Ark of the Covenant: Christ Our Representative in the Presence of God Part 1

By Charles Feinberg

This is tape number eight [inaudible] ministry and take twenty seven, but its tape number eight in series on the tabernacle. The title is the Ark of the Covenant: Christ our representative in the presence of God. This tape is being made by Dr. Charles L. Feinberg. This study is on the Ark of the Covenant: Christ our representative in the presence of God. Christ our representative in the presence of God.

The ark of covenant is spoken of as the first piece of furniture in exodus 25:10-16. Mentioned gain exodus 37:1-5, exodus 39:35, exodus 40:3, 20, and 21, and then in numbers 10:33 where we see there the ark of the covenant was the great object of leadership. It led the children of Israel through the wilderness. When the ark went forward, they went forward; when the ark rested, they rested at the command of the Lord. exodus 25:10-16, that passage reads and they the people of Israel should make an arc of acacia wood, two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and half the breadth thereof and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shall overlay it with pure gold within and without shall thou overlay it. And shalt make upon it a crown of gold roundabout. And thou shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them in the four feet thereof and two rings shall be on the one side of it and two rings on the other side of it. And though shall make staves of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And though shall put the staves into the rings on the sides of the ark where with to bear the ark. The staves shall be in the
rings of the ark. They shall not be taken from it. And though shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. That’s exodus 25:10-16.

In a way it is the focal passage on the Ark of the Covenant as far as the making of it and its purpose. Some try they may try to escape the truth of the types and there’s some in that category even today trying to avoid the truth and the force of the types of the bible. But a study of the scriptures is incomplete without them. We are told that while visiting Northfield [sp?], Massachusetts, a group was looking at the beautiful model of the temple of Solomon. It was designed by Newbury [sp?] scholar in the word of God. That model is in the library of the moody seminary. A lady who had listened to the conversation said she didn't believe in any of the types. She thought it was all fanciful. Well they tried to explain to her that a true type was something designed by God to teach a lesson and that if in the New Testament it was proved to be so, there was no fear of our being fanciful. It was God's picture book to teach his truth. She was asked if which there were no types of which she could believe. None, she said, not a one. question came do you not think when john the Baptist said behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world in john 1 he meant that all the lands which had been offered in sacrifice from abel on all those offered in sacrifice before john's day were types of the lord Jesus? Oh yes she said I see that. Do you not think that as the apostle peter speaks of believers as lively or living stones built up a spiritual house and a royal priest hood he may take the stones of the temple and the Levitical priesthood as types of believers? Oh yes I can see that.
Then as we are told in Hebrews that the lord Jesus Christ has consecrated for us a new and living way through the veil, that is to say his flesh, may we not say fearlessly that the veil was a type of his incarnation and the rending of the veil of his death? Why yes she could see that. She was obliged you see to admit several types. And then she was told to study others. She was soon interested in a study that you know as far from fanciful and far from fantastic. Now the Ark of the Covenant which is Christ our representative in the presence of God, the ark is referred to more frequently than any other article of furniture in the tabernacle and for a reason: it is a perfect symbol of our lord Jesus Christ as the enthronement of God in humanity. The enthronement of deity in humanity. In Colossians 2 we have the concept v 3 and v 9. Colossians 2:3 in whom that’s in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden then v 9 for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, or body-wise, the fullness of God dwells in him in a body.

The holy of holies, which was the second compartment of the tabernacle proper, the outer court, then the holy place, and then the holy of holies or the holiest of all or as it is often called, the holiest, and in the Latin sanctum sanctorum, the holy of holies, that holy of holies was indeed a small apartment. 15 feet each way. What condescension for the God of heaven to manifest his presence in such a lowly place. in first kings 8:27, at the dedication of the temple of Solomon, and it was a marvelous thing, one of the ancient wonders of the world, yet in spite of all the lavish appointments of that beautiful structure, it amazed Solomon and he speaks of it in true perplexity how it is that God whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, how is it that he would condescend to well in house that was made by hands, ordered by king Solomon? So great a god to live in such a small place.
Isaiah puts it beautifully, Isaiah 57:15, we read for thus saith the high and lofty one that
inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, that is heaven, with
him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the
heart of the contrite, the high and lofty majestic [inaudible] God lord of the universe whom the
heavens cannot contain nevertheless he condescends to live with the lowly, the humble, the
contrite.

The holy of holies is called the holiest of all for a reason, because it was the actual abode of God.
If we do not believe that God presence invisible form who was made to dwell between the
cherubim on top of the ark of the convent, on the mercy seat, if we do not believe that was an
actual manifestation of God in that form, then there is no validity to the tabernacle. It’s no better
than a child's toy house. No, it was the abode of God. When Hezekiah prayed, he said oh Lord
God though who dwelleth between the cherubim. Yes it was the abode of God on earth. The
omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God condescended to make the tabernacle and later the
temple his abode. He accepted the gift. He owned it. He recognized it as his very domicile. And
the way into it remember was by blood. Without that there is no entrance. That is so important.
We hear even at this late hour in so many places foolish individuals perhaps even well-meaning
talking about a bloodless religion. No need for blood no need for sacrifice no need for forfeiture
of human life. ah but Adam died spiritually in a human body and Christ had to come, God a very
God man a very man that he was, he had to come on earth in a human body and die. So the high
priest came in once a year with blood into the holiest of all with shoeless feet, and dressed in white linen.

Now we do not know from scripture that the priest ever uttered a word when he was within the veil. What a lesson: when we come near to God we do well to keep silence before him. Habakkuk 2:20 the lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. The high priest when he came out of the holiest of all, the end of the day of atonement, the high priest never referred to what had seen within the veil. Some spiritual experiences ought not to be talked about. Paul was caught up to the third heaven, and he tells us in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 that he saw things that were so marvelous it made him homesick for heaven. It spoiled him for earth and yet he said these were things he could not utter. Things unutterable. Some things, some spiritual experiences ought not to be talked about. They ought not to be banding around.

I think there's a remarkable picture in John 12. [Inaudible] You will remember that Lazarus had been ill, and had died, he had been buried, he had been lying in the grave for four days and his body was in a state of decomposition, and then the lord Jesus Christ marvelously raised him that blessed one who said I am the resurrection and the life who that believeth [sp?] on me shall never day, and he that dies shall live again. He is the resurrection of those who died; he is the life of those who will be caught up to rob death of its prey in the rapture. Lazarus then went through that experience.
In the twelfth chapter, we find our lord visiting in the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. And the interesting thing is that the folk came because they heard of what our lord had done with reference to Lazarus. Did you read that chapter through? Read it through carefully. Read it through many times. You will never find that Lazarus never said a word about his experience, about how he endured death and came out by being raised, resuscitation from the dead. We know he died again because he's not alive now. But Christ raised him from the dead in order to show the glory of the lord. and because the old testament indicated that messiah when he came would do signs, wonders, and miracles such as no man ever did/ why should Lazarus in the presence of the lord Jesus Christ talk about one of his experiences in being brought back from the dead when here is the lord of life and resurrection, the victor over death, the very death of death. why should Lazarus make much of his experience when here is the lord of life and resurrection who could give any number of experience to as many as he wished.

Now the furniture of the holy of holies was very scant. There’s no need for much else where God himself is. The ark was the first vessel God instructed Moses to make from. God's viewpoint the tabernacle is made from the holiest outward that’s the Ephesian picture. God begins from himself so it may be to the praise of the glory of the grace of the father, to the praise of the glory of the grace of the son, to the praise of the glory of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The first step in salvation is a divine one. It begin with God, of course man coming with his sin couldn't come to the Ark of the Covenant. He couldn't come there all through the year but the high priest only one day a year. And so man when it comes with his sin comes as is pictured in romans all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He's going to get [inaudible] throughout the year he must come by way of the altar of burnt offerings.
So the first step in salvation is a divine one, and God has done it. That’s why it never behooves us to say Lord it's your move. No it is not God's move. He made his move, marvelously, sufficient, and complete, once for all he made it at Calvary. Always God is seen in the bible as taking the first step. When Adam sinned and ran off from God, it was God who sought after him. now the materials of the ark of the covenant, the ark was a chest, two and a half cubit and a cubit is reckoned to be about 18 inches from the elbow to the middle finger, of course that differs in different individuals. There was what was called the short cubit and the longer cubit, but about 18 inches. Now the ark was a chest, two and a half cubits in length, one and one half in breadth and height. The dimensions then of the ark were precise. They were exact. They were fixed by God. Reminds us of the body of our lord Jesus in Hebrews 10:5 a body has thou prepared me. And what a blessed body it was that was altogether sinless, altogether without disease or sickness, that body which could fully take upon itself all the sin of the world. As far as that body was concerned, there was never any sin in it all through the life of our lord there was no sin on that body, laid on it. But on Calvary all the sin of the world was laid upon that body that God had prepared for that precise exact purpose.

Now the acacia wood was overlaid with gold within and without beautifully telling us that our lord Jesus as the enthronement of deity and humanity was glorified in his inward thoughts and his outward acts. Just as the high priest had upon his tiara [inaudible]
Unto the lord. So in every thought, in every inner impulse, in every concept of his blessed mind, our lord brought only and ever and solely glory to his blessed father in heaven.

Now the wood in the ark within was the same as the wood in the altar without acacia. Sets forth the truth that the blessed Jesus who suffered on the cross outside the walls of the city, outside the gate. He who suffered on the cross without is the very same blessed Jesus who is this very hour glorified on the throne within. Now the ark had four golden rings at the corner: two on each side. Through the rings were past staves. Now those are poles of wood covered with gold. The staves were never to be removed. Exodus 25:15 the word is quite explicit: the staves shall be in the rings of the ark. They shall not be taken from it. Hebrews 13:5 in that beautiful epistle that explains oh so much of the Old Testament ritual ordinance and liturgy. in Hebrews 13:5 we read for himself hath said I will in no wise fail thee neither will I in any wise forsake thee. Yes just as the Ark of the Covenant was there, available when needed and always needed, so he has promised never to leave us, never to forsake us. in john's gospel he tells us he will not leave us orphans, we are now in dwelt by the blessed holy spirit and spiritually we are in dwelt by Christ as well and God the father. Any man that would keep his word he said my father and I will come to him and dwell with him within him,

Matthew 28:20 lo I am with you always even to the full end of the age. The last verse of the gospel of Matthew. Yes he is available. He does not depart. He does not go off and leave us. What was the position of the ark? It rested in the holy of holies which speaks to us that Christ is now in the presence of god for us. He himself has gone into the holiest of all, into heaven itself.
And notice how beautifully the sacred writer in the epistle of the Hebrews puts it. In Hebrews 9:14 and 24 in 9:14 we should begin with verse 13 to catch the beginning of the thought.

Hebrews 9:13, for if the blood of goats and bowls and the ashes of a heffer sprinkling them that have been defiled sanctified-- in God's economy at that time it had a certain efficacy to it, it had a certain worth in that it separated them, sanctified them unto the cleanness of the flesh. if that can happen in that preliminary way, in that shadowy way, how much more shall the blood of Christ the reality who through the eternal spirit, that's the holy spirit, offered himself without blemish unto God, how shall he not cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

And then in verse 24 for Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, that’s the earthly one in the tabernacle and in the temple. He did what? They were only in pattern to the true, they were just after the model of the true one which was up in heaven. God told Moses see that thou make all these things according to the pattern that was shown thee on the mount and the pattern and the model came from heaven. Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands likened patterned to the true but into heaven itself. Now to appear before the face of God for us.

Friends how marvelous is this redemption? And the ark which was the center of the camp of Israel shows that God was in her midst. Jesus Christ was and is and ever shall be in the midst of all God's plans and purposes. Ephesians 3:11 tells us that God purposed an eternal purpose, an eternal plan and all of this was in Christ Jesus the lord. Ephesians 3:11. Now numerous folks ask us, where is that ark now? We know it was taken into Babylonian captivity in 586 BC. By the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Could it be that that ark was caught up to heaven as we read in revelation 11:19 that there was an arc of the covenant in heaven? All we can say and we dare not be dogmatic, there’s not enough material, I rather believe that that Ark of the Covenant is no
longer in existence any more than the many other features of the old testament that we might want, the manuscripts. Ah the original manuscripts of the bible in Hebrew Greek, they’re no longer with us. [Inaudible] could be worshipping that instead of the lord. And then God didn't allow the grave of Moses to be known. Go buried him himself so that men might not make some shrine out of him. So I verily believe that the present where abouts of the ark are not known at all. But we do know that that one of whom the ark spoke is with us always. And why would we need that ark? It spoke of him. It was the shadow of Christ, and Christ has come. We have him. We don't need the shadow. All those appointments we read in Colossians 2, where a shadow but the body the substance the reality is Christ.

I often put it this way: what would you rather have, a picture or a shadow of your mother or your mother herself? Well the answer is obvious. Why should we go back to the shadows, why should we go back to the prefiguring when we have all fulfillment in Christ himself? By Christ God created all things john 1:1-3, not anything was made. Notice how extensive that is. Not anything that was made without him. God created all things through him. Colossians tells us that by hi, all things cohere. The world would fall apart except for Christ and His mighty power. He upholds, Hebrews 1, he upholds all things by the word of his power. By him God created all things. By him God sustains all things and by Him thank God the Lord God redeemed the world. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and He did that work so marvelously with such utter satisfaction to the heart of God the Father that God the Father is now able to commit into the hands of redeemed sinners a ministry of reconciliation so that we do beseech men on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ as his ambassadors. We beseech men to be reconciled to God for him who knew no sin God made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of
God in him. So you see Colossians 1:18 beautifully summarizes it. It’s not overstated, not at all. That in him there might be the preeminence. That he might have the preeminence. He's the head. All things meet. All things converge in him. All other vessels were without value without this one. They all prepare the way to this. There were steps leading up to the fellowship with God at the ark. We are saved if you want to put the whole picture of the tabernacle in salvation language here it is: we are saved at the altar. We are sanctified at the lavor. We serve in the holy place at the table with the lamb and in intercession. We are saved and sanctified and served in order to do what? Worship. In the holiest of all, the highest of all is worship, and our lord is so right as always in Luke 10:42 Mary, said he to Martha who was so troubled because of her serving, Mary hath chosen that good thing which shall not be taken away from her. What was the good thing? Worshipping the ever living, ever blessed, ever glorious person of the Lord Jesus Christ.