

**From the Altar to Glory: The Ark of the Covenant: Living Under the Glory
A Spirit-Filled Journey Through the Temple Sanctuary**

Dr. John Carmichael

[1Co 3:16-17 NASB95] 16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

[Exo 25:10-22 NASB95] 10 "They shall construct an ark of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. 11 "You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make a gold molding around it. 12 "You shall cast four gold rings for it and fasten them on its four feet, and two rings shall be on one side of it and two rings on the other side of it. 13 "You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 14 "You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them. 15 "The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it. 16 "You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you. 17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. 18 "You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 "Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim [of one piece] with the mercy seat at its two ends. 20 "The cherubim shall have [their] wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be [turned] toward the mercy seat. 21 "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. 22 "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

- Throughout this series we have journeyed from the outer court to the Holy of Holies.
 - At the altar we found redemption through the blood.
 - At the laver we found cleansing and consecration.
 - At the lampstand we found the oil and fire of the Holy Spirit.
 - At the table we found provision through God's Word.
 - At the altar of incense we found prayer and worship.
- But none of those were the destination.
- They were preparation.
- Beyond the veil stood the Ark of the Covenant; the place where heaven touched earth and God's glory dwelt among His people.
- Everything in the sanctuary pointed toward the Presence.

What does it mean to live under the presence, mercy, and glory of God?

The Ark teaches us that God desires more than occasional visits with His people; He desires a people who live continually in His presence.

I. The Presence of God Must Become Our Greatest Pursuit

- a. [Exo 25:22 NASB95] 22 "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.
- b. The Ark represented the dwelling place of God among His people.
- c. God did not simply want Israel to know about Him. He wanted to be with them.
- d. Today many believers seek blessings, breakthroughs, and benefits while neglecting the presence of the One who gives them.

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- e. Moses understood the difference. [Exo 33:15 NASB95] 15 Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go [with us,] do not lead us up from here.
- f. The greatest blessing is not what God gives. The greatest blessing is God Himself.
- g. Application: Seek His presence before seeking His provision. Develop a daily habit of worship and communion. Measure success by His presence rather than by popularity or performance.

II. The Mercy of God Gives Us Bold Access

- a. [Lev 16:14-15 NASB95] 14 "Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle [it] with his finger on the mercy seat on the east [side;] also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. 15 "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.
- b. [Heb 4:16 NASB95] 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- c. On top of the Ark sat the Mercy Seat. Blood was sprinkled there on the Day of Atonement.
- d. The message was clear: God's presence is approached through mercy, not human merit.
- e. Under the New Covenant, Jesus is our High Priest. Because of His blood we no longer stand outside the veil. We have access. We do not approach God as unwanted strangers. We approach Him as redeemed sons and daughters.
- f. Application: Stop allowing guilt and condemnation to keep you from prayer. Run toward God when you fail instead of away from Him. Build confidence in Christ's finished work.

III. The Glory of God Changes Everything It Touches

- a. [2Ch 5:13-14 NASB95] 13 in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD [saying,] "[He] indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.
- b. When the glory filled Solomon's Temple, the priests could not continue ministering.
- c. The glory of God is not emotionalism. The glory of God is not manufactured excitement. The glory is the manifest presence of God.
- d. Throughout Scripture the glory brings: Transformation, Conviction, Healing, Deliverance, Revelation, Holy awe
- e. When God's glory fills a life, priorities change. When God's glory fills a church, people encounter God rather than merely attend services.
- f. Application: Create room for God to move. Value His presence above programs and preferences. Expect God to work supernaturally in your life.

IV. The Veil Has Been Torn Open

- a. [Heb 10:19-22 NASB95] 19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since [we have] a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [clean] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

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- b. Under the Old Covenant only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. Only once each year. Only with blood.
- c. But when Jesus died, the veil was torn from top to bottom.
- d. The way into God's presence was opened. What was once restricted is now available. The believer no longer lives outside the veil.
- e. We are invited inside. The church is not called merely to admire the glory from a distance. We are called to live in it.
- f. Application: Refuse a distant relationship with God. Cultivate intimacy rather than religious routine. Draw near daily through worship, prayer, and obedience.

V. We Are Called to Host the Presence of God

- a. [1Co 3:16 NASB95] 16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you?
 - b. The sanctuary was ultimately a shadow of what God desired to do in His people. Today His presence dwells within believers and among His gathered church.
 - c. We are not merely building church services. We are hosting the presence of God.
 - d. Everything we do should create an atmosphere where people can encounter Jesus. The church's greatest attraction is not creativity, personality, or production. It is the manifest presence of God.
 - e. Application: Guard your personal walk with God. Protect the spiritual atmosphere of your home. Help make North Church a presence-centered church rather than a consumer-centered church.
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- **God did not redeem us merely to improve our lives; He redeemed us so we could live under His presence, His mercy, and His glory.**
 - The greatest need of this generation is not better entertainment, stronger programs, or more religious activity. The greatest need is the manifest presence of God.