

# The Ark of the Covenant

## Part 1

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[00:00:00] So far for now, and hopefully a little more later.

I suppose that even a person who has never heard anything about the Bible before, if he read this chapter, he would realize very quickly that it is a very dramatic event that is taking place here in the history of the people of Israel.

However, most of you have been reading your Bibles, and most of you have done some studies into the Ark, and if you have looked at the meaning of this Ark of the Covenant, this chapter becomes much more dramatic, and it becomes much more understandable why the things [00:01:03] that happen are so terrible to those concerned.

Perhaps by way of remembrance, we might just call to mind a few features of this Ark that plays a central role in this chapter, before we look at the chapter itself. When I first heard it mentioned that the Ark is the most perfect type of the Lord Jesus, I couldn't quite believe that.

This is when I was young, so that's quite long ago, 30, 35 years ago, although you might not believe it.

In any case, once one looks a little bit at the Ark and its features, I suppose one becomes more and more convinced that the Ark actually is the, or one of the, most perfect types [00:02:03] of the Lord Jesus. I can't go into any detail now, I'll just give you a few items from the list.

First of all, everyone will remember that the Ark was made of wood and overlaid with gold. Now, the Lord Jesus, of course, is the root out of dry ground, the root out of Jesse, so in his manhood typified by the wood, but at the same time he is God, and so the Ark was overlaid all around with pure gold.

Now, that's of course not all.

Do you remember that when you read Exodus 25, where God talks about the tabernacle, you might assume that he would start talking about the curtains that went all around it, the fence and the court, but he doesn't do this. He says, I want you to build a tabernacle for me so that I can dwell in your midst, [00:03:04] and then the very first thing he starts talking about is the Ark, and that's another indication that the Ark speaks of the one who is central in the thoughts of God. Now, that's further emphasized by the fact that the Ark was in fact the only piece of furniture that stood in the Holy of

Holies.

When Israel had to cross the desert, the Ark had to be carried, and there was a protection, a covering of the Ark, consisted of three layers, and you might say, well, that was the case for other items of the tabernacle as well, but you know the difference is that with the Ark, the blue layer was the top layer.

So if you had seen Israel crossing the desert, if you had looked at that from above, what [00:04:06] you would have seen is a blue dot in the middle of the people, and you know that's basically picture of the Lord Jesus, the one who is at the center of his people, the color blue speaking of him as the heavenly man, and he is the center of our testimony in this world.

I might go on and do some more studies on the Ark, and for example look at the measurements, and if you look at the height of the Ark, that's a bit I found very interesting, you find that there were not many items in the tabernacle that had the same height, but there were three of them.

One was the table with the showbreads, the second one was the grate of the brazen altar, [00:05:08] which was about half the height of the altar itself, and the third one, or perhaps I should have said the first one of course, was the Ark.

Now I'm wondering whether there's a meaning in this, you know the Ark is called the throne of God, the table speaks about the people before God having fellowship with God, now how is that possible?

Because the claims of the throne had been met by the sacrifice on the grate of the brazen altar.

You might point out that there was also a crown around the Ark at the top, and that speaks to us of the Lord Jesus as well as the one who is now crowned with glory and [00:06:03] honor.

You might go to the New Testament and you find that there was actually something in the Ark, there were the tables, the unbroken tables of the law, and they speak to us of Christ as the one who could say, thy law is within mine heart.

And then there was the golden pot of manna, now that's a particularly beautiful feature of Christ, we know him as the manna, the bread from heaven, the one who has refreshed us here on our way through the desert and who has been our food. But you know this manna is in a golden pot in the sanctuary, and Christ is no longer down here, but he is now the man who is glorified and who is in the heavenly sanctuary.

Now all these features I've mentioned to you should really make the Lord precious to us, [00:07:07] but they all speak really of his person. Oh, and I forgot to say, the third item in the Ark of course was, I'm surprised nobody interrupted me, was of course the rod of Aaron that had budded, according to Hebrews 9 verse 4. I remember the dispute there about the priesthood, but the priesthood of Aaron had been confirmed because his rod was the one that budded, speaking of resurrection. And the Lord Jesus has been raised out of death, he has been confirmed in resurrection, declared as son of God, and in this power he now holds his priesthood.

Now all of these things speak about the Lord's person, but the type of the Ark isn't finished [00:08:03] even there, although it was quite a long list already. But the Ark also speaks of the death of Christ, the work of Christ, and I suggest three aspects to you again in which it speaks of Christ's death. The

first one, perhaps the best known one, is the fact that on the great atonement day the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies and he would sprinkle the blood of atonement on the lid of the Ark.

And that is a picture of the value of the blood of Christ that presents us righteous and that retains its value and full efficacy in the presence of God and in the light of his glory. You see the blood was taken into the very holy place and there it spoke before God.

[00:09:05] The second one I mentioned, the matter of the height being the same as the altar, but there is a third one which you only come across later in history. After Israel had crossed the desert, they came to Jordan and I believe it was actually mentioned in this very place here last month that when those who bore the Ark, when their feet touched into Jordan, that the waters receded and there was a wide opening and the way was made open for the people to cross the Jordan and to enter the land.

That's the death of Christ, but not in its justifying effect upon us, but in a different effect. You know the people crossed, but only because the Ark was there in the Jordan. And the way was free for them to enter into Canaan and to start enjoying the blessing. [00:10:06] And that's something the death of Christ has done for us as well. It has not only spared us from the penalty of sin and the judgment of a righteous God.

That's perhaps what we think about most often and most of the time. But the death of Christ has also opened the way for us to enjoy the blessings of Canaan.

Now having sort of reminded ourselves of these features of the Ark, I think it becomes clearer what is the significance of this chapter here.

The Philistines, verse two, the perennial enemies of the people during the time of Samuel and David, Saul as well of course, they put themselves into array against Israel.

[00:11:04] There is a battle and Israel loses.

And they ask this question, why did the Lord do this to us? But I'm not sure whether they really ask the Lord for an answer. They have a solution ready to hand.

And they say in verse three, let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh that it may save us.

Now question, wasn't this a good thing?

If you look at the history, you might have said it was.

Example number one, Jericho, what happened?

They went round about the city with the Ark six times on six successive days, once a day, [00:12:01] and then seven times on the seventh day. And what happened, it even says, and the Ark went around the city. Interesting, isn't it? Not the people with the Ark, but the Ark. So that was important. And the walls fell.

Example number two, in Numbers 14, remember they had just sent out the spies.

The spies, 10 out of 12, had brought back discouraging news. And God had said, you now have to stay in the wilderness 40 years. And then some had this idea and said, oh, actually, no, we didn't want that. Now let's go up and let's conquer the land. And Moses says, it won't work. But they go, and they are defeated by the Canaanites. And then there's this short sentence which says, but the Ark had not departed from the camp. They had gone alone without the Ark, and they had had defeat. So in a way, I understand that the people here, they say, well, actually, we're too [00:13:05] weak in ourselves.

We want the Ark.

But really, they were trying to play a game with God.

There were things that weren't right in their lives. And they said, well, if we just have that token of the presence of God, that will do. And you know, there's a difference between having Christ and having an empty profession to have Christ.

And I think that's the difference we see very clearly in this chapter. I know they bring the Ark. There is great rejoicing and shouting, verse 5.

It's remarkable. They even say the earth shook or rang again. The Philistines hear the noise.

They're afraid. And now the Philistines make the same mistake in verse 7. They say, God has come into the camp. [00:14:04] And perhaps for the Philistines, it's excusable that they confound the symbol of God's presence or the profession of God's presence with its reality. The people of God should have known the difference. And then you come to this, you might say, devastating statement in verse 11, and the Ark of God was taken.

Perhaps having looked at the way in which the Ark speaks of the glories of Christ, we can understand a little bit more that with the Ark taken, everything was gone. They basically now, they have an empty sanctuary.

The throne of God, where God had said, I will go there, I will come there, and I will commune with you there, the throne of God was gone.

[00:15:01] The Ark was taken.

It's a phrase that is repeated here four or five times. Also translated, the Ark was taken captive.

One of the four captivities of the people of God, you know, first in Egypt, then here the Ark, then in Babylon, and then in 70 A.D., taken captive, chased from the land.

And in each time, in each case, God has a deliverer who leads the people out of captivity. It's Moses and Joshua in the first case.

It's a rabble and Joshua in the Babylonian captivity.

It will be the two prophets as heralds, and then Christ himself in the last case. And here, there will be a deliverance as well, which I hope we will still look at. [00:16:02] But let's just ponder this for a

moment, what it meant that the Ark was taken.

How serious it was, you find when the messenger comes back and speaks to Eli, and you might have thought that Eli fell off his chair when he heard about his two sons having died. But it says expressly, when he heard that the Ark was taken, that's when he fell off and broke his neck. You find that despite all the failures in the life of Eli, he did have faith.

He did have a realization of what was important for God. And you even find with his daughter-in-law that she had an appreciation of what was important for God.

You find that the wife of Phinehas, this wicked priest, she has a child here.

[00:17:07] And before she dies, she gives a name to the child, Ichabod.

And that name of this little child expresses exactly what had happened at this stage in history, the glory of Jehovah had departed.

You might say, it was just a box, wasn't it? It was just a piece of furniture. No, it wasn't.

It was the token of the presence of God.

The wife of Phinehas had an appreciation for the importance of the presence of God. And perhaps we can come back to this a little later. But I first would like to read some verses now from Chapter 6 of the same book.

[00:18:03] Chapter 6, verse 1.

And the Ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the Ark of the Lord? Tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. Verse 10.

And the men did so and took two milk kine and tied them to the cart and shut up their calves at home.

And they laid the Ark of the Lord upon the cart and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emeralds.

And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth Shemes and went and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth Shemes. And they of Beth Shemes were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And they lifted up their eyes and saw the Ark and rejoiced to see it.

[00:19:08] And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth Shemite and stood there. And there was a great stone. And they claved the wood of the cart and offered the kine, a burnt offering, unto the Lord. And the Levites took down the Ark of the Lord and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone. And the men of Beth Shemes offered burnt offering and sacrificed sacrifices. The same day unto the Lord. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Akron the same day." We haven't got time now to read chapter 5, but just to

remind ourselves, it tells us what happened to the Ark in the land of the Philistines. They thought it was their best trophy they had ever had. [00:20:02] And they take it and put it right into the idol's temple of Dagon. And the next morning, when they come and have a look, Dagon has fallen over. And they seem to learn nothing, and they do the same thing again. And they come back a day later and Dagon has fallen over and he has actually lost his hands and his head. And at that stage, they realize, well, something is wrong. And also they are slain with these diseases, emeralds.

And they start sending the Ark to other cities in their territory, perhaps that the people there might also get emeralds. But in any case, they're trying to work on the symptoms, they send the Ark away. And it turns out that the Ark is actually now the last thing they want. And the reason is very simple. You can't expect any blessing if you combine the presence of the Lord or the profession [00:21:05] of it even with that which is not in harmony with God, especially if it's evil like idolatry. But the other way of looking at it is that it is really God's hand that is at work.

You might say as far as the people is concerned, Chapter 4, it's their defeat and they had lost everything.

But in Chapters 5 and 6, you find that God is there as well. And if the people had lost everything, God now says, actually, I'm still there and I will not allow the Ark to stay with the Philistines. And that's why he judges them in this way. And in the end, they decide to send the Ark away. Now, they feel that they have done something wrong and therefore they should do something to appease God as they see it. [00:22:02] And they ask the diviners and they say, yes, you need to send a trespass offering. That's what their conscience told them perhaps. The idea isn't bad, but if you look at the trespass offering, they suggest you might be surprised. I suppose every Christian knows what a trespass offering has to be like. First of all, it has to be blood that is shed.

It has to speak of Christ in order to have value for God. And what the Philistines do is they make these golden pictures of the mice and the emeralds, that which had plagued them. And you know, all that natural man can bring to God is really what comes out of his darkened heart.

And it's nothing that God can find pleasure in because it doesn't speak of Christ, the one who has value for him.

[00:23:02] And nevertheless, after these seven months in which they try to keep the Ark, the Ark is on its way back.

I wonder whether Samuel perhaps had prayed for this. He certainly was aware that the Ark had been taken. I've no doubt that he prayed and perhaps others. But what do you think, among all those who might have prayed because of this situation that the Ark was gone, would anyone have even entertained the idea that the Ark might come back in this way?

No war, no covert operation, no spies, no intelligence mission.

There is nothing of the kind. And the Ark comes back all on its own.

And it even comes back against the forces of nature. The Philistines say, well, if this Ark really has something to do with a God who is stronger [00:24:03] than ours, then we want to prove. And they said, if we choose two milk cows and we leave their calves at home, some may know more about this than

I do, but I'm told that the natural things the cows would do is always to come back.

And therefore, they use these cows for the cart, put the Ark on top, and what happens? The cows do what their instinct would never tell them to do, and they head straight for the territory of Israel where the Ark belongs. You see, that's the God we've got. When the people has failed completely, when they've lost their highest privilege, God says, I'm still there, I'm working, and he brings the Ark back into the territory.

When the Ark gets there, it arrives here in Beth Shemesh, apparently the first place in [00:25:02] Israel they would get to. The people there see it, and what commends them is that they rejoice. They are so glad the Ark is back. Next thing they do, they bring a sacrifice. They have understood that now that the Ark is back, they actually can bring a sacrifice. You know, the sacrifices were linked to the tabernacle system, and the Ark was the central piece in the tabernacle. Now that the Ark is back, they could bring a sacrifice.

And then you have these lords of the Philistines, and you just wonder about these people. They had, as it says here, they had followed the cows, walking behind the cows, and they had looked at all this, and they couldn't understand it, and then when they come to Beth Shemesh, the people take the Ark and put it onto this rock, and nothing happens. No judgment, no emeralds, no dead, and they look at this, they look at the sacrifice, [00:26:09] and then it says, and they returned to their cities. I'm just wondering whether there might be anyone here who might have observed things, who might have observed Christians gathering to the name of the Lord Jesus, who might have been impressed perhaps, but who might have said, well actually, I've seen it now, I know how they did, and I return to my place.

Things that have to do with Christ have nothing to do, have no, are not an incentive for me to be there. I mean, they were men who didn't know God. They were idolaters, and therefore it would only have been surprising if it had attracted them. But as to the people of Beth Shemesh, you find, commendable as they were, in verse 19, [00:27:04] they do make a mistake.

It says that God smote the men of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord. Great as their joy was, they went over and above the limits of what God had allowed them to do.

And God has to act in judgment because of this.

And what is a little bit sad in this chapter is that they don't take the right, they don't draw the right conclusion. They should have said, well actually, this was wrong. They should have confessed it and still have thanked God for the Ark. But instead they say, and they send messengers to the people in Kirgath Jeorim, verse 21, and they say, please, we've got the Ark here, and we've had trouble with it. Please come and take it.

Now the people in Kirgath Jeorim, if we just read the first two verses of chapter 7, they [00:28:06] seem to make a completely different experience. The men of Kirgath Jeorim came and fetched up the Ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill and sanctified Eliezer, his son, to keep the Ark of the Lord. And it came to pass while the Ark abode in Kirgath Jeorim that the time was long, for it was 20 years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

Maybe the Ark isn't that dangerous then after all. Not for the people in Kirgath Jeorim. Well, what's

the difference?

You see, when the Ark got there, they were happy to come and get it, and when the Ark got there, it says they sanctified a person to look after the Ark. That's all it takes. All it takes is the respect for the things of God. [00:29:03] And as they had sanctified Eliezer, the son of Abinadab, to look after the Ark, it stayed there. Not only for a day or two, it stayed there for 20 years and probably even longer after that. And there was no judgment for them at all.

Now, the last chapter I'd like to turn to quickly is in the second book of Samuel.

The reason why I'm trying to cram all this in as well is that there you find a much more positive experience, or positive experiences, made with the Ark. If we just read quickly, starting from verse 2, 2 Samuel 6, verse 2.

And David arose and went with all the people that were with him from Baal of Judah to bring up from thence the Ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, [00:30:06] that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was in Gibeah. And Uzzah and Ahio, the son of Abinadab, drove the new cart.

And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was at Gibeah, accompanying the Ark of the Lord.

And Ahio went before the Ark.

And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on harps and on psalteries and on timbrels and on cornets and on cymbals.

And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the Ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. [00:31:02] And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error. And there he died by the Ark of God. And David was displeased. Verse 11.

And the Ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite, three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his households. And it was told to King David, saying, The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that pertaineth unto him because of the Ark of God. So David went and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom unto the city of David with gladness.

And it was so that when they that bear the Ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was girded with the linen ephod.

[00:32:03] So David and all the house of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of trumpets.

Perhaps also verse 18.



And as soon as David had made an end of the offering, burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.

It seems that the Ark, once it had been taken captive in 1 Samuel 4, never, ever returned to the tabernacle.

It did return to Kirgis-Jerim and it stayed there. We read 20 years, but that was until the time there in 1 Samuel 7.

It remained there afterwards, perhaps for a period overall of about 100 years. [00:33:02] And then the moment comes when David says, actually, there is this Ark in Kirgis-Jerim.

And it's interesting that you read about this in the Psalms, Psalm 132. He says, and we found the Ark in the fields of the wood.

Now the fields of the wood, that's just a translation of Kirgis-Jerim. And David has this good and laudable idea of taking the Ark from there and moving it to Zion, where he had moved his seat of government, which before that was in Hebron. Now you might say, well, if that was such a good thing, why did it go wrong again?

It's kind of, how should I put it, a little bit disappointing that if in 2 Samuel 5, Daniel [00:34:04] defeats the Philistines in a war, that in 2 Samuel 6, he lets the Philistines into his heart.

What do I mean by that? Well, you know, David takes the Ark and he puts it onto a new cart.

And you kind of wonder from where he knew that method. He didn't know it from the law of God, but he must have seen it with the Philistines. And if it worked for them, why shouldn't it work for him? Well, you know, the Philistines, perhaps one should just mention this, they had come into the country, probably from Crete and other places. In any case, they had come into the country, but they had not crossed the Red Sea, they had not crossed the Jordan, and they were not part of the people of God. And outwardly, they looked like people who did form part of the people of God. [00:35:05] In other words, outwardly they took the position of belonging to the people of God, but in reality they weren't.

Today we call this a nominal Christian who is not a real Christian. And it is dangerous to copy methods from them, especially when it relates to Christ who is foreshadowed in the Ark.

Now it goes wrong because of the way the oxen go, and the Ark almost would have fallen down, and Uzzah probably meant well, but he did what he wasn't allowed to do. He stretched forth his hand to protect the Ark, and God had to judge Uzzah for this.

Now you find that David draws the wrong conclusion and he says, oh, the presence of God, the Ark, is too dangerous, let's leave it.

[00:36:04] And somehow this man, Obed-Edom, he ends up having the Ark.

And you find that the Ark stays in his house for a good while, three months I think, and Obed-Edom doesn't fall down dead, he doesn't have any plagues, and it even says, and the house of Obed-Edom was blessed because of the Ark.

You know there was a household which gave, we would say today, which gave God the first place.

The Ark was honoured there, and God answered with blessing. I think that's the right conclusion to draw, not to be afraid of the Ark and to say, oh, coming to the meeting, it's all connected with responsibility, making a profession to have Christ, it's connected with responsibility, let's leave it. That's the wrong conclusion to draw. [00:37:02] The right conclusion is the one of Obed-Edom. He opens his house, he receives the Ark, and he is blessed. And then it turns out that David hears about this, actually, somebody tells him, you know, David, the Ark doesn't always bring judgement, it's different with Obed-Edom, he is being blessed.

And then David takes courage and he does the right thing, and he gets the Ark in the right way. This time, the Ark is born on the shoulders, as a testimony needs to be born on the shoulders. You bring up the Ark, this time in the list of instruments, you also have the trumpets, which really had to be blown when the Ark was set in motion. And you find David here, just refer to this again.

In verse 14, it says, and David danced before the Lord with all his might, and David was [00:38:07] girded in linen ephod.

Now there is, of course, a prophetic meaning to this chapter, but my exercise is to talk about the practical significance of the event.

You see, you have a stark contrast here between David on the one hand, and his wife Michael on the other hand. We didn't read about her, but I suppose you remember what happened, that she was looking out of this window, and she observed what her husband did when the Ark came back. The Ark moved, after six steps they offered a sacrifice, perhaps not after every six steps, but after six steps they offered a sacrifice. Perhaps they were mindful of the fact that last time, when the Ark moved, there was death in judgment with Uzzah.

[00:39:03] Now this time there wasn't, and this time there was death in a sacrifice, speaking of the sacrifice of Christ who bore the judgment.

But David seems to be very, very moved in his heart by this event.

We might just read some verses that explain perhaps a little bit more what is going on inside this man at this point in time. In Psalm 132, it says in verse 1, Lord, remember David and all his afflictions, how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob, surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go into my bed, I will not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, until I [00:40:05] find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

Lo, we heard of it, that is the Ark, we heard of it at Ephrata, we found it in the fields of the wood, that's Kirgeth-Jerim.

We will go into his tabernacles, we will worship at his footstool.

Let me step back a little.

We've seen David who is moved in this way because the Ark physically comes to Zion. But we've also reminded ourselves that the Ark is a type of the Lord Jesus. The mere presence of the Ark is a

type of a mere profession of the presence of Christ. But if the Ark is there in faith, like it was the case at the Jordan and at Jericho, [00:41:04] it is a type of the real presence of Christ.

And what happened with David, what were the ambitions, what were the objectives of David?

David says, I've got one burning desire, and that burning desire is that I want the Ark of God to find its resting place in Zion.

And he says, I won't even give my eyes any sleep before this has come about. Now if you allow me a little application, perhaps for the younger ones, have you ever thought about the meaning of the presence of Christ? I'm sure you've all heard the verse, for where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them. That is talking about the presence of Christ, isn't it? But have you ever come from Matthew 18 to Psalm 132 to say, I don't want to give my [00:42:10] eyes any rest, I don't want to sleep, before I have found that place of the presence of the Lord?

You know, we all, when I say we now, I mean Christians in general, we all want a church, we all want a Christian profession, but who actually wants Christ?

Who is actually interested in the glories of the one who is God and man, the one who is the heavenly man, the one who is the hidden manna, the one who is the true high priest, the one who has brought about the sacrifice, the one who has opened the whole way up into the promised land? Who is actually interested in realising the presence of Christ?

[00:43:04] And then you have this contrast, you know, on the one hand you have this example which is so positive, David, and he sets his heart on having the ark and knowing its presence. And then on the other hand, you have Michael, and Michael looks out of the window and says, what is he doing there? David, I thought he was the king and he's dancing around with the people and all of that just because of the ark, just because of that piece of furniture. And it didn't mean anything to her. All she had in her heart was that she was despising her husband for attributing such an importance to that which speaks of Christ. I don't think that was a very good marriage.

One who was so interested in the things of God and one who only looks out of the window and laughs. It must have been a terrible marriage.

[00:44:04] But perhaps we can take David as an example.

Perhaps we can ask the Lord, well, help me that what is important for me is really Christ, his person, his glories, all the things the ark speaks of, and that I might go in for these things. That I might not give my eyes any rest, that I might not fall asleep before I have found the presence of Christ.

And I mean this in two ways. One is personally, in my personal life, that I don't only have an empty profession saying, yes, I'm a Christian, but a true one. And also in our collective lives, that we might not have just an empty profession, but that it might be a reality for us, that we might be gathered unto the name of Christ [00:45:03] and that we might make an experience like Obed-Edom, that we might be blessed because of the presence of Christ.

Can we sing one more hymn, number 381?

In thy presence we are happy, in thy presence we are secure, in thy presence all affliction we can easily endure, in thy presence we can conquer, we can suffer, we can die, wandering from thee we are feeble, let thy love, Lord, keep us nigh.

Number 381.