### **Important Lesson**

Religious symbols cannot replace obedience.

### **Study Point**

Many people want God's power without God's holiness or relationship.

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## **6. The Ark in the House of Dagon**

When the Philistines captured the Ark, they placed it before their idol Dagon.

### **1 Samuel 5:2–4**

"And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD..."

### **Meaning**

False gods cannot stand before the true God.

### **Study Point**

God's glory will always overpower idols.

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## **7. David Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem**

David desired God's presence in the center of national life.

### **2 Samuel 6:12–15**

"And David danced before the LORD with all his might..."

## **Why Was David So Passionate?**

Because the Ark represented restored fellowship with God.

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## **Worship Lesson**

True worship flows from reverence and joy in God's presence.

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## **8. The Ark and the Temple**

The Ark was eventually placed in Solomon's Temple.

### **1 Kings 8:6–11**

“...the cloud filled the house of the LORD...

for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.”

## **Meaning**

God's glory rested where His covenant and holiness were honored.

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## **9. What Happened to the Ark?**

The Bible never clearly explains the Ark's final earthly location.

Some believe it disappeared before the Babylonian invasion.

However, spiritually, the focus shifts from a physical Ark to God dwelling with His people directly.

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## **10. What Is the Importance of the Ark Today?**

The Ark still matters because of what it teaches spiritually.

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## A. God Still Desires His Presence Among His People

### Revelation 21:3

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them..."

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## B. Jesus Fulfilled Everything the Ark Represented

Ark Symbol	Fulfilled in Christ
Law	Jesus fulfilled the Law
Manna	Jesus is the Bread of Life
Aaron's Rod	Jesus is eternal High Priest
Mercy Seat	Jesus became atonement
Presence of God	God dwells in Christ

### Colossians 2:9

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

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## C. Believers Are Now the Temple of God

### 1 Corinthians 6:19

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost..."

### Meaning

God's presence no longer dwells in a golden box but within believers through the Holy Spirit.

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## D. Reverence for God Still Matters

The Ark teaches believers not to treat God casually.

## **Hebrews 12:28–29**

"...let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

For our God is a consuming fire."

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### **E. God's Mercy Still Covers Judgment**

The Mercy Seat pointed to Christ's sacrifice.

#### **1 John 2:1–2**

"...we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins..."

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## **11. Prophetic and Spiritual Insights**

### **The Ark Represents:**

- God's throne
  - Covenant relationship
  - Holiness
  - Divine order
  - Worship
  - Atonement
  - Victory
  - The presence of God among humanity
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## **12. Practical Application for Believers Today**

### **A. Seek God's Presence Above Everything**

#### **Psalms 16:11**

"In thy presence is fulness of joy..."

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## **B. Honor God's Holiness**

Do not reduce Christianity to rituals while neglecting obedience.

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## **C. Trust God's Provision**

Like manna in the Ark, God remains faithful to sustain His people.

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## **D. Walk Under God's Authority**

Aaron's rod reminds believers to submit to God's divine order.

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## **E. Live Through Christ's Mercy**

The blood on the Mercy Seat points to grace through Jesus.

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## **13. Key Themes for Group Discussion**

1. Why was the Ark treated with such reverence?
2. What does Uzzah's death teach about holiness?
3. Why did Israel fail when they treated the Ark like a good luck charm?
4. How does Jesus fulfill the symbolism of the Ark?
5. What does it mean for believers to carry God's presence today?
6. How can modern Christians restore reverence for God?

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## **14. Major Scriptures for Further Study**

- Exodus 25:10–22
- Exodus 40:34–38
- Leviticus 16
- Numbers 10:33–36

- Numbers 17
- Joshua 3–6
- 1 Samuel 4–6
- 2 Samuel 6
- 1 Kings 8
- Hebrews 9
- Revelation 11:19

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## **Final Summary**

The Ark of God was not merely a sacred object—it was a visible sign of:

- God’s covenant
- His holiness
- His mercy
- His authority
- His glory
- His presence among His people

Today, believers no longer seek a physical Ark because Jesus Christ fulfilled what the Ark represented. Through Christ and the Holy Spirit, God now dwells within His people.

The Ark ultimately points to this truth:

**God desires to dwell with humanity, but His presence must be approached through holiness, covenant, reverence, and atonement through Jesus Christ.**