

**GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM
THEME: LESSONS FROM THE ARK
SONGS: WE LIFT YOU UP SANCTUARY**

INTRO: The ark of the covenant was a great source of blessing to the Israelites in Old Testament times. With it in their possession, they were able to complete their wilderness Journey to the Promised land and gain victory in their battles.

The ark was the HOLIEST SIGN of God's presence and power. It was set in the Most Holy Place, first in the tabernacle, then in the temple. Since the destruction of the first temple, however, the ark's whereabouts is unknown.

This raises some questions...Why is the ark not in use today? Where is OUR source of blessing to come from? Stay tuned as Barbara Sandbek answers these questions and more on GRACE NOTES .

God had specific instructions for the construction of the ark of the covenant. It was to be a portable, wooden chest, made of acacia wood, and covered with gold. The ark's cover, or Mercy Seat, represented the earthly throne of God. Exodus 25:22 says that God told Moses He would deliver all His commands for the Israelites from between the two cherubim that faced each other at the ends of the cover.

God also had specific instructions for how the ark was to be carried. According to Numbers 4:15 only Levites were to carry the ark. It was to be carried with poles--and never touched, on pain of death. So important were these commands that in one instance a non-Levite, named Uzzah, was struck dead for touching it when the oxen stumbled and it began to fall off the cart they were using to transport it.

When the Lord's wrath broke out against Uzzah, King David was angry. 2 Samuel 6:9-11 records David's actions...

David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and (get this) the LORD BLESSED him and his entire household.

Because God chose to make His presence known through the ark, whoever had possession of it was blessed. When David was told of this, he immediately went to their city and brought the ark back – only this time he did it the right way.

There are several lessons to be learned here. First, God is a God of detail who does not do things on a whim, rather He carefully plans and executes His purposes. And second, everything He orders is for a reason and when followed produces good and Godly results. He is honored and we are blessed.

But how can we enter into the presence of God and receive His blessing if the ark is no longer available? To answer this, we need to go to the New Testament Scriptures in Hebrews 9 starting at verse 1...

The first covenant (which God made with the Israelites) had regulations for worship and also an EARTHLY sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up... behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, (or the inner room) which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant.

Skipping to verse 7...

...only the high priest entered the inner room and that only once a year and never without blood, which he offered for himself and the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration for the PRESENT TIME, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only...external regulations applying until the time of the NEW ORDER. When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made...He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but He entered the Most Holy Place ONCE FOR ALL by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 8 says that the tabernacle was a shadow of what is in heaven. Jesus is the high priest of the NEW covenant made between Himself and God. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and serves in the sanctuary there, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not man.

Verse 24 says...

He, (Christ) entered heaven itself, now to appear for US in God's presence.

Moving on to Hebrews 10:19-23...

Since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus by a NEW and LIVING way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God, with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Through Jesus Christ we have a new covenant that is not dependant on man's obedience, but rather on Christ's completed work of salvation. When we receive Him as our great high-priest, he does this work in us and brings us into fellowship with God. Our hearts become his sanctuary...

For this, Hebrews 12:28b says...

...let us be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe..

***** SANCTUARY *****

Uzzah died when he looked into the ark because God could not tolerate his sin – he had not made an acceptable sacrifice. But God sees those who have believed in Jesus as righteous because he sees us through the sinless blood of Christ, our once and for all sacrifice. This makes our worship acceptable.

In Numbers 21 we find that the Israelites had sinned and as their punishment, God sent venomous snakes among them. Many died. When they confessed their sin, God had Moses make a bronze snake, put it on a pole and tell the people that anyone who was bitten and looked at the snake would live. In the same way, Jesus said in John 3:14-15...

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.

Jesus was lifted up on the cross. He bore the venom of the sin of mankind in his body, yet He rose to life so that when we lift Him up to God as our COVENANT KEEPER we too will live!

**** WE LIFT YOU UP *****

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