

The Ark of the Covenant

by Henry Law

The sermon explores the significance of the Ark of the Covenant as a symbol of Christ's redemption and emphasizes the importance of recognizing His presence, remembering His work, and responding with obedience and faith.

Scripture: Exodus 25:10, Joshua 3:13, 1 Samuel 4:3, 2 Samuel 6:11, Psalm 40:7, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 9:5, Revelation 11:19

Topics: "Christology", "Redemption"

Description

Henry Law preaches about the significance of the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle, highlighting how it represents Christ as the Ark of redemption, the embodiment of the Law, and the Mercy-seat. The Ark, made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, symbolizes Jesus as both fully man and fully God, without sin. The cherubim on the Mercy-seat point to the unity and purpose of believers in Christ, always focused on Him and His work. The Ark's presence with the faithful is a reminder of Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers, providing dignity, peace, and warning against straying from Him.

Transcript

"Make an Ark of acacia wood--a sacred chest 3 3/4 feet long, 2 1/4 feet wide, and 2 1/4 feet high. Overlay it inside and outside with pure gold, and put a molding of gold all around it." Exodus 25:10-11

Reader! come see the chief wonder of the wondrous Tabernacle. It is the Ark. For this the holy tent was upraised. For this the holiest place was set apart. This is the richest jewel of the sacred casket. The topstone of the hallowed Tabernacle. Its form was first displayed in heaven. God gave the plan to Moses. In heaven it still is visible to faith. John saw it with enraptured eye. We read, 'The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the Ark of His testament.' Rev. 11:19

All this exhibits Christ. He is the ARK of redemption, the scheme of which was drawn above. In fullness of time it was set up below. And now it shines, and ever shall shine, the glorious glory of the new Jerusalem. When God describes the holy vessels, observe, this Ark takes precedence. He first shows that which shows His Son most clearly. It is His will that Christ should be set forth without a cloud, in full-orbed splendor. May the same mind be ours! May He fill up the foreground of each thought and work! Let no reserve, let no unworthy veil obscure the brightness of His brightest smile. God puts the glories of His Firstborn first. Woe to the man who hides Him in the rear!

The Ark is a plain chest. Its length is less than four feet. Its height and breadth are scarcely more than two. Jesus is simple majesty. He needs no art to decorate His grace. It is impure and pitiable taste which craves for outside show.

The substance of the Ark is wood. This proves an earthly birth. Trees spring from this our lower soil. Here Jesus is portrayed the woman's Seed--the kinsman of our race. O my soul, ponder more and more Christ's visit to our low abode. He takes our prison rags, that He may bear our prison woe. He becomes man, that with man's lips He may exhaust our cup of wrath. Christ's sufferings in the flesh leave us no sufferings to pay. This is no common wood. Corruption cannot soil it. It defies decay. So human nature, as put on by Christ, is human nature without spot of sin. It is a lovely sight to see man treading earth, and no mire cleaving to the feet; and breathing our polluted air, without infection's taint.

The Ark is more than wood. Its every part is covered with pure gold. This metal, put over the coarse wood, shows that our Jesus is much more than man. Grand truth! Sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth. The lowly Savior is the mighty God! Vain were the wounds, the blood, the agony, the death, unless the merit had a boundless worth. One soul which never sinned might buy one sinning soul from curse. But Jesus satisfies for multitudes, as many as the sea-shore grains, and countless as the stars of night. His Deity enables Him for the stupendous work. His every act and every pain is as measureless as God can be. Infinite deaths are died upon His cross. Infinite obedience is wrought out in His life. O my soul, look often at the Ark. It witnesses that Christ is very man, a spotless man, and man co-joined with perfect Deity and so the Savior whom your case requires.

A crown (or molding) of gold surrounds the summit. This speaks of kingly state. And is not Christ a king? The Father's voice decides it; 'Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.' The Spirit cries aloud, 'He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.' Who will not add, Lift up your heads, O portals of my heart, and let the King of Glory enter in? Happy they, who give Him the throne of every thought, and crown Him daily with high crowns of praise! Let the ungodly pierce Him with mockery's thorns. Reader! place on His brow the jewel of your ransomed soul.

Coffers are made to hold some treasure. They have the custody of precious things. That surely, then, must be a priceless prize, which shall be guarded within walls like these! And so it is. The Ark receives the Tables of the Law. God had revealed His will. He had drawn on a chart His own transcendent holiness. This transcript of the eternal mind was folded in this chest. Now look to Christ. He is the Law-containing Ark. The Spirit, not the letter, dwells in Him. The world reviled this code. Man cast it from him. Christ gave Himself to be its sacred home. He hid it in the chambers of His breast. Hear His appeal, 'I delight to do Your will, O My God! yes, Your law is within My heart.' Christ is embodied Law.

Next, the Ark is covered. A lid of solid gold is placed for especial purpose, and with especial name. The purpose is to hide the Law from every eye. This brings us to the glorious work of Christ. The Law has a stern voice. Mark its requirements. They are very long and very wide. Their breadth embraces the whole of each man's life. They rigidly exact obedience, without one falter or one flaw. Mark, also, its curse. It has one fearful threat. Eternal ruin is transgression's doom. Christ comes to hide these terrible demands. He spreads Himself along the vast dimensions of the requiring and the condemning code. His life is satisfaction to the whole. So, also, He bears its utmost penalties. He suffers until its wrath can take no more. God looks upon His Son. He finds obedience rendered and the curse endured. An exact covering conceals all claims. No part appears to ask for further dues.

The lid has an especial name. It is the Mercy-seat. We now are taught why pure gold, without any admixture, is its substance. Mercy has no birth-place but in heaven. It yearns, indeed, over our fallen race. It speeds, indeed, to earth. But its high origin is far above. Hence nothing but pure gold, God's emblem, can form this Mercy-seat. It is a fitting name. For what is mercy, but Christ in His finished work? Christ is the ocean of mercy, in which every drop is infinite compassion. He is the mountain of mercy, towering above mountains, in which every grain is God's own goodness. He is the mirror of God's loving heart, the pinnacle of tender grace. O my soul, know the full comfort of the Mercy-seat. When your short-comings fill you with dismay, see Christ, your mercy-seat, spreading His own robe around you; when threatening thunders peal, seek safety in His covering side. Bless Jesus more and more. His mercy shelters. His mercy saves. His mercy endures forever.

Can more be added to the Ark? Faith would see some token of redeemed souls. It looks again. Nor looks in vain. At either end a cherubim has its place. No foreign metal frames this glittering pair. They and the Mercy-seat are of one piece. Aloft they spread their wings, thus shadowing the lid. Their faces turn towards each other, but look intently on the seat below.

Reader! come learn some obvious lessons from these cherubim. They rest upon the Mercy-seat. The heirs of life have no dependence but on Christ. On Him they lean for every help. On Him they cast the burden of their sins. 'Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

They are, also, part and parcel of the Lord. He is the Head--they are the members. One sap pervades the stem and branch. Christ's Spirit animates each fiber of the Church. All are 'partakers of the divine nature.'

Their expanded wings proclaim their readiness for instant work. The cry of grateful love is always one--'Lord, what will You have me to do?' Speak but the word, and swiftly I will fly. My plumes delight to speed in Your behalf.

They turn towards each other. Oneness of purpose, oneness of heart, oneness of action, is the pure mark of God's pure sons. They look not to their own, but to the common good. Without diverging glance, in harmony and love, they seek the glory of their glorious Lord.

But every eye is riveted on Christ! They dwell with prying gaze on the mysteries of the Mercy-seat. They have no look for other objects, nor mind for other knowledge. Their sigh is, Oh! that we might know Him more and more, and see with clearer view the wonders of His person, His grace, His love, His work. The more they search the more they learn. The more they learn the more they crave. Eternity must end before the end of Christ be reached.

A promise, bringing heaven down to earth, surmounts the whole. God adds, 'There will I meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the Mercy-seat. The anxious soul will often breathe the longing thought, 'Oh! that I knew where I might find Him.'

Reader! there is no doubt. The spot is fixed. Come to the Mercy-seat! There God is present to hear, to answer, and to bless. There He will open all His heart, and deal as friend with friend, in all the freeness of intimate love. Then linger not. Plead Christ, your law-fulfilling righteousness. Claim Christ, your law-appeasing victim. Show Christ as set forth of God to be an atoning sacrifice, or Mercy-seat, 'through faith in His blood.' As you draw near, God will draw near to you. In Christ you come. In Christ He meets you. The Mercy-seat joins you to God. The Mercy-seat joins God to you.

Will any say that the Ark of Moses no more exists? True. When the Temple fell, this framework disappeared. But Christ, the substance, ever lives. In heaven the Throne of Grace cannot be moved. The name is changed, but the reality is one. Material forms are lost. Substantial blessings have eternal life. Yes! While needs lasts we may go boldly to a ready throne. God waits with open hand. With open hand His people take. O my soul, pass often through the parted veil. You will return laden with mercies, rich in grace, refreshed with heavenly communion, and made fit for a heavenly home.

Moreover, the Ark had poles. By these the priests carried it. It was the constant center of the marching host. It moved or tarried as they moved or stayed. Thus Christ abides, the inhabitant of the faithful heart. At home, abroad, in solitude, in work, indwelling Deity gives dignity and peace. The poles might not be taken out. They kept their place in readiness for instant movement. It is true that Christ never finally deserts His own who once have welcomed Him. But let them watch and pray, and hold Him fast with clinging love and fervency of zeal. For if the world creeps in, and rival lusts are fondled, His gracious smile will cease to cheer, His precious presence will seem to vanish. Let congregations, also, and churches fear. The poles give warning, that departure may be near. The Gospel comes. It calls. It is not heeded. What then? It passes on, and may be no more heard. The true Light has shone on many a spot which now is dark as death's dark valley.

Reader! let not the Ark thus speak to you in vain. Receive it, prize it, and Obed-edom's blessings will enrich you. 'The Ark of the Lord remained there with the family of Obed-edom for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household.' 2 Samuel 6:11

Enshrine it in your heart. Then all strongholds of sin, like Jericho, will fall before it. The idols of self-righteous forms will lie, like shattered Dagon, at its feet. And when you reach the stream of Jordan, Christ, the true Ark, will lead you onward, and parting waters will be your passage to the land of rest!

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