

Query #52 May 2019
The ark of the covenant

Query:

What is the ark of the covenant mentioned in the Bible and where is it now?

Response:

Here is the story of the ark.

Exodus 25:

[God the Saviour said]⁸ And let [allow] them make Me a sanctuary [for they have asked for one like the Egyptians have, which is a distorted copy of My one in heaven]; that I may dwell among them [they want to keep Me in one place].

[The patriarchs had done without this for 2,500 years,
for they knew that God is everywhere!]

⁹ According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it [so that it teaches what I want].

¹⁰ And they shall make an ark [a box] of shittim wood: two cubits and a half [just under 4ft or just over 1 metre] shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half [27 inches or over half a metre] the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half [27 inches] the height thereof.

¹¹ And you shall overlay it with pure gold, within and without shall you overlay it, and shall make upon it [on its top] a crown of gold round about.

¹² And you shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. ¹³ And you shall make staves [poles] of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴ And you shall put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.

¹⁵ ***The staves shall be in the rings of the ark:
they shall not be taken from it.***

¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the testimony [the two tables of the Ten Commandments] which I shall give you . . .

²¹ And you shall put the Mercy Seat above upon the ark; and in the ark you shall put the testimony [the Ten Commandments] that I shall give you.

²²And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubims [angels beaten out of pure gold. Exodus 25:18-20. Carved wooden angels covered in beaten gold?] which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel . . .

Chapter 40:

²⁰ And he [Moses] took and put the Testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the Mercy Seat above upon the ark [as a lid]: [The Spirit ignores the fact that some strong young men actually carried it for Moses who was over 80 years old. But this was before the tabernacle had been dedicated.]

²¹ And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering [which was also used to separate the second room from the first], and covered [separated] the ark of the Testimony [from the rest of the furniture, for it was to be in a private place]; as the LORD commanded Moses. ²²*And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubims [golden angels] which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*

Leviticus 16:2

And the LORD said to Moses, Speak to Aaron your brother [the high priest], that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the Mercy Seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the Mercy Seat [and My presence is dangerous to sinners].

How could Aaron do that? Only with “clean hands and a pure heart”.

It is written,

Psalm 24:

³ Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand ***in His holy place***? ⁴ He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. ⁵ He shall receive ***the blessing*** [protection] ***from the LORD***, and [the robe of] righteousness from the God of his salvation [to be like that].

And yet we have a problem with that as one patriarch knew:

Job 9:

³⁰ If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; ³¹ yet shall You plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes [my own righteousness] shall abhor me [and this is true of all men].

So Aaron had to be *given* the righteousness of the Son of God, not because he was good like Him, but because he *needed* it! (It will require a protection like Aaron's for the 144,000.)

To get back to our subject:

In those opening verses we learn that the ark was an open box about the size of a coffee table made of wood covered inside and outside with gold plate, with a solid gold lid called the "Mercy Seat" placed on its top. Inside the box were the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God [showing that mercy overshadows ritual. Hosea 6:6. The two angel figures were depicted as wondering about that.]

Moses told a new generation at the end of the wandering:

Deuteronomy 10:

¹ At that time the LORD said to me, *Hew you two tables of stone like to the first, and come up to Me into the mount, and make you an ark of wood.* ² *And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which you broke, and you shall put them **in the ark**.*

³ And I made [caused to be made by Bezaleel and Aholiab and others. Exodus 31:1-11] an ark of shittim wood, and [then I caused to be] hewed two tables of stone like to the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand. ⁴ And He [the LORD] wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD spoke to you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly [Exodus 20]: and the LORD gave them to me. ⁵ And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me . . .

⁸ At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him, and to bless in His name, to this day . . .

Numbers 4:

⁴ This shall be the service of the sons of *Kohath* [one of three sections of the family of Levi. Numbers 3:29] in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things. ⁵ And when the camp sets forward [to follow the Cloud and move to another place], Aaron shall come, and his sons [the priests], and they shall take down the covering veil [between the first and second rooms], and [without looking] *cover the ark of testimony* with it: ⁶ and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue [three coverings in total], and shall put in the staves thereof

[sometimes they had been taken out!] . . . [It was covered to protect those with sinful bodies from being killed by its “aura”.]

We also learn that it had shallow cupboards on its sides, and that its pattern was shown to Moses as were all the other pieces of furniture.

Deuteronomy 35:

[And it came about]²⁵ That Moses commanded the Levites [at the end of the 40 years of wandering], which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD [on their shoulders], saying,²⁶ *Take this book of the law* [Moses’ writings, called the Torah], *and put it **in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.***²⁷ *For I know your rebellion, and your stiff neck* [pride]: *behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, you have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?* [They made copies to use.]

Only the high priest could safely go into that room on one day a year so when he put the things in the sides of the ark he must have had special permission, for there was also a pot of manna (Exodus 16:33-34), and Aaron’s rod which budded (Numbers 17:10). What distinguishes this piece of furniture from all the others was that it was placed on its own in the second room of the tabernacle and was used by God the Saviour as a throne when He came to talk with Moses and the people.

Numbers 7:

⁸⁹ And when Moses was gone into the [first room of the] tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of One speaking to him from off the Mercy Seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spoke to Him [over the curtain. Today we have “a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh . . .” [and can speak directly to Him] Hebrews 10:20].

The ark had two rings on each side at the corners which contained two poles long enough to fit on four men’s shoulders as they carried it and these were not to be removed at any time, for they were meant to demonstrate its portability. But it was heavy and required many porters for any lengthy journeys.

This is what the priest Ezekiel saw about 1,000 years later:

First, the aura of light and power:-

Ezekiel 1:

⁴ And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself [turning every way as flames do], and a

brightness was about [in] it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. [There was a central core of light covering a special vision inside it.] ⁵ Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man [in their bodies]. ⁶ And every one had four faces, and every one had **four** wings [for they were obviously representations of angels]. . . .

¹⁴ And the [four] living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning [for they were cherubim, having four wings of speed]. ¹⁵ Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold [each one had] **one wheel upon the earth** [representing humans] by the living creatures, [each creature] with his four faces.

¹⁶ The appearance of **the wheels** and their work [design] was like to the colour of a beryl [green, like an emerald]: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel [it was like looking inside an old clock]. ¹⁷ When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. [They stayed in their places while they rotated.] ¹⁸ As for their rings [rims], they were so high that they were dreadful [awesome]; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

[This is a very difficult object for humans to comprehend, but it represents humanity under the control of God through His angels. Consider Revelation 7:1. Human affairs look complicated, but are all working together for one goal which God is master-minding.]

¹⁹ And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by [with] them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. ²⁰ Whithersoever [God] the Spirit was to go, they went [for] thither was their spirit [desire] to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against [with] them: for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels [also].

²¹ When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against [with] them: for the Spirit of the living creature was [also] in the wheels. [This represents angels and Christian humans co-operating under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.]

²² And the likeness of the firmament [the air space] upon [above] the heads of the living creature [it is spoken of as one unit] was as the colour of the terrible [bright sparkling] crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

²³ And under the firmament were their wings straight [like an aeroplane], the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies [like a bird].

[Ordinary angels have two wings while seraphim have six, denoting greater speed. Isaiah 6:2.]

²⁴ And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host [rushing through the air]. When they stood, they let down their wings [and came to rest].

²⁵ And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings [had become quiet]. ²⁶ And above [in] the firmament that was over their heads was ***the likeness of a throne*** [the ark with its lid], as the appearance of a sapphire stone [the blue of mercy]: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a Man above upon it.

²⁷ And I saw as the colour of amber [yellow-orange], as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward [His torso], and from the appearance of His loins even downward [His legs], I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had [extra] brightness round about [where His body was].

²⁸ As the appearance of the [rain] bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about [where His head was. Revelation 10:1.] ***This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.*** And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of One that spoke.

Chapter 2:

¹ And He said to me, ***Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak to you.*** ² And the Spirit entered into me when He spoke to me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard Him that spoke to me.] [Read on in Ezekiel to hear what He said.]

There were two cherubim or special angels standing or kneeling (it is not clear which, maybe it was both on different occasions) on the lid of the ark and the bright Light or Cloud which showed the presence of the LORD stood or sat between them. Later, we will find that this whole apparition sometimes moved to the front door of the tabernacle to talk face to face with Moses [His friend. Exodus 33:9-11. Just as it came to Abram in the form of three humans. Genesis 18:1-2.]

It was such a “holy” (dangerous) piece of furniture because of the immediate or lingering Presence that no one was to enter the second room except one person. That was to be high priest and he would enter several times on one day in the year under *special* protection, for the Son of God would physically be there.

The ark, and therefore the sanctuary tent, was to travel to many places in Israel during and after the conquest, but for the initial attacks it remained at Gilgal.

Joshua 18:

¹ And [after Ephraim and Manasseh had been settled outside of Israel in Gilead] the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them. [It remained there through the period of the Judges until the Philistines captured it. After its recovery it was moved to a place called Nob.]

{Patriarchs and Prophets 514.4}

The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli's house [family], it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined. The ark was never returned to the tabernacle here, the sanctuary service was finally transferred to the temple at Jerusalem, and Shiloh fell into insignificance. There are only ruins to mark the spot where it once stood. Long afterward its fate was made use of as a warning to Jerusalem. “Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh,” the Lord declared by the prophet Jeremiah [in Jerusalem about 600BC], “where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel. . . Therefore will I do unto *this* house, which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.” Jeremiah 7:12-14. {PP 514.4}

{Prophets and Kings 416.1-2} [Published 1917]

The sin of Eli had consisted in passing lightly over the iniquity of his sons *in sacred office*, and over the evils prevailing throughout the land. His neglect to correct these evils had brought upon Israel a fearful calamity [for their behaviour inspired others]. His sons had fallen in battle, Eli himself had lost his life, the ark of God had been taken from the land of Israel, thirty thousand of the people had been slain -- and all because sin had been allowed to flourish unrebuked and unchecked. Israel had vainly thought that, notwithstanding their sinful practices, the presence of the ark [without the Person] would ensure them victory over the Philistines.

In like manner, during the days of Jeremiah, the inhabitants of Judah were prone to believe that a strict observance of the divinely appointed services

of the temple would preserve them from a just punishment for their wicked course [but cause produces effect].

What a lesson is this to men holding positions of responsibility today in the church of God! What a solemn warning to deal faithfully with wrongs that bring dishonor to the cause of truth! Let none who claim to be the depositaries of God's law flatter themselves that the regard they may outwardly show toward the commandments will preserve them from the exercise of divine justice. Let none refuse to be reprov'd for evil, nor charge the servants of God with being too zealous in endeavoring to cleanse the [corporate] camp from [public] evil-doing. A sin-hating God calls upon those who claim to keep His law to depart from *all* iniquity.

A neglect to repent and to render willing obedience will bring upon men and women today as serious consequences as came upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which the judgments of Jehovah [He who keeps His word] can no longer be delayed. [This is set by the number of the rejecters in the church as well as the world.] The desolation of Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah is a solemn warning to modern Israel, that the counsels and admonitions given them *through chosen instrumentalities* [such as Waggoner and Jones] cannot be disregarded with impunity. {PK 416.2}

During the reign of king Saul the tabernacle was temporarily established at Nob, then it appears that it was moved on to Gibeon [maybe a different area in the same place?] and the Gibeonites became the unpaid workers in it [a blessing in disguise for many were thus converted to His worship].

Joshua 9:

¹⁸ And the children of Israel smote them [the people of Gibeon] not, because the princes [leaders] of the congregation had sworn [peace] unto them by [in the name of] the LORD God of Israel [He who keeps His word]. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. ¹⁹ But all the princes said unto all the congregation, *We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.* ²⁰ *This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.* [It was obtained by trickery, but Christians do not change their word because of the actions of others.] ²¹ And the princes said to them, *Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water to all the congregation;* as the princes had promised them.

²² And Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, *Wherefore have you beguiled [lied to] us, saying, We are very far from you; when you dwell among us?* ²³ *Now therefore you are cursed, and there shall none of*

you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. ²⁴ And they answered Joshua, and said, *Because it was certainly told your servants, how that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.* ²⁵ And now, behold, *we are in your hand: as it seems good and right to you to do to us, do.*

²⁶ And so did he to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. ²⁷ And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even to this day, in the place which He should choose [which eventually was a place named Kirjath-jearim in Gibeon].

About 500 years after Joshua:

1 Samuel 21:

¹ Then came David to Nob [probably what Kirjath-jearim was called at that time] to Ahimelech the [high] priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said to him, *Why are you alone* [except for your personal guard], *and no [king's] man with you?* ² And David said to Ahimelech the priest, *The king has commanded me a business, and has said to me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send you, and what I have commanded you: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.* ³ Now therefore *what is under your hand? give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or what there is present.*

⁴ And the priest answered David, and said, *There is no common bread under my hand, but there is [old] hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women* [for the sanctuary attendants were very poor, not being looked after by the people]. ⁵ And David answered the priest, and said to him, *Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread [of life] is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.*

⁶ So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the [discarded] showbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. [So they ate the shewbread based on a lie!]

And a few years later when David was king:-

2 Chronicles 1:

⁴ But the ark of God had David brought up [had tried to bring up] from Kirjathjearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched **a tent** [the tabernacle] for it at Jerusalem. [The ark and the tent were often separated, meaning that the form of worship was there but not the Person.]

But there was a problem when they tried that:

1 Chronicles 13:

² And David said to all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good to you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad to our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves to us: ³ And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul [it (He) had been greatly neglected].

⁴ And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was [or seemed] right in the eyes of all the people [but they were mainly using their own judgment]. ⁵ So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even to the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim [without asking God **how** to do it].

How did it get there?

[1 Samuel 7:1-2

And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD [after the Philistines had returned it. 1 Samuel 6] and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified [set aside] Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; **for it was twenty years**: and all the house of Israel lamented [pined] after the LORD, when He was always trying to be spiritually present with them. Revelation 3:20.]

⁶ And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwells between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.

⁷ And they carried the ark of God **in a new cart** out of the house of Abinadab [after twenty years of exile]: and Uzza and Ahio [two young priests] drove **the cart**. [It was not carried on men's shoulders and therefore God was not with it.] ⁸ And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. ⁹ And when they came to the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark [he was walking beside it]; for the oxen stumbled. ¹⁰ And the anger of the LORD

was kindled against Uzza [he did not have the protection the high priest had], and he smote him [or so everyone thought], because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

¹¹ *And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza* [or so he thought]: *wherefore that place is called Perezuzza to this day.*

¹² *And David was afraid of God that day*, saying, *How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?* [A good question!] ¹³ So David brought not the ark home *to himself* to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite [while he asked the LORD where they had gone wrong].

¹⁴ And the ark of God remained with the family of Obedom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed [was able to bless] the house of Obedom, and all that he had [for he was a faithful one] . . .

2 Samuel 6:

¹⁰ So David would not remove the ark of the LORD to him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obedom the Gittite.

¹¹ And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obedom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obedom, and all his household [with many blessings in a short time]. ¹² And it was told king David, saying, The LORD has blessed the house of Obedom, and all that pertains to him, because of the ark of God. [Actually, because they walked in harmony together.]

So David [when he had learned how to from the LORD] went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obedom into the city of David with gladness. ¹³ And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings [which God had not asked for!]. ¹⁴ And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod [like a priest, which God had also not asked for, but He accepts such offerings in good faith if they do not contradict His safety instructions. But the dancing upset David's wife and later caused him family problems. 2 Samuel 6:16-23].

¹⁵ So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet [a loud cry].

1 Chronicles 15:

¹ And David [had] made him houses in the city of David [a suburb of Jerusalem], and [also] prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it *a tent*. ² Then David said, [I have learned from the scriptures that] none ought

to carry the ark of God but the Levites [for they have the protection]: for them has the LORD chosen [been able to empower] to carry the ark of God, and to minister to Him for ever.

³ And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to his place, which he had prepared for it. ⁴ And David assembled the children of Aaron [the priests], and the Levites [the workers]. ⁵ Of the sons of ***Kohath***; Uriel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twenty: ⁶ of the sons of ***Merari***; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty: ⁷ of the sons of ***Gershon***; Joel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and thirty. [These were the three main divisions of the family.]

And of the minor divisions:

⁸ Of the sons of Elizaphan; Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred: ⁹ of the sons of Hebron; Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore: ¹⁰ of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twelve.

¹¹ And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests [there were two high priests at the time! 2 Samuel 8:17], and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, ¹² and said to them, You are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify [ceremonially cleanse] yourselves, both you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it. ¹³ For because you did it not [correctly] at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, ***for that we sought him not after the due order***. [Uzzah the priest died because he did not have the necessary protection from God and had not asked for it. The LORD could not protect him without his permission for he could, and should, have known not to touch! God can only look after His own when they are obedient to His *every* word.]

¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites [ceremonially] sanctified themselves [according to the word of God and not their own ideas] to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁵ And the children of the Levites ***bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon***, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD . . .

Chapter 16:

¹ So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it [he was not spiritually capable of building a temple,

2 Samuel 7]: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God. ² And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. ³ And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine [from the peace offerings. Leviticus 7]. ⁴ And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel [he set up rosters and routines] . . .

So that is how it ended up in Jerusalem!

Then years later the ark was moved into the new temple.

1 Kings 8:

² And all the men of Israel assembled themselves to king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month [which is the end of the religious year, our September/October]. ³ And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle [tent] of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up [the hill to the newly-built temple].

⁵ And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled to him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude [and they became food for the people].

⁶ And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to his place, into the oracle of the house [the second room of Solomon's temple], to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. ⁷ For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

[Solomon had two statues of angel-size cherubims (about 15ft tall) standing on the floor as well as the cherubs which were on the ark. 1 Kings 6:23-28. He was a great believer in "bigger or greater is better" and made a larger temple, a larger sacrificial altar, ten lavers, ten candlesticks, and ten tables for the killing rituals. 2 Chronicles 4.]

⁸ And they drew out the staves [thus claiming that God was staying with them forever despite God's advice never to take them out. Exodus 25:15.], that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place [they placed them on the floor] before the oracle, and they were not seen without [in the first room]: and there they are to this day. [This is telling us that they began to believe that they were the ONLY chosen ones.]

⁹ There was nothing *in* the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

And that is where it remained until before the Babylonian attack on the city around 606BC. Since then at least twenty-one places have made claim or have a claim made for them, to possessing it.

Here is one list:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/05/The-Lost-Ark-of-the-Covenant-Still-Lost.aspx>

May 05, 2008 – by [Gary Byers MA](#)

So, what about the Lost Ark of the Covenant? Where is it today? Over the years I have collected an interesting list of theories. Here they are in a basically chronological order.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ARK OF THE COVENANT?

1. Taken to Ethiopia (Axum) by Menelik, son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (see 1 Kings 10; 2 Chronicles 9; the Ethiopian royal chronicles (Kebra Nagast – The Glory of Kings)
2. Taken to Tanis, Egypt by Pharaoh Shishak (Sheshonk-1 Kings 14)
3. Taken in battle by King Jehoash of Israel (2 Kings 14)
4. Given by King Hezekiah as tribute payment to Assyrian King Sennacherib (2 Kings 18)
5. Destroyed by King Manasseh when he desecrated the Temple (2 Kings 2;, 2 Chronicles 33)
6. During days of Manasseh, taken by Israelite priests to Elephantine Island on the Nile and eventually reached Axum, Ethiopia (see 2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33)
7. Hidden by Jeremiah on “the mountain which Moses ascended to see the heritage promised by God.” (Mt. Nebo, Mt. Sinai or Mt. Olives – 2 Maccabees 2)
8. Taken by Jeremiah to Ireland

9. Hidden by Israelite priests beneath the Temple Mount before Babylonian captivity (Mishnah Shekalim 6:1-2; Babylonian Talmud Sotah 9a; Yoma 52a-54a; Tosefta Sotah 13:1)
10. Hidden by Israelite priests beneath Golgotha [under the site of the cross] before the Babylonian captivity (Gordon's Calvary – Hebrews 9)
11. Returned to Kiriath Jearim from Jerusalem by Israelite priests before the Babylonian captivity
12. Taken by God to the Heavenly Temple, probably before the Babylonian captivity (see Revelation 11:19; Hebrews 9; also Exodus 15; 1 Chronicles 28)
13. Destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon when he plundered and destroyed the Temple (2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chronicles 36; Lamentations 1)
14. Taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36; Isaiah 39; Jeremiah 52; Lamentations 1; 2 Esdras 10; Babylonian Talmud Yoma 53b; Tosefta Sotah 13:1)
15. Hidden by priests in a cave near the Dead Sea before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (the Copper Scroll).
16. Taken to Rome and ultimately hidden in the Vatican (Josephus, Wars 7:148-149)
17. Taken to Rome by Titus, taken from Rome to Carthage by the Vandals, taken to Constantinople (Byzantium) by Beligarius, returned to Jerusalem by Justinian and hidden beneath the New ("New") Church in Jerusalem (6th century AD Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea)
18. Hidden at an undetermined time in a fully reconstructed Temple buried in the Hinnom Valley (the Ezekiel Tablets)
19. Swallowed by the earth (2 Baruch 6)
20. Transported to Yemen and incorporated into the Lemba tribe's sacred ngoma [See note 1.]
21. Stored away in a US government warehouse somewhere in Washington DC (Raiders of the Lost Ark)

Where is the Ark of the Covenant today? If someone knows, they have not been forthcoming. Not only do we not know where it is, we do not even know that it

still exists. Wherever it has been for the last few millennia, the Lost Ark has still not been found [for there has never been any evidence of it].

However, I personally accept #7 on the list because:

<https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/2-Maccabees-Chapter-2/>

[Why is 2 Maccabees shown with the King James Bible?](#)

1 It is also found in the records, that Jeremy [Jeremiah] the prophet [and priest of the high priest's family] commanded them that were carried away to take of the [sacred] fire, as it hath been signified [to remind them of His presence]: 2 And how that the prophet, having given them the law, charged them not to forget the commandments of the Lord, and that they should not err in their minds, when they see images of silver and gold, with their ornaments. 3 And with other such speeches exhorted he them, that the law should not depart *from their hearts*.

4 It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark [dutifully covered] to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up [Deuteronomy 32:49], and saw the heritage of God. 5 And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid *the tabernacle* [which Moses had caused to be made about 1,000 years before], and *the ark*, and *the altar of incense*, and so stopped the door.

6 And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it. 7 Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, *As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy.* 8 Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the Cloud also, as it was shewed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified.

And his saying is backed up by:

Revelation 11:

¹⁸ And the nations were angry, and Your wrath is come [they have *all* rejected Your protection], and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should give reward to Your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear [respect] Your name [character], small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth.

¹⁹ And the temple of God was opened *in heaven*, and there was seen in His temple the [original] ark of His testament [containing the Ten original Commandments]: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail [as the seventh angel *began* to sound his trumpet before the second coming]. Revelation 11:15].

And:

{Prophets and Kings 453.2}

Among the righteous still in Jerusalem, to whom had been made plain the divine purpose, were some who determined to place beyond the reach of ruthless hands the sacred ark containing the tables of stone on which had been traced the precepts of the Decalogue. This they did. With mourning and sadness they secreted the ark in a cave, where it was to be hidden from the people of Israel and Judah because of their sins, and was to be no more restored to them. *That sacred ark is yet hidden. It has never been disturbed since it was secreted.* [Why?]

[The second temple which still existed in Christ's time, never housed it!]

Conclusion:

The ark in Moses' tabernacle and Solomon's temple was an earthly picture of the original one in the heavenly temple, the literal throne of God! That one could move about freely in the universe being carried by four heavenly beings, transporting either God the Chairperson or God the Saviour in a physical picture for all the universe to see, and so this one was made portable too.

Even when it was unoccupied, the earthly ark carried with it what I must call an "aura" (like residual electricity) for want of a better word, and this was dangerous to humans, so God the Saviour had given instructions on how to handle it when He was not present. Anything different could cause death to one who knew (or should have known) the need of the protection of the LORD, but those who were ignorant of such advice could do more, as in the case of the Philistines. [1 Samuel chapters 4, 5 and 6.]

The verses in this article show us that no one other than an especially blessed priest or Levite could handle such a dangerous (holy) object, which is why it is still hidden!!

For more on this thought, see next month's query – the churches of God.

Note 1: [my emphasis and additions]
<http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/ote/v22n1/06.pdf>

102 Le Roux: Ngoma Lungundu
OTE 22/1(2009), [pages] 102-125 Ngoma Lungundu:
an African Ark of the Covenant ¹
by MAGDEL LE ROUX (UNISA)

ABSTRACT [a shortened version]

The Lemba in *Southern* Africa are a specific group with unique traditions regarding Israelite origins. Their oral traditions also contain significant information on the leading role their priestly family played on their journey from the North into the Arabian Peninsula and eventually into Africa. They blazed their trail southwards into Africa as traders, with the ngoma lungundu (“the drum which thunders”) playing a very similar role to that of the Ark of the Covenant. Striking parallels between the two traditions as well as a possible link between these two narratives are scrutinised. This study shows how the Lemba have constructed their own set of beliefs around Biblical myths in the context of marginalisation [ethnic separation] among other African communities. Their oral culture constitutes their world-view and self-understanding or identity. It incorporates the role of oral traditions, history and historiography. One could draw parallels between orality [non-written history] in early Israelite and African religions. The reciprocity between orality and inscripturation of traditions [elevating them to Scriptural value] yields valuable information regarding the possible development of traditions in the Old Testament . . .

Who wants to add (or subtract!) from these thoughts? I won't argue as I have stated, but I will publish your Scriptures so that we may review all the words of God on the subject. Some of the comments on this page are adapted from books in my library. Recognition is not always given because they are not intended as authorities, but are used because they express my understanding clearly.

Next query. To be discussed from 1st June 2019

Why has this experiment with sin dragged on for 6,000 or more years – about 300 generations. And does it have anything to do with the record of the seven churches in the Book of The Revelation?

For contact:

mail to: nonconformist@mail.com (Copy and paste if necessary)

To see the list of some of my past queries, [click here](#).

To see past queries and my responses, [click here](#).