

*The Ark of the Covenant
Will it Ever
Be Found?*



Bible Study Series
By
Victor A. Tawadros
www.oasisoflivingwater.com

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Historical Background:

The word ark in Hebrew is “**aron**” which is a common name for a chest or coffer. It was so named (Num. 10:33; Deut. 31:26; and Heb. 9:4) because as we shall see later in its description that it was as a safety deposit box where the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written were kept. It was also called the Ark of Testimony (Ex. 25:16) because the Commandments were God’s testimony. And lastly it was called the Ark of God (1st Sam. 3:3; 4:11) as being the throne of the Divine presence as we shall also see later.

Description:

The Ark was the only piece of furniture in the most inner part of the temple which was called “**The Holy of Holies**”. That was because it was the dwelling of God amidst the children of Israel; and no body can enter it except the high priest who can enter once a year with the blood of a sacrifice on behalf of himself and of the people.

The Ark was made of acacia wood 2 ½ cubits long (the cubit is 18 inches), 1 ½ cubits broad and 1 ½ cubits high. It was plated inside and out with pure gold. Running around each side was a gold border extending above the top of the Ark, so as to keep the lid from moving. This lid was called “**The Mercy Seat**” (Ex. 25:20 – 22), and it was the same size as the Ark itself, made also of acacia wood and covered with gold.

The Ark was transported by means of two gold-covered poles run through two gold rings on each side from which they were not to be removed (Ex. 25:15), unless it might be necessary to remove them in order to cover the Ark when the Tabernacle was moved (Num. 4:6).

On top of the lid (the mercy seat) were placed two “**Cherubim**” one on each side in the shape of two angels made of beaten gold standing facing each other, looking down upon the Mercy Seat with their wings forward in a brooding attitude (Ex. 25:20 & Deut. 32:11).

The golden censer with which the high priest once a year entered the Holy of Holies was also set upon this lid (Mercy Seat).

Between the two cherubim was the “**Shekinah**” (residence), the cloud in which Jehovah appeared above the Mercy Seat (Ex. 25:22 & Lev. 16:2). It was not the cloud of incense (Ex. 16:13), but the manifest appearance of the Divine glory.

Contents:

The Ark contained few items:

- 1) The two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments as mentioned above.
- 2) A golden jar of manna (Ex. 16:33, 34).
- 3) Aaron’s rod which budded (Num. 17:10 & Heb.9:4).

Where is it now?

No body knows.

As a symbol of the Lord’s presence, it was carried by the priests in advance of the host (Num. 10:33; Deut. 1:33 & Ps. 132:8). So the children of Israel carried it with them wherever they went or settled. However it remained in Shiloh until the time of Eli, when it was carried along with the army, in the hope that it would secure victory over the Philistines who conquered the Israelites and captured the Ark (1st Sam. 4:3 – 11). But they gladly returned it after seven months, for they encountered some grave losses which they thought because of keeping the Ark amidst them (1st Sam. 5:7). From then onward, the Ark was kept in Kiriath-jearim (1st Sam. 7:2) until the time of David. Its removal to Jerusalem was delayed three months by the death of Uzzah while carelessly handling it.. There it rested in the house of Obed-edom from where it was taken with great celebration to Mount Zion (2nd Sam. 6:1 – 19).

And when building the temple by King Solomon was completed, the Ark was put in the sanctuary (1st kings 8:6 – 9). Later the Levites were directed to keep it in the Holy of Holies (2nd Chron. 35:3), and it remained there till the temple was destroyed by the Babbalonians. From that time on, no body knows whether it was destroyed or lost

There is a tale common in between the Jews that King Jeroboam hid it in a secret place which was unknown to any one, in an attempt to destroy worshipping the true God when he also forbade the yearly pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem and set up two golden calves for the people to worship. Then in the twentieth century precisely in the 1930, Haile Selassie came into power and declared himself the Emperor of Ethiopia, proclaiming that he is the 11th descendant of King Solomon and gave himself the name of the defender of the star of David which he also took as his nation’s symbol. He then claimed that the Ark of Covenant is in his possession and that he kept it safe and secure in a secret place some where in his empire which no body knows second to himself. Time passed and he was betrayed by his own son and assassinated. His son did not reign and was also killed and the country went into chaos and fell in the hands of the radical communists and Muslims.

So he went, and the secret place of the Ark of Covenant went with him.

And that is the end of the Ark of the Covenant.

But the question of this article is not yet answered: “**Will it ever be found?**”

And the answer is:

- 1) To the Jews, they are- and will be- trying hard to find it. It is their **“Security blanket”**. Without it they feel that God is not amidst them especially in the present time when the universal thought and awareness is increasing that they are no longer the chosen people of God. This goes hand in hand with the thought of rebuilding the temple, because one cannot exist without the other.
- 2) As for the Christians, Christ’s message changed the whole situation. We are no longer looking for a God who lives in hand made buildings (Acts 7:48 & 17:24) because we are taught that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in us, whom we have from God (1st Cor. 6:19). We do not need a tabernacle or an ark to see His Shekinah because it is manifested in our hearts; we feel it and touch it in every beat.
And to any Christian who thinks or feels that the Ark should be found, I say please read the Bible.