

The Ark of the Covenant

Scripture Reading — Exodus 25:10-22

Between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant law, I will meet with you. . . . — Exodus 25:22

To learn about the ark of the covenant, we need to look to the authority of the Bible. We won't find the right information in movies like *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, or in other stories or legends.

Some translations of the Bible call the ark a “chest” so that young readers won't confuse it with Noah's ark, which was huge (Genesis 6:15). Others call the cover “the mercy seat” because God is described as enthroned there between the cherubim (angels; see 1 Samuel 4:4). Other translations call it “the atonement cover.” And once a year the high priest would enter the Most Holy Place and sprinkle blood on the cover of the ark to make atonement for the people's sin.

Forgiveness and mercy were central to God's relationship with his people. And to this day Jews celebrate the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), as one of their most holy days.

In the ark were the Ten Com-mandments of God's law. The law shows us how to honor God with our lives, but we always fall short. So we need atonement and forgiveness. When Jesus, our ultimate High Priest, shed his blood for us, he made the ultimate atonement, fulfilling the requirements of the law “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). God is indeed forgiving and merciful.

Have you experienced God's holiness and mercy in your life?

Prayer

Holy and merciful God, thank you for making a way for us to be forgiven and to live in your presence—through the blood of Christ, our Savior. Amen.

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