

Bible Arks

Joe Slater

What's the first thing you think of when you hear the word "ark"? Maybe Noah's ark; or the Ark of the Covenant; or the ark into which Jochebed placed Moses.

An ark is simply a chest. Its purpose is to contain something. Noah's ark, for example, was definitely **not** a boat! It was more like a barge. It didn't need a bow to slice through the water. All it needed to do was float as it contained eight precious souls and a host of animals. God used that means to save them from drowning in the flood.

The ark Jochebed made for Moses also saved that precious baby from drowning in the Nile where she set him afloat so Pharaoh's daughter could find him.

What precious items did the Ark of the Covenant hold? Begin with the stone tablets on which God Himself had written the Ten Commandments. Then there was the pot of manna that never spoiled and Aaron's rod which budded and bore ripe almonds miraculously overnight.

Moses used the Hebrew word for ark in reference to the coffin in which Joseph's remains were placed in Egypt (Genesis 50:26). And 2 Chronicles 24:10-11 uses the same word to denote the chest King Joash made to collect money for repair of the Temple.

Nothing about the Bible words for "ark" implies value, but each time an "ark" is mentioned in Scripture it contains something valuable. God considered the eight souls in Noah's ark to be valuable. The holy things in the Ark of the Covenant were valuable. Joseph's people undoubtedly considered His remains to be valuable. And the money collected to repair the temple was obviously valuable.

What God considers valuable says much about Him. And what you consider valuable says a lot about you.

A Well-Marked Trail

"But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that has been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory" (1 Corinthians 2:7).

The Purple Heart Trail is a memorial to all men and women who have been killed or wounded while serving in a branch of the United States armed forces. It begins at Mount Vernon, Virginia, and goes across the United States to Florida. It also occurs in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam. In most states, the trail is well-marked every 100 miles by a purple heart-shaped sign.

God's Word contains a well-marked trail. It is the story of Jesus Christ, and it begins in Genesis 3:15 with *"He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Nearly every book of the Bible contains a sign to it, a prophecy. Some books, such as Ruth and Esther, tell how God worked on it through history.

God's signs are clearly posted for everyone to read. Great men such as Job saw them and understood. He said, *"But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth"* (Job 19:25). David's psalms foretell His coming (40:8, 9; 68:18). The books of the prophets point the way for His coming. Paul says it "was given to us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but has now been manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:10).

The story of Jesus starts in Genesis, and it doesn't end until the last chapter of the last book of the Bible. In Revelation 21:13, a triumphant Christ declares, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."* The last sign will be marked by the appearing of our Lord, the end of the trail.

--Donna Richmond Wittlif (Ft. Worth, TX)

On Holy Ground

"Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him" (Psalm 34:8).

Have you ever noticed the clever slogans at fast food chains? The concept each restaurant seeks to portray is that the customer is in complete and total control. For example, Burger King invites customers to come and "have it your way." Wendy's encourages patrons to "do what tastes right," while Taco Bell bids their clientele to "think outside the bun" and "live mas" (live more) by choosing a burrito or taco over a hamburger. Quite often, these catchphrases eventually become engrained in our culture.

Now, consider how frequently these "slogans" mirror everyday life. Regarding spiritual matters, many choose to "have it their way" by embracing lifestyles that contradict God's will. Rather than *"tasting and finding the Lord to be gracious"* (1 Peter 2:3), others make the choice to *"think beyond the things which are written"* (1 Corinthians 4:6) and "live more" by "doing what feels right." When all things are considered, being in complete and total control is not always a good thing.

How do we remedy this problem? We must reject conventional thinking and exercise the ultimate self-control by allowing God to take total control. Paul writes, *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:2).

--Kenny Westmoreland (Celina, TN)

Don't fear the one who can keep you from bearing arms. Fear the one who distracts you from wielding the sword of the Spirit.

--Jon Warnes (via Facebook)