

Your Ark? Are you using it to the fullest?
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What items would you include in an ark if you were building one today?

Before giving an answer to that, we need to consider history since it shows that you must use 'wisdom' to discover the outcome you are aiming for. In the Scriptures there are three distinct arks, although they in fact belong to two entirely different types.

Are we talking about a **boat**, or are we talking about a **box**?

Think about it. We have Noah's Ark and the Ark of Moses. Those were boats. Their goal was rescue and survival through a storm. Noah's ark was a massive wooden vessel built strong enough to endure an extended period of global peril; it was to preserve all living creatures on the face of the world. Moses' ark was a tiny papyrus basket daubed with slime and pitch; it was only meant to endure long enough for its immediate, short-term purpose of carrying an infant down the Nile safely.

Then there's the Ark of the Covenant. That was a box. Its goal wasn't to float through a storm; its goal was sacred preservation. It was a chest made of acacia wood, roughly three-and-a-half feet long, completely overlaid inside and out with pure gold, and topped with a solid gold lid called the mercy seat.

In the box there were three holy objects: the stone tablets of the Commandments, a golden jar of manna from the desert, and Aaron's rod which miraculously put out buds and produced almonds.

The term used in Hebrew for ark is one that means "a box-like container". But this is where the idea of wisdom enters the picture. The thing which is "wise" to place in an ark changes entirely according to your objective. Whether wisdom is right or wrong depends on the result you are trying to achieve.

If you want to survive a flood, it is silly to pack gold and stone tablets—what you need instead is a boat, wood, and living animals. But if your aim is to preserve a divine covenant for generations, it is impossible to put two of each animal into a small golden box. In this case, size does not matter; the ark is only limited by its purpose.

When you start to pack, you should notice something important regarding what was packed, or more accurately what was not packed. In every instance, no one attempted to pack a visual or historical record or a human diary of the past, not even a Volume of Sacred Law. It is true that the Ark of the Covenant contained the Commandments, but why wasn't there anything else? Because the Creator's word is not a dead artifact; it is living, and it does not need to be historically preserved since it is always present, and the Great Architect can always give fresh inspiration through nature.

So, what does that mean for us today? It means we don't build arks to save what is already dead or the past. We build arks to preserve what needs to live on, or what needs deliverance from judgment.

Now, look closer at how these arks were actually built. None of them were designed to last forever on this earth. Even when gold, silver, or brass could have been used as the solid foundation, God commanded them to be built out of wood. Wood rots. Wood burns. Wood is a product of the earth—temporary and fleeting.

But when it came to the Ark of the Covenant, it wasn't just any wood. It was built from acacia wood.

As Masons, when we hear the word acacia, our minds immediately go to the Blue Lodge. We know the spring of acacia as our great symbol of innocence, resurrection, and the immortality of the soul. It reminds us that while the corruptible, earthly body is temporary and will return to dust, there is a spiritual part of man that bears an eternal youth.

Think about the genius of the Great Architect's blueprint. He took acacia—a wood that grows out of the dry, harsh desert soil—and had it overlaid with pure gold. He took something temporary, something born of the earth, and clothed it in the divine, incorruptible glory of gold.

The box itself eventually disappeared from history. It wasn't meant to last forever. But the wisdom, the law, and the spiritual truth it carried inside? That is what is immortal.

If a symbolic, "modern ark" were built today, **what would you put in it, and what is your reason why?** Using wisdom, what is your goal? Reflecting more personally, consider these examples: What virtues or practical things would you preserve for the future?

- Is the **boat** that you are constructing intended to endure an apocalyptic storm, with the aim of preserving humanity's biological heritage, its tools, and its ability to survive?
- Or are you going to make a **box**—a sacred time capsule designed to contain the very best of our culture, our values, and all that we know at the moment?

It is only through wisdom that it can be decided and known what is best for you and best for the task. Wisdom moves beyond what is technically an option and points to what is inspired by the Creator.

Again, looking at the pillars, there are three - WISDOM, STRENGTH, AND BEAUTY; there is no pillar for Intelligence/Knowledge.

In the biblical account, when God offered to grant King Solomon whatever he desired, Solomon humbly asked for a discerning mind and wisdom to govern his people rather than wealth, long life, or the strength to defeat his enemies. God was so pleased with this selfless request that He granted him unparalleled wisdom, alongside immense riches, honor, and a long life.

If intelligence and knowledge are seen as the accumulation of facts and theories, then wisdom is the strength of mind that enables one to apply that knowledge effectively; it is the ability to know how to act, when to remain silent, and how to treat others fairly. Wisdom therefore consists in the strength of mind needed to apply knowledge to one's own benefit and that of the community.

For anyone who has played a ‘role-playing’ style game, you are familiar with the fact that it takes multiple parts that make up the character, i.e., Intelligence, Strength, Wisdom, Charisma, Dexterity, etc. Reviewing those “games,” Wisdom is always the key stat for the player types most closely linked to “a deity” (priest classes), and as Masons, we too strive to be closer to the Supreme Architect, so Wisdom is key for us as well.

Without question, knowledge and wisdom are important elements to pursue and develop. Knowledge gives us access to useful information. Wisdom tells us how to make sense of it; knowing we can do something is not the same as knowing what we SHOULD DO.

Back to the question of the arks: If I asked 100 brothers, we would have a mix of builders making boats for the storm and keepers preserving sacred boxes for the future. And as we’ve seen, the wisdom behind what we chose wasn’t about the size of the container—it was dictated entirely by the ultimate goal.

The arks of scripture were made of temporary materials. Noah’s vessel eventually rotted on a mountaintop. Moses’ basket disintegrated in the Nile. Even the Ark of the Covenant, built of the finest acacia and covered in pure gold, was lost to history. Physical containers never lasted.

And that is because the Great Architect never intended for a wooden vessel or a gold box to be the permanent home of His truth. **You are the ark.**

Think about it. We hold inside ourselves a temporary, earthly body—fleshy, fragile, and bound to return to the dust. Like acacia wood growing from desert soil, our physical lives are impermanent. Yet, as Masons, we are taught to overlay that temporary frame with something divine and incorruptible. We clothe our actions in honor, our minds in truth, and our hearts in brotherly love.

Inside you, in the most secret parts of your character, what are you preserving? Are you hoarding the dead artifacts of past regrets and historical complaints? Or are you carrying the living word, the providential manna of gratitude, and a spirit that—like Aaron's rod—can bud, blossom, and bring life even through the darkest seasons?

The Challenge

Each day we enter a world which is going through its own sort of storm. Society is in need of wisdom, of virtue, and of men who have integrity. It is not necessary to construct a modern ark from steel, glass, or digital drives. Simply consider your own life, determine your purpose, and protect what is sacred within you.

Make sure your vessel remains strong, guard the immortal truth in your heart, and keep in mind that the wisdom you carry will determine the legacy you leave behind.