# ALL-THINGS-MARIAN-04-18-2024

**Music:** [00:00:00] All Things Marian, a weekly program of information, research, and experience about the Virgin Mary, sponsored by the International Marian Research Institute of the University of Dayton. Now your host, Michele Foley.

**Michele Foley:** Hello everyone. And welcome to All Things Marian. We're so happy you could join us [00:01:00] today, wherever you may be, on whatever device you are listening to us. We are here every Thursday. And so, you may also dial in to our podcasts, which are on the radiomaria.us. website. They are listed in alphabetical order.

And they go back quite, quite a ways. So today, we welcome a very special guest, which, or rather who, is going to continue our discussion of Our Lady. Our Lady whose history comes to us, and who is present in the liturgy, in our prayers, and with her Son. Our guest today is Stuart Schafer. Stuart has earned his Sacred Theological Doctorate from the International Marian Research Institute in Dayton, Ohio.

He [00:02:00] comes to us and is speaking to us about Mary, the Ark of the Covenant, and we're so happy to have him with us. Welcome Stuart!

**Stuart Schafer:** Thank you very much. This is an honor. De Maria numquam satis, you

can't say enough about the Blessed Mother. So today I'm going to talk about how Mary is presented as the Ark of the Covenant in scripture and praying the fathers and in ancient liturgies. So begin with a prayer, which is the under your protection prayer. It's probably more familiar in the Latin translation, but I'm going to use the Greek, the original one that comes back to, go back to about the third or fourth century.

And, uh, it'll address her as Theotokos, which the Eastern world is Mother of God, the God Bearer. Beneath thy compassion, we take [00:03:00] refuge, O Theotokos. Do not despise our petitions in time of trouble, but rescue us from dangers, only pure one, only blessed one.

So Mary is the Ark of the Covenant was the topic I chose for my dissertation. I chose this as the most powerful image I encountered when I began Marian studies. Explaining it involves looking at the internal evidence of scripture, Understanding the history of the Ark, understanding Jewish techniques of interpreting scripture and other Jewish thought in Jesus’ time, and understanding the Greek of the relevant New Testament passages and the Greek Old Testament passages that they evoke.

So why would Mary be compared to a box? She contained the Divine Presence, the Son of God, in her womb. The Ark contained the manna. Mary contained the Bread of Life. [00:04:00] The Ark contained the tablets with the twelve words. Mary contained the Word of God. The Ark contained the rod of Aaron. Mary contained the High Priest.

What might this mean? If Mary, who carried the Son of God in her womb, can be likened to the Ark, and Mary is the prototypical Christian, that has implications for us.

As the Son of God is at the heart of God's plan for saving us, God provided clues beforehand that point to his Son. In scripture, these include prophecies, but also events, places, persons, and phrases that point to him, and those are called types. Mary is intimately connected with Christ, and so the existence of prophecies or types regarding Jesus can reasonably be expected to be accompanied by types of [00:05:00] Mary, such as the famous New Eve typology mentioned in the second century by Irenaeus.

So first, I'll discuss some Jewish principles of Bible interpretation. The first principle is that the prophecies of the Old Testament are directed to fulfillment in the age of the Messiah, and then the worship of God will prevail on earth. This principle is rooted in scripture and reflected in rabbinic writings.

All the prophets foretold Christ as a tribute to Rabbi Johanan of the third century. But Jesus himself used this principle with the disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, where he went through Moses and all the prophets, explaining the scriptures that foretold him. And networks of messianic scripture passages are known from the first century before Christ, in testimonies, testimonies from the Qumran documents.[00:06:00]

The second principle is that the same earthly reality corresponds to heavenly reality and recurs in history under different forms. This principle is reflected in rabbinic writings from the second to the fourth centuries. The Divine Presence was said to be at the center of the Garden of Eden, but was removed when people sinned.

It returned to Mount Sinai in the Ark of the Covenant, sometime between when the Ark was constructed and when it was dedicated. The history of the Shekinah, the Presence of God, and its presence in the Ark, the Tabernacle, and the Temple provides a figure of the type dwelling of God, which presents earthly correspondences to heavenly realities.

The principle of earthly copies derives from scripture itself. Hebrews 8 expounds on this concept when it speaks of the sanctuary and the true tent of meeting, which the Lord and [00:07:00] not any man set up. But it is also present in the Old Testament. For instance, when Moses was admonished to follow the copy that the Lord had given him on the mountain, or David, when he followed the instructions for the Temple that the Lord had given him. And it's also mentioned in rabbinic commentary.

Exodus 15:17, which was right, which was the chapter that the Israelites sang right after they had crossed the Red Sea, states, “You will bring them and plant them on the mountain that is your own, the place you have made your dwelling, Yahweh,

the sanctuary, Yahweh, you have prepared by your own hands.” This passage is taken up in Jewish Biblical interpretation. An explicit reference to the Temple as an earthly copy of God's tabernacle is found in Wisdom 9. [00:08:00] So these principles apply to the Ark and the Shekinah. And with the understanding that all prophecy is directed to Christ are the impetus for the phenomenon of foreshadowing and fulfillment.

Now I'm going to discuss a couple rules of Jewish Biblical interpretation. There are also rules of scriptural interpretation established in the century before Christ. Rabbi Hillel taught seven rules which support the expectation that scripture explains scripture. His second rule, reasoning by analogy, and the seventh rule, consideration of the context, are those most relevant to typology, and are applied by Jesus himself and applied to himself.

Typologies are often at the level of principles, summed up in a nutshell, and while a shared context is important, it is not necessarily intended [00:09:00] to be used for a broader elaboration of fine grained comparisons. So a type is a person, event, or situation which has a spiritual significance foreshadowing an aspect of God's plan.

So for example, in John 3, Jesus takes the type of the bronze serpent lifted up on a pole in Exodus 21, which saved from death anyone who looked at it, and he applies it to himself on the cross. The common element is lifted up to save, to save the world. In Matthew 12 and Luke 11, Jesus names his burial and resurrection as a fulfillment of the type of Jonah in the belly of the whale.

The common element is three days and three nights, a brief summary comparison that is not intended to include certain fine details for most conspicuously. The reason Jonah [00:10:00] was swallowed was because he was trying to escape God's mission for him of calling Nineveh to repent, but Jesus accepted the Father's mission of saving the world through his death and resurrection.

Nevertheless, the type of Jonah was a type of the burial and resurrection. So I want to discuss some of the events and features of the history of the Ark of the Covenant. The history of the Ark starts in Exodus 25, which describes the Sanctuary, the Tabernacle, and the Ark. The Ark was made of incorruptible wood and covered with gold.

It had long poles on the sides for the Levites to carry it. As stated, it contained the pot of manna, the tablets of the Ten Commandments, and Aaron's rod. The Ark was the primary location of the Shekinah, the presence of God on Earth. [00:11:00] Two golden cherubim overshadowed the Ark. God spoke from above the cherubim.

When the Ark was carried, the people went with the Ark crying out with loud cries. The Ark conferred blessings and protection on Israel, but only when they honored God's presence. At one time, they presumed it made them invincible, and the Philistines captured the Ark. It was carried for 40 years in the desert in the Tent of Meeting, and stayed at a few places in the Promised Land.

King David decided to transfer the Ark to a permanent place prepared for it. The Levites did not carry it as they were supposed to. Uzzah touched the ark and was smitten. And David in fear asked, how can the Ark of the Lord come to me? David had it stayed three months with Obed-Edom. Then it was taken to a tent in the city of David.

On the procession, David danced in ecstasy in [00:12:00] the presence of the Ark. God told David that he would not build the Temple. Solomon would. Solomon built the Temple and brought the Ark into it. It was consecrated on the Feast of Tabernacles. The Cloud of Glory filled the Temple, as it had filled the Ark in the Tabernacle in the Tent of Meeting.

When the Southern Kingdom was exiled to Babylonia, the Ark was hidden. It is to return in the Messianic Age, in 2 Maccabees 2. Now, though, about the presence of God. The Maccabees passage of the return of the Ark also speaks of the return of the Glory and the Cloud. This is the Shekinah manifested especially as a cloud, the pillar of cloud in the desert in Exodus, or light, like the burning bush, or the pillar of light at night in Exodus.

Less frequently mentioned is the voice, where God speaks from [00:13:00] above the cherubim in the Ark. It is heard at the baptism of Christ, where God says, This is my beloved Son. The Shekinah is a formless transcendent presence being upon someone or something, versus in the new covenant where the Word is made flesh and his people have the divine indwelling.

The Shekinah shows God dwelling in creation and in relationship to his people. There's an early second century rabbinic statement that when two sit together and there are words of Torah between them, the Shekinah abides among them. Jesus himself had earlier applied this concept to himself as being present when two or three are gathered in his name.

So given this background, I want to discuss some internal evidence of scripture for Ark references, followed by the ancient Christian witnesses. [00:14:00] Marian Ark typology is seen in the New Testament with the Lucan infancy narrative. The prologue of John and the Woman of Revelation. Luke 1 focuses on Mary.

John 1 focuses on Jesus. Revelation 12 focuses on the Woman and the dragon. The Lucan infancy account in Luke 1 weaves a narrative that contains a number of phrases and situations that evoke the history of the ark in terms of Mary during Christ's gestation. These comparisons were noted in the 20th century by Swete, Burrows, and especially Laurentin and also Lyonnet.

First, there are two rare Greek verbs for overshadow and for cry out that are used almost exclusively in the Greek Bible in the context of the Ark and the Shekinah. These verbs are present where Mary is present in [00:15:00] Luke. The cloud overshadowed the Tent of Meeting and filled the Temple. At the Annunciation, the power of the Most High will overshadow Mary.

In the presence of the Ark, the Israelites cried out with a loud voice. At the Visitation, Elizabeth, in the presence of Mary with Jesus in her womb, cries out with a loud voice, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. A number of other elements of Ark history are evoked in Luke 1.

The Ark was brought to the hill country of Jerusalem, which is in the tribe of Judah. Mary went into the whole country of Judah to visit Elizabeth, which has been identified as En Karem. When Uzzah was smitten, David asked, How can the Ark of the Lord come to me? At the Visitation, Elizabeth, in the presence of Mary with Jesus in her womb, asks, How does the mother of my Lord come to me?

At the [00:16:00] transfer of the Ark, David danced ecstatically before the Ark. At the presence of Mary with Jesus in her womb, Elizabeth says, The babe John leapt in her womb for joy. The tent and the Temple were filled with the Shekinah. Mary and Elizabeth are filled with the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ presence. Until David had things ready, the Ark stayed at Obed-Edom's house for three months.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months. According to Josephus, and later rabbinic tradition, the unspecified nature of this blessing on Obed-Edom, while the Ark stayed on his property, was a full blessing, including fertility. Mary's pregnancy, while a virgin, and Elizabeth's child bearing insterility were miraculous blessings associated with Christ.

The Israelite shouts in the presence of the Ark is seen as [00:17:00] shouts of joy and God's victory, and are also used in the context of the joy of the last days when God redeemed Zion. Two key prophecies of the coming of King Messiah in Zephaniah 3 and Zechariah 9 address Zion with Rejoice, daughter of Zion.

Gabriel addresses Mary, Rejoice, full of grace, using the same Greek verb that is in the Greek Bible to address the daughter of Zion. In fact, there are other places where prophecies of the daughter of Zion are interpreted in Judaism as standing for Israel and in Christianity for Mary. And these places are in the context of the coming of the Messiah.

As such, Mary is an individual realization of the prophecies God is in the midst of her. These subtle allusions evoking the Ark display the Jewish rules of scripture interpretation, [00:18:00] especially analogy and context. Two possible additional Ark links to Luke are proposed. The priests of the Order of Abijah were chosen to the service of the Holy of Holies that contained the Ark.

Mary's kinsman Zechariah was of the Order of Abijah. In the Gospel of James, Mary is chosen to weave the purple and scarlet work for the veil that God had commanded to cover the Ark. Gospel of James is an apocryphal that we'll mention again. Obed-Edom, whose property hosted the Ark for three months, has a name that appears to connote total service to God.

Mary chooses to be the servant of the Lord for whatever he wants of her. Of all these commonalities, the usage of the same rare Greek verb in context of the Ark and the Annunciation appeared to be too strong to attribute to chance. So moving on to the Prologue of John, John 1 with its focus on Christ and the lack [00:19:00] of any narrative describing the Nativity, Ark and Marian references are less direct, but references that do occur are significant.

Where Luke commences with the history of Mary, John commences with the history of the Word. Speaking of beginnings, it's no coincidence. Just as, or, John starts, In the beginning was the Word. Just as Genesis begins, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. John is presenting a new creation in Christ.

John 1 uses a methodist successive development of four themes and phases. They are applied to Christ's coming into the world. The phases are heavenly reality, earthly reality, witness, and wilderness. An identical set of phrases will be found in Revelation 12, covering the woman. John begins with the eternal existence of God, the Word, and creation, giving light and life, [00:20:00] earthly and heavenly reality, followed by the witness of John the Baptist, and the Word coming into the world, to make believers the children of God.

Not by human procreation. Witness heaven and earthly reality. Jesus becoming flesh in the Incarnation through Mary, not through human seed, that we could see his glory, the Shekinah, heavenly and earthly reality and witness, and then the mission of John the Baptist to prepare the way for him, witness and wilderness.

After this section and then to the end of chapter one, three times there is mention of the next day, next day. With chapter two jumping to the third day after the previous ones. Six days after the beginning are included, just as are six days after the beginning at creation, and six at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, described in second century Jewish commentaries on Exodus.

The [00:21:00] Exodus commentaries also renumber after the third day following the previous. The return at Sinai of the Shekinah lost in the world in Eden is mentioned in these Jewish commentaries, as well as the understanding of the giving of the law as a new creation. In John, besides the mention of his glory, John says that the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, like St.

Paul's reference to our earthly tents, tabernacles, same word. Greek. Likely evoking the Shekinah in the Tent of Meeting with the Ark and the Tabernacle, since in Chapter 2, Jesus refers to his body as the new Temple that he will rebuild in three days. There is also mention of Jesus being full of grace and truth, and he made his mother full of grace.

John's Gospel does speak of the persons of the Trinity in drawing the Christian in John 14, as the prophecy in Ezekiel 36, about [00:22:00] God putting his Spirit in his people. This truth allows for the figure of the inanimate Ark being realized as each Christian being an animate Ark, in whom is the presence of God.

There's an allusion to this in John 14, where Jesus says to the disciples, He'll prepare a place for them, a permanent dwelling in heaven. The Greek phrase is the same verb and the noun used in the history of the Ark, where David made a prepared place for the Ark. And in Exodus 15, where there's the prepared place

of his sanctuary. A Marian reference may be present when Jesus speaks in John 16 of the disciples upcoming sorrow at the crucifixion and mentions a woman in the painful labor of childbirth. Jesus knows that the next day his mother will be at the cross and will be designated the mother of the beloved disciple and of all the faithful experiencing the [00:23:00] pains of spiritual motherhood that she escaped at the nativity.

The third passage, the Woman of Revelation, begins in Revelation 11, with the Ark of Covenant in Heaven being revealed. This is the heavenly reality of which the earthly Ark is a copy. It is followed by lightning, thunder, earthquake, and hail. Haggai 2 discusses the shaking of the elements in the context of messianic fulfillment, of the filling of the Temple with the Shekinah.

Haggai's prophecy was delivered on the Feast of Tabernacles. Tabernacles reminded the Jews of their pilgrimage on earth in temporary dwellings. As the harvest feast, it also pointed to the end of the year, to completion of the harvest, to rest in the promised land, and in God's plan to fulfillment at the end of time.

In the Book of Revelation, the same four phases of heavenly reality, earthly reality, witness and [00:24:00] wilderness seen in John are applied to the woman. Immediately following the shaking of the elements is the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon, and a crown of twelve stars. There is also the dragon.

The Ark, the woman seen in heaven, and the dragon are heavenly realities. She was in the pains of childbirth. She gave birth to a boy who will rule the nations with an iron scepter. Her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. These are earthly and heavenly realities. She fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, a wilderness phase.

Michael and his angels fight the dragon and the dragon is cast down to earth, heavenly and earthly reality. Then there is a hymn describing God, his victory and calling the heavens to rejoice, a witness phase. The dragon pursues the woman, an earthly reality. She is given two wings of a great eagle [00:25:00] to fly to the place prepared for her, a wilderness phase.

The dragon sends a flood to overcome her, but the earth swallows it, so he goes to fight the rest of her children who obey God's commands and keep the testimony of Jesus, an earthly reality. Who is the woman? Some say it is Mary. Some say it is the Church. Some say it cannot be Mary because the vision does not match the historical Mary.

So is the woman an individual Mary or a collective church? The problem is that in Revelation we see something that reminds us of the historical facts of Christ's life, but it is presented in a highly symbolic version with a spiritual outlook. Images can convey several ideas and realities at the same time.

It can move back and forth between different perspectives. Some of the images in Revelation 12 are in heaven, and some are on earth. Some are physical, and some are spiritual. Even here are three [00:26:00] realities.

But in historical fact, the male child, who is to rule the nations with an iron rod, is an individual, Jesus Christ, and the woman who gave birth to him is an individual, Mary. The repetition of the same device of heavenly, earthly, witness, and wilderness phases, also seen in John, is in a context of the Incarnation.

The same theological context of the fulfillment of God's plan by the coming of the Messiah is common to Luke 1, John 1, and Revelation 12. John and Revelation share in common the term woman, the presence of other children besides Christ, and a spiritual maternity united to Golgotha. The hymn in Revelation 12 uses the expression loud voice, [00:27:00] similar to the crying out with a loud voice in the presence of the Ark.

The exhortation, Rejoice, O Heavens, occurs in Psalm 96, with a parallel in 1 Chronicles. God is great and his praise must be loud. Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice at his presence, for he is coming. This Psalm 96 was appointed by David to be sung before the Ark. So I believe at this time we have a break.

**Michele Foley:** Yes, and thank you for this fascinating comparison and revelation for us. This means so much to many of us who wonder and probably have studied some about Mary as the Ark of the Covenant. And it makes so much sense now that you have revealed that to us, Stuart. And we thank you. This is Radio Maria. A Catholic voice in your home.

This is All Things Marian and I am Michele Foley, [00:28:00] your host every Thursday. We hope that you enjoy and will consider some of the things that we have presented to you in your prayer life and in your reflection on your faith. Thank you for listening everyone and thank you Radio Maria. God bless you all and we will see you.

After the break, thank you.[00:29:00]

**Music:** Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing. You reign now in splendor with Jesus our King. Ave, ave, ave Maria. Ave, ave, Maria.

In heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim. On earth, we your children invoke your sweet name. Ave, ave, ave Maria. Ave, Ave, Maria. We pray for the Church our true Mother on Earth, and beg you to watch o’er the land of our birth. Ave, ave, ave Maria.

[00:30:00] You are listening to

Radio Maria, a Catholic voice in your home. We now return to our program, All Things Marian, brought to you by the International Marian Research Institute of the University of Dayton.

**Michele Foley:** Thank you, friends, and welcome. Welcome back to join us today with our guest Stuart Schafer. This is Michele [00:31:00] Foley for All Things Marian.

Today, Stuart is telling us about the origin of the comparison of Mary, or Our Lady, the Mother of Jesus, with the Ark of the Covenant. And it makes so much sense. And thank you, Stuart, for giving us this revelation, as I said before the break. And we hope that all of you will consider this and make it part of your prayer life.

So we continue, Stuart, and thank you so much for joining us today.

**Stuart Schafer:** Thank you. And as with the other scriptures, the Shekinah is also present in Revelation 12. The woman is clothed with the sun, and arrayed as a queen with a crown of stars. She contains the Son of God, whom she is about to bear. Mary is enveloped with the Shekinah of Christ as seen in the allusion to Haggai 2 with the messianic filling of the dwelling in the [00:32:00] Temple.

She is grounded by the moon, which does not shine of its own light, but reflects the glory of the sun. Later, the wings of the eagle, as a means to go to the place prepared for her, echoing John 14, is applied to the apostles in the passing of Mary, another apocryphal work, as pointing to the fulfillment of Mary's life.

It reflects the Jewish tradition interpreting Exodus 19, that at the Exodus, all Israel was miraculously and swiftly gathered together to leave for the promised land. Mary is making her own exodus from this world to the promised land. But as in John 19, she goes as the mother of Jesus and the mother of all the Christians.

Nevertheless, many important ancient writers saw the Woman as the Church. In Revelation 12, the focus goes back and forth between the [00:33:00] heavenly prototype of the earthly Ark of Old and Mary the New Ark and Mary and the Church. The Bible exhibits the phenomenon of corporate personality, where a group is realized in its members, like Rachel weeping for her children, or Jesus asking Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

When Saul was persecuting the Christians. A person can stand for the whole group, and that makes the individual and the group somewhat interchangeable. A corporate person can change realizations over time. Over time, the corporate people of God are realized in the individual daughter of Zion and corporate Israel in the Old Testament.

And in the New Testament, in the individual Mary and the corporate Church. The Woman of Revelation, then, can be Mary and it can be the Church. Mary is mother, both of Jesus and of the Church, [00:34:00] as we see in John 19. St. Augustine can even say the reverse, that the Church is the Mother of Christ. Revelation 12 is portraying one single role of motherhood for Mary.

Her motherhood encompasses the historical birth of Christ in joy, and the spiritual birth of the faithful in pain at the Passion. Fundamentally in spirit, Mary is the Church at its core. She is a scriptural sketch, enjoying and pointing to our destination after this life. As the details have not yet been revealed to us, she can also be considered as a type of the Church to be fulfilled at the coming of Christ.

Chromatius from the 5th century said, This man came after John, because according to the flesh he was considered worthy to be born from the Virgin after John, but he was before John because he was born of God the Father before all [00:35:00] things. May we see in this woman the image of the Church foreshadowed in every respect.

Honorius of Autun in the 12th century said, The glorious Virgin Mary, who is virgin and mother, bears the type of the Church, and is even preached as mother. Because made fruitful by the Holy Spirit, daily many sons of God are born in baptism through her. Therefore everything that is written of the Church is also fittingly said of her.

So I'm going to continue with some attributions of Mary as the Ark and the Shekinah in the patristic era, up to the 8th century, and ancient liturgical texts. There are two main Marian Apocrypha that present the beginning and the end of Mary's life. Passing references to both of them have been made. The protoevangelium or gospel of James recounts her miraculous birth in the old [00:36:00] age of

her parents, Joachim and Anne near the Feast of Tabernacles, actually conceived near the Feast of Tabernacles. Her entrance into the Temple to be dedicated to God and grow up there is also portrayed with events seen at the Feast of Tabernacles. At the arrival of Mary's puberty, Joseph, an old widower, is granted the care of her by casting lots.

In keeping with Ark references, the power of God overshadows her. The midwife examines her to prove her virginity, and the midwife's hands are smitten, as was Uzzah. And at the nativity, a cloud overshadows the cave, and a brilliant light surrounds it when Jesus is born. The transitus, or the passing of Mary, in the poem version, which is more prevalent in the West, portrays a last week of her life, with the Lord telling Mary her death was near, then three days of events once the angel comes, then [00:37:00] she passes,

and three days afterwards arises. Indication of the Feast of Tabernacles are given there also, including the use of the Psalms of Ascent and Hallel that were said during the Feast of Tabernacles. And there are also some aspects of the Exodus, such as the miraculous gathering of the apostles to her at the end.

The Jewish chief priest attacks her bier to topple it, and his arms are smitten, as was Uzzah. Some additional events found only in one or two transitive versions include Christ utilizing Psalm 132, written for the transfer of the Ark to Zion, applying to Mary the words, Arise to your rest, you and the Ark of your holiness.

Another transitus version refers to the apostles raising the Ark of God on their shoulders and carrying Mary's bier to the tomb.

So, following are [00:38:00] some statements of church fathers and writers in the 4th to the 8th centuries. And most of these statements are syntheses. That is, you know, maybe there would be four or five, uh, writers, church fathers, that's made similar statements, and instead of repeating all five, which are not very distinctive and very repetitious, they've kind of been synthesized into a summary.

Although a couple are direct quotes. What I mentioned, the, the author, I'm favoring the most ancient occurrence of the statement. So St. Ephrem, and this is a direct quote, there shone forth from the rib the hidden power who cut down Satan as he did Dagon, for in that Ark was hidden scripture. Joseph served in the presence of Christ in Mary as the priest served in the presence of the Ark.

Ephrem was in the fourth century. Also in the fourth [00:39:00] century, For who is your equal in greatness, O dwelling 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 new 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.

Moses praises you, setting you up like a new Ark of the covenant, surrounded all around with gold. And that was Saint Athanasius. There's a hymn book of the 5th century from the Holy Sepulchre. And it praises of Mary. It speaks of her as Ark of holiness of the new law, Ark of holiness upon whom the Holy Spirit appeared, golden urn of manna, and sanctified tent.

And it also makes her a type or an image of Mary. And along with [00:40:00] that hymn book, there's a contemporary Marian feast in Georgian, in the Georgian language, and its title is Type of the Old Ark and the New Law. Some of the attributes of the Ark that are mentioned in patristic writings are Mary as containing the uncontainable, and Mary is the rational ark.

Cyril of Alexandria from the 5th century said, Hail Mary, dwelling place of the uncontainable, who contained the only begotten God the Word. As far as rational Ark or animate realization of the inanimate Ark, Mary is the Ark gifted with reason. Mary is the living Ark of God, the Word, and completely holy Ark.

Mary is the spiritual Ark of Glory. That's by Pseudo-John Chrysostom, Pseudo-Methodius, and Proclus. Also[00:41:00] this century. Another attribute is the holiness and purity of the Ark as gold and imperishable wood. So Athanasius said Mary is surrounded by purity rather than gold. Another statement, Mary is the Ark full of spiritual mysteries.

Mary is pure like the Ark. Mary or Christ, it's not exactly clear who, is the Ark covered with gold and made of incorruptible wood. And those statements are from James of Sarug, Maximus of Turin, Proclus, and Hippolytus from the 3rd to the 6th centuries. Another attribute is Mary's protection, which is described in a number of different ways.

In the Holy Sepulchre hymn book, it says, She illuminates sinners, guides our souls, and is merciful to the forsaken. She is the provider of [00:42:00] spiritual and temporal protection, as delivering those given to death and emboldening those destined for torment. Theoteknos said, Mary is the spiritual Ark who defeated God's enemies.

Mary's intercession is an unassailable fortification. And Pseudo-Methodius said, Mary is like the golden pot that protected the manna from corruption. Andrew of Crete says, Mary is our refuge. Statements about Mary containing the Divine Presence include, containing the Glory of the Shekinah, being Mother and bridal chamber of the light, and clothed with the glory of the divinity.

St. Ephrem says Mary's body was radiant with divine light and full of Shekinah glory. Paulinus of Nola says, when Elizabeth at a distance saw Mary gleaming with [00:43:00] fiery light, why has the glory of heaven descended into our hearts and cheap abode, introducing into our dark recesses so powerful a light.

James of Saruge, writing in Aramaic. said Mary is the Ark full of fire and the Shekinah, so he uses the actual word Shekinah for the Presence of God. In the life of Pachomius, the Incarnation is a fulfillment of God's coming as a consuming fire. Again in the Holy Sepulchre hymnbook, she's the completely radiant Virgin, true light, and illuminator of our souls.

Mother of the light. She is the light most radiant in the moon, inextinguishable lamp. Then there are a number of statements from many different liturgical texts, Byzantine Greek, Armenian, the Latin Visigothic writers, the Syro Malankara divine office, the [00:44:00] Coptic liturgy, Syrian, Orthodox, Syrian-Catholic. Some of the statements are, Mary is the Temple, the Tabernacle, the dwelling place, the habitation, and the cloud of light.

Mary is like the moon and the sun, illuminated by the light of God. The following one I like a lot because in these dark times, it's comforting to me. Mary is like the day and will not let darkness rule over creation. Mary, like the Ark, is clothed inside and out with the Glory of the divinity. Mary was a pillar, excuse me.

Mary was a pillar of steady brilliance guiding us. Mary is the bride of the light and provided the bridal chamber of the light. And Mary is Mother of the light. [00:45:00] There are also a couple of references to the history of the Ark that we discussed in Luke 1 going back all the way to some of them in the 5th century.

So one, David's dance foreshadowed Mary's entrance at age 3 into the Temple, which is described in the, that Apocrypha, the, the Protoevangelium of James, and it's used in the Byzantine Liturgy. Another statement that David's dance before the Ark foreshadowed Mary containing Christ, or Mary contain, John the Baptist dancing in the womb.

Another statement is Elizabeth's question, how the mother of the Lord comes to her, echoes David's question about the Ark by Andrew of Crete. I think he was the 8th century. I've also discussed the usage of Psalm 132 in, writings, Arise to your rest you in [00:46:00] the Ark of your holiness. And also Psalm 45, On your right hand stands the queen.

These are often found in readings for Marian feasts since the 5th century. Particularly in orations for Marian feasts, the Nativity of Mary, Mary's entry into the Temple, the Annunciation and the Dormition, or Assumption. The themes are richest in the Dormition homilies, such as those calling her the permanent dwelling of God led to the presence of the King.

So, some writers say Psalm 132 foreshadows Mary as the Ark of Gold for bearing Emmanuel and for being the Zion of his habitation. One writer, Chrysippus, I believe from the fourth, fourth century, fourth to fifth century, he's considered, his writings are considered to be perhaps a [00:47:00] foundation for a lot of the later writings of the Dormition Feasts.

And this is a quote from him, quoting both Psalm 132 and Psalm 45. Arise, O Lord, into your rest, you and the Ark of your Holiness, for truly the Ark is the palace, the Ark most precious is the virgin God bearer, an Ark which received the treasure of all holiness, not that Ark in which were the tables of stone, as in the Ark that journeyed in company with Israel throughout the desert, but an Ark, whose architect and inhabitant, pilot and merchant, companion of the way and leader, was the creator of all creatures, all which he bears in himself, but by all is not contained.

Arise, O Lord, into your rest, for your rest, he says, is the Virgin, whose womb is your rest, for to you it is made both a bed and a dwelling. You and the Ark of Your Holiness, for you arose from there, and you [00:48:00] ornamented the Ark of Your Holiness there. And this Ark rose with awe from the fall, in which the family of Eve established her.

And for Psalm 45, Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people. And the house of your father and the king will desire your beauty, for he is your Lord, and you will worship him. And both of these are used even up to the present day in Marian Feast of the Dormition.

So, to kind of sum it up, God can do more than we ask or think. And he did so in Mary's case. Grace without the limit of sin dwelt in her. And her response to God was a total return of herself to God and a total consecration to Christ's mission to be perfect as the Father is perfect. She is a model to us to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to do [00:49:00] as Jesus tells us.

She shares spiritually in the Holy Spirit's mission of binding Christ to the human race and especially to his members, as an earthly mother binds her human family together. We can share God's love in Christ that we have received to the people in our lives. She shares in Christ's mission to save us as a mother sacrifices herself for her children.

We can pray and have a concern for the lost. Mary is in the center of us because she is in the center of Christ, clothed in his glory and grace from the beginning. We can radiate God's love as examples pointing the way to Christ so that he'll be the center of our lives and the center of others’ lives.

She protects us with God's power as she has been protected by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in the wings of the eagle. We can be a refuge for those [00:50:00] bombarded by the evil one, the emptiness of sin, and the troubles of the world by our prayer and our counsel and our example. The inanimate Ark becomes the living dwelling of God in Mary

and Christ's members over time, bearers of the Divine Presence. The inanimate Temple becomes living in Christ, where, where Christ rested. And like Solomon's Temple, she is a place of refuge and intercession for the nations. As we advance in grace, we are headed to our permanent dwelling with God, and will be with her

who has reached that place. And I thank you for being able to present this. And I pray that Lord will encourage you to continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to do everything that he tells you.

**Michele Foley:** Thank you, Stuart, for this beautiful and very interesting, as well as [00:51:00] theologically inspiring, and you've done so much research.

I really admire that, and I'm sure that our listeners do, too. Whether you are in your car, at work, at home, whether you're working outside or inside, we thank you for your attention and for joining us every week, or even if this is your first time joining us for All Things Marian on your Catholic radio station, Radio Maria, that goes to 75 countries around the world, 24 hours a day.

We are open for you. God bless you all. Thank you, Stuart, for this beautiful, beautiful presentation. We will see you next week on Thursday, one o'clock central. Thank you. This is Michele Foley for the International Marian Research Institute. Thank you. [00:52:00]

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