

Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant

By Steve Ray

The first topic I will tackle is your question: “*And could you explain more about why Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant?*” This is a very exciting topic and quite a thrilling romp through the Old and New Testaments. Luke wove marvelous things into his gospel that only a knowledgeable Jew would have understood at the time — one who knew the Jewish Scriptures and had ears to hear and eyes to see. When I am finished writing this section I will mail it to you along with my video on Mary. In my video I discuss Mary as the fulfillment of the Old Testament type — the Ark of the Covenant — on location in Israel.

I have added a lot of footnotes to add supporting information. You can ignore them or read them if you wish. They are not necessary, only documentation in case you want or need it. I added them for your information and because I might end up putting this on my website too.

**St. Augustine expressed its principle:
"In the Old Testament the New
Testament is concealed;
in the New Testament the Old Testament
is revealed."**

Even though you probably already know this, let me explain *typology* so we have a foundation for understanding what we will discover about Mary.

Understanding Typology

As you know, the Old Testament is overflowing with stories and people and history, many of which we call *types*. To me this is very exciting stuff. A *type* is a person, a thing, or an event in the Old Testament which prefigures its fulfillment or reality in the New Testament. In other words, it is like a picture which comes alive in a new and exciting way. The New Testament fulfillments are always more glorious, more effective and more universal than their Old Testament *types*. As St. Augustine said, “the Old Testament is the New concealed, but the New Testament is the Old revealed”.¹

Paul mentions *types* in his epistles. For an example Paul said Adam is a type of Christ. He wrote “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come” (Rom 5:14). As early as Paul, Christians understood that the Old Testament was full of types which were fulfilled in the New Testament.

Let’s look at a few other examples. Remember the slavery of the Israelites under the Pharaoh in Egypt? Egypt is a type of the world, Pharaoh a type of the devil, and slavery a type of sin. Moses is a type of Christ who is raised up from among his own people to rescue them — like Jesus was raised up

¹ For more on this, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 128–130, 1094.

from among his own people to save them (Deut 18:15, 18; Jn 1:11-12). Jesus is the new Moses who leads us out of sin and slavery to the promised land of heaven.

Let's pursue it a little further. Jesus said we will see the kingdom of heaven only if we are born again of "water and Spirit" (Jn 3:3-5). What could that mean? Well, what had Jesus just done? He had gone down into the water and the Spirit had come down (Jn 1:28-32; Lk 3:21-22). By "water and Spirit" Jesus meant baptism, as all early Christians taught. This was also the way the Israelites were saved from Egypt, slavery, and Pharaoh and formed into a new nation—they went down into the water of the Red Sea with the Spirit hovering over their heads in the form of a cloud and leading the way.

It is also the way the first creation came had its "birth" when the world was empty and void and the Spirit of God hovered over the waters—and from the waters rose land, and the dust from which man was made. God always creates new things through water and Spirit. It was also how the new humanity started with Noah as he was saved through water (with a dove hovering above) and Peter makes the parallel between the flood and baptism (1 Pet 3:18-21).



Paul recognizes Moses and the exodus from Egypt as true history, but also as a *type*—a type of Christian baptism and salvation. Notice what he says "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea and all ate the same spiritual food [the manna, a type of the Eucharist] and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:1-4).

Peter uses Noah's Ark as a type of Christian baptism in 1 Peter 3:18-2, circumcision foreshadowed baptism (Col 2:11-12), the bronze serpent was a type of the crucified Christ (Num 21:8-9; Jn 3:14), and the Passover Lamb prefigured Christ (1 Cor 5:7). These are just a few of many examples of biblical typology.²

Understanding the Ark of the Old Covenant

What I am about to write is not new to you. You already know about the Ark of the Old Covenant that was housed in the Tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai. Janet and I have studied all of this on location at Mount Sinai and it is fascinating! To stand on the same "holy ground" where Moses stood and to

² A few other examples: Rom 5:4, Heb 11:19

see the open expanse of the wilderness where the first Ark was constructed in the shadow of the holy mountain, it was truly breathtaking.³

God loved his people and wanted to dwell among them. He chose to do so in a very special way.⁴ He instructed Moses to build a tabernacle surrounded by heavy curtains and within the tabernacle to place a golden Ark. The Ark was made of acacia wood covered with gold. Within the Ark was placed a golden jar holding the manna, Aaron's rod which budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant (Heb 9:14). The Ark was covered with the mercy seat and with two golden images of the magnificent cherubim who dwell in heaven (Ex 25:10-22).



When Moses had finished making the Ark and the tabernacle, the glory cloud of the Lord (the Shekinah Glory) covered the tent

of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Ex 40:34-35; Num 9:18, 22). The verb “to cover” or “overshadow” and the metaphor “cloud” are used in a special way in the Bible. They represent the presence and glory of God. The spirit of God covered or “overshadowed” the Ark and the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.⁵

The Greek word for “overshadow” (ἐπισκιάζω or *episkiazein*) in Exodus 40 is rarely used in the Greek Old Testament.⁶ The Holy Spirit chooses his words carefully. Here it is used of the presence of God overshadowing the Ark. The same Shekinah glory cloud also filled the Temple of Solomon (2 Chron 7:1-3).

The Holy Spirit Overshadows Mary

The very same Greek word for “overshadow” is used by Gabriel when he tells Mary that the Holy Spirit will overshadow her and she will become pregnant. There is sexual imagery used here and the

³ We also have a documentary on Moses which shows all of this biblical history which I will send you if you like. But, I think your mom already has a copy.

⁴ Ex 25:21–22; 40:34–38; Lev 16:2; CCC 2594.

⁵ In paragraph 697 the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “*Cloud and light*. These two images occur together in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In the theophanies of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God, while veiling the transcendence of his glory - with Moses on Mount Sinai, at the tent of meeting, and during the wandering in the desert, and with Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. In the Holy Spirit, Christ fulfills these figures. The Spirit comes upon the Virgin Mary and “overshadows” her, so that she might conceive and give birth to Jesus. . . .

⁶ In 250 BC the Jews translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek. It was called the Septuagint and it was the primary Bible used by the Apostles and the early Church.

result of the overshadowing is the presence of God in the womb of Mary, just like the presence of God dwelling in the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle. I don't think the Holy Spirit chose to use the rarely used Greek word ἐπισκιάζω in both places without purpose.

If someone reads Luke's gospel without thinking like a Jew or having a deep understanding the Old Testament and its types and symbols, this interesting bit of information about the Ark and Mary would probably slip past them. Luke is suggesting there is a parallel between the Old Testament Ark as the dwelling place of God and Mary as the new dwelling of God, but this time God came to dwell upon the earth in the flesh.



People sometimes ask why God was so specific and careful about every exacting detail of the Ark (Ex 25 — 30). God wanted it made for himself — a place for him to dwell (Ex 25:8). God made it very clear that the word of God inscribed on stone should be housed in a perfect container covered with pure gold within and without. How much *more* would God prepare a very special woman to carry his holy and only begotten Son. Soon the Word of God in flesh would take up residence in the womb of a human girl. Imagine how concerned God would be to prepare a perfect and flawless Ark that would carry the Word of God enfleshed — the Second Person of the Trinity. ⁷

King David and the Ark

But that is not all, there are more fascinating hints that Luke gives us. Again, they are carefully woven into the story of Mary and would have been overlooked unless one was very familiar with the Old Testament. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke was an author with real genius.

After Moses died, Joshua led the people into the Promised Land. Joshua established Ark in Shiloh where it stayed for over two hundred years. But then one day the Israelites were fighting the Philistines and not doing so well so they ran and removed the Ark from the temple and carried it to the front lines of the battle. God was not pleased and the Philistines stole



⁷ “The Virgin Mary is the living shrine of the Word of God, the Ark of the New and Eternal Covenant. In fact, St. Luke's account of the annunciation of the angel to Mary nicely incorporates the images of the tent of meeting with God in Sinai and of the Temple of Zion. Just as the cloud covered the people of God marching in the desert (cf. Nm 10:34; Dt 33:12; Ps 91:4) and just as the same cloud, as a sign of the divine mystery present in the midst of Israel, hovered over the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Ex 40:35), so now the shadow of the Most High envelops and penetrates the tabernacle of the new covenant that is the womb of Mary (cf. Lk 1:35) (*The Shrine: Memory, Presence and Prophecy of the Living God*, May 8, 1999 written by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People).

the Ark. After it caused lots of problems for them explain, they sent it back to Israel (1 Sam 5:1—6:12).

The Ark had arrived in the hill country of Judea and David arose and went to retrieve it (1 Sam 6:1-2). After Uzzah was struck dead when he touched the Holy Ark David was afraid of the Ark and said “How can the Ark of the LORD come to me?” (2 Sam 6:9). He left the Ark in the hill country of Judea for three months (2 Sam 6:11). And then we are told that David (dressed as a priest) danced and leapt in front of the Ark and everyone shouted for joy (2 Sam 6:14). The house of Obed-edom which had housed the Ark was blessed (2 Sam 6:11) and then David took the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:12).

Mary Visits Her Relative Elizabeth

Luke must have interviewed Mary to be able to record intimate parts of her story. Maybe it was even Mary that helped instruct the gentile Luke to understand the Old Testament and may have even helped him understand these types and parallels. To make it easier, I will provide Luke’s words below.

Luke 1:39-45 (NASB)

³⁹ Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ “And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ “For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ “And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”



This is a fascinating paragraph, filled with Old Testament allusions. First, Mary arose and went to the hill country of Judea. I have been to both Ein Kerem where Elizabeth lived and Abu Ghosh from which the Ark was carried and they are a stone’s throw away. Mary and the Ark were both on a journey to the same hill country of Judea.

Second, when David saw the Ark he rejoiced and said, “Who am I that the Ark of the Lord should come to me?” and what does Elizabeth say? She shouts out almost the same words, “Who am I that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?” Is this by chance? I think nothing is by chance in Scripture and Luke is telling us something – drawing our mind back to the Old Testament — showing us a parallel.

Third, when David approached the Ark he shouted out and danced and leapt in front of the Ark. He even wore an ephod which was the clothing of a priest. When Mary, the Ark of the New Covenant approaches Elizabeth John the Baptist leapt in his mothers womb – and John was from the priestly line of Aaron. Both leapt and danced in the presence of the Ark. David was filled with the Spirit to dance and rejoice; Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the Ark of the Old Covenant remained in the house of Obed-edom for three months and we are told that Mary remained in the house of Elizabeth for three months. Chance? Too many parallels to be a mistake or chance.

Fifth, the place that housed the Ark for three months was blessed and in this short paragraph Elizabeth uses the word “blessed” three times and their home was certainly blessed by the presence of the Ark and the Lord within.

Sixth, when the Old Testament Ark arrived — and when Mary arrived — they were both greeted with “shouts of joy.” And the word for the cry of Elizabeth’s greeting is another rare Greek word. It’s used in connection with Old Testament liturgical ceremonies that were centered around the Ark and worship.⁸ Luke again uses an uncommon word borrowed from the Old Testament — a word any good Jew would understand. Luke uses a word that would flip a light on in an Jewish head.

Seventh, the Ark returns to its home and ends up in Jerusalem where God’s presence and glory is revealed in the Temple (2 Sam 6:12; 1 Ki 8:9-11) and Mary returns home and eventually ends up in Jerusalem where she presents God enfleshed in the Temple (Lk 1:56; 2:21-22).



Interestingly, at this moment, Mary bursts into inspired, poetic worship and says that all generations will call her blessed. Many Christians hesitate to do this, but Catholics have called her blessed through the centuries. Also it is interesting to notice that Mary’s prayer, the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55), is based upon the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10). The late Pope John Paul II said Hannah’s prayer was the biblical model for Mary’s song and was the *Magnificat of the Old Testament*. It seems Mary was very well-versed in the Jewish Scripture.

⁸ The Word Biblical Commentary says of Elizabeth’s crying out: “Elizabeth’s intensity reflects her state of inspiration, ἀναφωνεῖν, “to cry out,” is used in the LXX (5 times) only in connection with the loud noise of worship. (Evans, C. (2002). *Vol. 35A: Word Biblical Commentary : Luke 1:1-9:20*. Word Biblical Commentary (Page 67). Dallas: Word, Incorporated).

Knowing the depth of Scripture, the Jewish nature of the Bible, and the use of biblical typology it seems pretty clear that Luke has twice now revealed something of the person and place of Mary in the history of salvation – and he did it in a very clever manner. In the Ark of the Old Covenant, God came to his people with a spiritual presence, but in Mary the Ark of the New Covenant God comes to dwell with his people not only spiritually, but *physically* in the womb of a specially chosen and prepared Jewish girl.

Mary the Ark as Revealed in Mary’s Visit to Elizabeth	
Golden Box: Ark of the Old Covenant	Mary: Ark of the New Covenant
Traveled to House of Obed-Edom in the hill country of Judea (2 Sam 6:1-11)	Traveled to house of Elizabeth and Zechariah in the hill country of Judea (Lk 1:39)
Dressed as a priest, David danced and leapt in front of the Ark (2 Sam 6:14)	John the Baptist of priestly lineage leapt in his mother’s womb at the approach of Mary (Lk 1:41)
David asks “Who am I that the Ark of my Lord should come to me?” (2 Sam 6:9)	Elizabeth asks “Who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Lk 1:43)
David was shouting in the presence of the Ark (2 Sam 6:15)	Elizabeth “cried out” in the presence of the Mary (Lk 1:42)
The Ark remained in the house of Obed-edom for three months (2 Sam 6:11)	Mary remained in the house of Elizabeth for three months (Lk 1:56)
The house of Obed-edom was blessed by the presence of the Ark (2 Sam 6:11)	The word “blessed” used three times and surely the house was blessed by God (Lk 1:39-45)
The Ark returns to its home and ends up in Jerusalem where God’s presence and glory is revealed in the Temple (2 Sam 6:12; 1 Ki 8:9-11)	Mary returns home and eventually ends up in Jerusalem where she presents God enfleshed in the Temple (Lk 1:56; 2:21-22)

What Things Were Placed in the Old Testament Ark?

The Old Testament tells us that one item was placed inside the Ark while in the Sinai Wilderness as a witness to the people of Israel. God had given Moses the Ten Commandments written on stone with his own finger. God told Moses to place the tablets inside the Ark (Deut 10:3-5) so that they would always be at the heart of their worship.

Hebrews 9:4 tells us that two *additional* things were placed in the Ark: “. . . the Ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant.”⁹ Each of the three items had profound significance and were always to be with the people in the very presence of God in the Ark.

⁹ In the Old Testament we are told early on that the only thing inside the Ark was the word of God inscribed on tablets of stone (Deut 10:3-5; 1 Ki 8:9-11). Placed *near* the Ark was the rod of Aaron that budded (Num 17:10-11) and the golden urn containing manna from the wilderness (Ex 16:33). However, the book of Hebrews informs us that all three items were *inside* the Ark (Heb 9:4). There may have been a later tradition or practice of keeping all three *in* the Ark which would correspond to the words of Hebrews 9:4.

In my DVD *Mary, the Mother of God*, here is how I describe the three items placed in the Ark of the Old Covenant:

“But there’s even more. Inside the Ark is the law of God inscribed on stone, and in the Book of Hebrews we read there’s also an urn of manna from the wilderness and the rod of Aaron, which budded. What an amazing parallel!

“Here we have the law of God inscribed on stone, but in the womb of Mary we have the word of God in flesh, a person.

“Here we have the urn of manna, which was the manna come down from heaven that if we ate of it we would still die, but in Mary’s womb is the Bread of Life come down from heaven, that if we eat of it we will never die.

“And here we have the rod of Aaron, which is the proof of the true priesthood, but in Mary’s womb, Mary, this Ark of the Covenant, is the true priest. What an amazing parallel between these two.



“St. Gregory the Wonder Worker in the third century tells us that Mary is truly an Ark — gold within and gold without, and she has received in her womb all the treasures of the sanctuary. A beautiful image...and it’s not the last time we’ll see Mary as the Ark -- just wait and see!

Mary as the Ark Revealed by the Items inside the Ark	
Inside Ark of the Old Covenant	Inside Mary, Ark of the New Covenant
The stone tablets of the Law—the word of God inscribed on stone	The body of Jesus Christ—the word of God in the flesh.
The urn filled with manna from the wilderness—the miraculous bread come down from heaven.	The womb containing Jesus, the bread of life come down from heaven (Jn 6:41)
The rod of Aaron which budded to prove and defend the true High Priest	The actual and eternal High Priest

Again, this cannot be a coincidence, especially if we put it together with the “overshadowing” and the ‘visit to Elizabeth’s house.’” Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. But there is even more.

The Temple and Ark now in Heaven

The book of Revelation was pretty much rejected by the early Christians. Many did not believe it belonged in the Bible. It was not really accepted universally until the end of the 4th century so it was

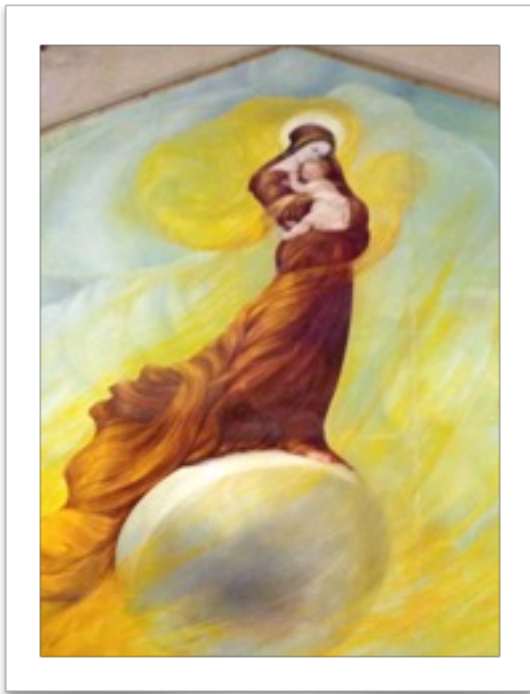
never much studied or discussed until later centuries. But after it was finally declared as part of the canon by the bishops of the Catholic Church, Christians realized there was more revelation in the Bible about Mary as the Ark.

The Apostle John was exiled to the Island of Patmos. Janet and I went there a couple of times to study the background to this book of the Bible. In Revelation 11:19 John says something that would have shocked any 1st century Jew. The Ark of the Old Covenant had been lost for centuries — no one had seen it for about 600 years.



But in Revelation 11:19 John makes a surprise announcement: “And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the Ark of His covenant appeared in His temple. . . .”

At this point chapter 11 ends and chapter 12 begins, but the Bible was not written with chapter and verse divisions; they were added in the twelfth century. When John penned these words, there was no division between chapters 11 and 12.¹⁰



So, immediately in the context of saying he saw the Ark of the Covenant in heaven, what is the next thing John says?

“A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child . . .” (Rev 12:1-2a). Who was the woman? Mary, the Ark of the Covenant was revealed by God and John saw it in heaven. She was seen bearing the child who would rule the world with a rod of iron (Rev 12:5). Mary was seen as the Ark and as a queen.

But does this passage really refer to Mary? Some say the woman represents Israel or the Church, and certainly she does. John’s use of rich symbolism is well known, but it is obvious from the Bible itself that the woman is Mary. The Bible begins with a real man (Adam), a real woman (Eve) and a real serpent (the devil) — and it also ends with a real man (Jesus, the Last Adam, 1 Cor 15:45),

¹⁰ “The different divisions of the material within the NT books are not ancient. The chapter divisions are usually attributed to Cardinal Hugo de San Caro, who in A.D. 1248 used them in preparing a Bible index, but he may have borrowed them from the earlier [Catholic] archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton. The modern verses derive from Robert Estienne (Stephanus), who, according to his son Henry, made the divisions while on a journey on horseback from Paris to Lyons. They were first published in Stephanus’ Greek Testament of 1551 and first appeared in an English translation of the NT in William Whittingham’s version of 1557. The first complete Bible in English with our verses was the Geneva Bible of 1560” (Achtmeier, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 699).

a real woman (Mary the New Eve¹¹, Rev 11:19—12:2) and a real serpent (the devil of old).¹² All this was foretold in Genesis 3:15.

Later in the same chapter it says that the devil went out to persecute the woman's other offspring — Christians — which certainly seems to indicate Mary is somehow the mother of the Church (Rev 12:17).

So, here again we see very good scriptural evidence of Mary being revealed by God in Scripture as the Ark of the New Covenant. Even if someone disagrees with Catholic teaching, they cannot argue that there is good and reasonable scriptural foundations for this teaching. And it is a teaching that has been taught by Christians from ancient times.¹³

What Did the Early Christians Teach about Mary and the Ark?

Here are a few representative quotations — some written well before the New Testament books were finally collected into the final New Testament canon.

Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296 – 373) was the main defender of the deity of Christ against the 2nd century heretics. He wrote: “O noble Virgin, truly you are greater than any other greatness. For who is your equal in greatness, O dwelling place of God the Word? To whom among all creatures shall I compare you, O Virgin? You are greater than them all O (Ark of the) Covenant, clothed with purity instead of gold! You are the Ark in which is found the golden vessel containing the true manna, that is, the flesh in which Divinity resides.”
Homily of the Papyrus of Turin.

Gregory the Wonderworker (c. 213 – c. 270) an early Christian teacher wrote: “Let us chant the melody which has been taught us by the inspired harp of David, and say, “Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the Ark of Thy sanctuary.” For the holy Virgin is in truth an Ark, wrought with gold both within and without, that has



¹¹ Mary as the New Eve is another fascinating adventure through the Old and New Testaments.

¹² John Henry Cardinal Newman comments: “What I would maintain is this, that the Holy Apostle would not have spoken of the Church under this particular image, unless there had existed a blessed Virgin Mary, who was exalted on high and the object of veneration to all the faithful. No one doubts that the “man-child” spoken of is an allusion to our Lord; why then is not “the Woman” an allusion to his mother?”

¹³ “Often there are theologians and preachers who, following in the footsteps of the holy Fathers, have been rather free in their use of events and expressions taken from Sacred Scripture to explain their belief in the Assumption. Thus, to mention only a few of the texts rather frequently cited in this fashion, some have employed the words of the psalmist: “Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark, which you have sanctified”; and have looked upon the Ark of the Covenant, built of incorruptible wood and placed in the Lord's temple, as a type of the most pure body of the Virgin Mary, preserved and exempt from all the corruption of the tomb and raised up to such glory in heaven” (Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950).

received the whole treasury of the sanctuary.¹⁴

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* echoes the words from the earliest centuries, “Mary, in whom the Lord himself has just made his dwelling, is the daughter of Zion in person, the Ark of the covenant, the place where the glory of the Lord dwells. She is “the dwelling of God . . . with men.” (CCC 2676).

There are many quotations I could provide because it was widely taught, but I have only added a few to keep it from being too long. The early Christians taught the same thing that the Catholic Church teaches today about Mary, especially about her being the Ark of the New Covenant. For a comprehensive collection of patristic quotations, click here <http://www.catholic-convert.com/Portals/57ad7180-c5e7-49f5-b282-c6475cdb7ee7/Documents/MaryArkPatristics.doc>.

Conclusion

So, that about does it! Thanks for asking me to explain Mary and the Ark of the New Covenant. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. Janet says “Hi!”

Addendum 1: Objections

1. *Jesus is the new Ark of the Covenant (Romans 3:25), not Mary.*

That passage states that Jesus is a propitiatory sacrifice, not the Propitiatory itself (the cover of the Ark, also called the “mercy seat”). Though some early Christians speculated that the old Ark could be a type of Christ, the Bible does not state that Jesus is the Ark of the New Covenant. Nor does it deny that Mary is the New Ark; in fact it strongly insinuates that she is.

The Ark was a created thing, a mere vessel which carried the presence of God. Jesus is not just a vessel carrying God’s presence, He is God Incarnate. There’s a big difference! Mary, on the other hand, *is* a mere creature, a living vessel who carried the presence of God. She is to the New Covenant what the Ark was to the Old Covenant. Though the Bible never portrays Jesus as the New Ark, we saw above that II Samuel 6:2-11 clearly parallels the Visitation thus indicating that Mary is the New Ark.

2. *John 1:14 says “the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory.” In the Greek the word dwelt is “skeino” from the Hebrew word “shekinah” which was the word for “God residing in the Tabernacle.” Jesus clothed himself in human flesh (Phil 2:5-8) the Ark was His body as it had carried the creator of the universe. It was not Mary who was the Ark, but Jesus Christ’s body that was the Tabernacle.*

Again, this passage does not state that Jesus is the Ark of the New Covenant. We have seen above that Mary is compared to the Ark twice in St. Luke’s Gospel.

3. *The Ark was made of acacia wood and gold; the wood signified Jesus’ humanity and the gold His Deity.*

Why should part of the Ark “symbolize” Deity when it bore the Deity Himself? It seems repetitious and unnecessary. The gold may just as well symbolize royalty, since Mary is the

¹⁴Roberts, A., Donaldson, J., & Coxe, A. C. (1997). *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. VI: Translations of the writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. Fathers of the Third Century: Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius The Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

queen mother, or purity as mentioned by Gregory the wonderworker or perhaps grace, with which Mary is filled.

4. *The contents of the Ark prove that it is a type of Christ, since they are all types of the Messiah.*

The tablets containing the Ten Commandments, the Manna and Aaron's budded staff all do signify Christ, Who is the living Word of God, the Bread of Life and the High Priest. But the Ark is the vessel meant to hold these things, even as Mary is the Vessel who bore Jesus. Many have seen the Ark as a type of Christ too, and that is also legitimate, however, there is more evidence to see Mary as the Ark and the two do not negate each other. Each can be used as various metaphors, just as the temple can be seen as both the body of Christ, the Church, and the believer.

5. *But the Jews worshiped the Ark; and we're not supposed to worship Mary.*

The Jews were not supposed to worship the Ark, only the Shekinah Glory enthroned upon it. If any Jews did worship the box itself (which is doubtful) then they were committing idolatry, as would anyone who worships Mary, the New Ark. Worship is reserved for the Trinity alone.

6. *If Mary were the New Ark of the Covenant, then all the things which happened to the old Ark would have to have happened to her. So Mary would have to have been stolen by pagans and gone into exile as the Ark did (1 Samuel 4:11).*

This argument only backfires on the user, since most Protestants believe the Ark to be a type of Christ, but He wasn't kidnapped by pagans and carried off to a foreign land either! A New Testament character need not experience everything which his or her Old Testament type did: King David was a type of Christ, but Jesus never committed adultery as David did; the prophet Jonah was a type of Christ, but Jesus never disobeyed God, etc.. Thus Mary also did not have to experience everything which happened to the Ark of the Old Covenant.

The above "Objections" were taken from a website for which I want to give full credit though I edited it a bit. I do not know the author's name, but the website address is <http://members.tripod.com/~maryimmaculate/marian2.html>.

Addendum 2: Mary the Ark of the Covenant, by my friend Patrick Madrid.

<http://www.catholic.com/thisrock/1991/9112fea1.asp>

Addendum 3: Segment from my Study Guide from Mary, Mother of God.

Here is the section of my Study Guide included in the *Mary, Mother of God*. You can use it for further research. CCC is an abbreviation for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

1. What is "typology," and how does it help us understand the Old and New Testaments (CCC 128-30, 1094)?
2. For example, how is Adam a type or prefiguring of Christ (Rom 5:14)?
3. Augustine wisely said the Old Testament is the New concealed, but the New Testament is the Old revealed (cp. CCC 129).
4. How is the Old Testament instructive in understanding the New Testament (1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4; CCC 117.1)?

5. Where did God's presence dwell in the Old Covenant (Ex 25:21–22; 40:34–38; Lev 16:2; CCC 2594)?
6. What has become the dwelling place of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit among men (CCC 721)?
7. Where did the Ark of the Covenant reside (Ex 40:21; Num 7:89)?
8. What happened to Moses in the presence of the Ark (Ex 34:33–35)?
9. What overshadowed Mary (Lk 1:35; CCC 697) and what overshadowed the Ark in the Tabernacle (Ex 40:34–35)?
10. What was contained within the Ark of the Covenant (Deut 10:3–5; Heb 9:4; CCC 2058)?
11. What was within Mary's womb—the new Ark (Mt 1:23; Lk 1:35; Jn 1:1, 14; CCC 2676)?
12. Find some parallels between the Old Testament Ark and the New Testament Ark in 2 Samuel 6 and Luke 1.
13. Compare 2 Sam 6:2–4 with Lk 1:39 (same hill country in Judea); 2 Sam 6:14 with Lk 1:41; 2 Sam 6:9 with Lk 1:43; and 2 Sam 6:11 and Lk 1:56.
14. Discuss how Mary is shown to be the Ark of the New Covenant and how Christians should respect her.