A Dangerous Desire

The Ark represented the presence God, who was enthroned above the golden cherubim on its lid (2 Samuel 6:3). It had been neglected during the reign of Saul (1 Chronicles 13:3). After David was established as king in Jerusalem, he wanted to restore and centralize the worship of the Lord at his new capital city. David’s experience in moving the ark is a mirror for reflecting on our response to the nearness of God.

**1. David *desired* the nearness of God**

The Ark was a place of—

A. *Pardon*

B. *Prayer*

C. Jesus *brings* us near to God

Ephesians 2:13-18; Hebrews 7:25; 10:19-22

**2. David *dreaded* the nearness of God**

Through the Ark God manifested His—

A. *Horrifying power*

B. *Holy presence*

Isaiah 6:1-5; Luke 5:8

C. Jesus *heals* our dread of God

**3. David *delighted* in the nearness of God**

In the presence of the Ark—

A. David experienced great *happiness*

Psalm 27:4; 36:7-8; 65:4; 63:1-3

B. David expressed great *humility*

C. Jesus draws us into *happy humility*

Matthew 5:3

**For additional study or family discussion**

1. What did the Lord say to you today through His word? Did you learn some new truth about God or yourself? Did the Lord challenge you, convict you, or encourage you?

2. Cherubim are angels. God spoke to Moses from above the images of cherubim on the Ark (Exodus 25:17-22). One of their symbolic functions in Scripture is to uphold the throne of God (2 Samuel 6:2; Psalm 99:1; Ezekiel 10:1, 18-19). So the Ark represents the throne of God on earth.

3. The gold lid of the Ark has traditionally been called the *mercy seat*. A more accurate translation would be *place of atonement* or *place of propitiation* (that is, the place where God’s wrath is satisfied). The high priest sprinkled sacrificial blood on this lid once a year to atone for the sins of the nation (Leviticus 16:15). Inside the Ark, Moses placed the stone tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 10:1-5).

4. Combining # 2 and # 3, yields the following symbolism. God, enthroned above the Ark, looks down and sees the stone tablets of His holy law, which His people have broken. When the high priest sprinkles blood on the mercy seat, the blood rests between God and the law. God sees the blood and He forgives the transgression of His people because the penalty of their sin has been paid by a sacrificial victim. As Hebrews 9-10 makes clear, the true priest and the true victim is Jesus Christ, who offered Himself up for the sins of His people.

5. In the tabernacle and temple the altar of incense was placed immediately before the veil behind which the Ark was hidden. The priest burned incense on this altar every morning and every evening (Exodus 30:6-8). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest carried a pan full of burning incense from the altar when he went inside the veil to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat. The cloud of incense represented prayer going up before the throne of God (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4).

6. Other occasions on which the Ark brought death—Leviticus 10:1-2; Numbers 16:35; 1 Samuel 6:19-20).