



Where is the Ark of the Covenant Now?

The ARK OF THE COVENANT - This was the sacred chest or box kept in the tabernacle and, later, in the temple built by Solomon. (Picture – Insight Volume 1 pg 539).

Construction - Jehovah gave Moses the design for the Ark. Bezalel and others helping him followed the plans exactly, constructing the Ark from the materials contributed by the people. (Ex 25:10; 37:1)

The chest itself measured 2.5 cubits long, 1.5 cubits wide, and 1.5 cubits high (44 × 26 × 26 in.). It was made of acacia wood, a durable orange-brown-coloured wood, that still grows plentifully in the Sinai peninsula (North -Eastern Egypt). (Ex 25:11).

Then it was covered inside and out with pure gold , apparently thin gold plates . The border (or 'moulding') has been the subject of debate. The border possibly ran around the top of the ark on all four sides , and extended above the sides of the ark sufficiently to keep the cover securely in place, so that the cover could not slide, e.g., when the ark was lifted up or moved.

The cover of the Ark was made of a slab of solid gold. Mounted on this cover were two golden cherubs, one at each end of the cover facing each other, with heads bowed and wings extending upward and overspreading the Ark. These were so situated, one at each end, that they faced each other. (Ex 25:17-20).

The account does not describe their general appearance. A variety of reconstructions have been attempted by scholars and historians. However, the reasonable conclusion is that they resembled human form. Ezekiel described cherubs who appeared in a vision; their general appearance was that of men. (Ezek. 1:5; 10:9). However, it cannot positively be stated what these golden cherubs on the Ark looked like.

Long poles were made for carrying the Ark. They were made of acacia wood covered with gold and were inserted through two rings of gold on each side of the chest. These poles were never to be removed from their rings; so there was never a necessity for carriers of the Ark to touch it. There were four feet located at the corners to raise the Ark off the floor. (Ex 25:12-15; 37:3)

Contents - The Ark served as a holy archive for the safekeeping of sacred items, the principal contents being the two tablets of the testimony, or the Ten Commandments. When the tabernacle was completed a year after the Exodus, Moses took the two stone tablets of the Law and put them into the Ark. Next, Moses inserted the poles in the rings of the Ark, laid the cover on and brought it into the tent. (Ex 31:18; 40:20, 21).

But other items were added later . Heb 9:3, 4

The Ark was associated with God's presence. Jehovah promised: "*I will present myself to you there and speak with you from above the cover, from between the two cherubs that are upon the ark*" (Ex 25:22) Accordingly Moses would hear Jehovah's voice from above the cover of the ark. (Num 7:89).

Later, only the high priest actually entered the Most Holy and saw the Ark, one day a year, not to communicate with Jehovah, but in carrying out the Atonement Day ceremony. (Lev 16:2, 3)

In other ways the presence of Jehovah, as represented by the Ark, brought blessings to Israel. It was customary when Israel moved camp for the Ark with its overhead cloud to lead the way. (Num 10:33, 34). It was part of the convoy in the march around Jericho, before the city was destroyed (Josh 6).

Even the enemy Philistines recognized the presence of Jehovah when the Ark appeared on the battlefield. (**1 Sam 4:6-8**)

However, Jehovah allowed the Israelite's to lose that particular battle and the Ark was captured. (**1 Sam 4:10, 11**)

Jehovah's presence was still evident when the Philistines took the Ark to the temple in Ashdod to sit alongside the image of Dagon. That night, Dagon fell on his face. (**1 Sam 5:2, 3**)

The next night Dagon again toppled over before the Ark of Jehovah and his head and the palms of both of his hands were cut off. (**1 Sam 5:4**)

During the next seven months, as the Ark circulated among the Philistine cities, they suffered a variety of plagues until finally the Ark was returned to Israel.

However, the Ark was not a magic charm. Its presence alone did not guarantee success; Jehovah's blessings depended on the faithful obedience of those possessing the Ark. Hence, the Israelite's under the leadership of Joshua suffered defeat at Ai because of unfaithfulness, despite the presence of the Ark in their camp. (**Josh 7:1, 5, 6**)

Location - For centuries, the Ark had no permanent resting -place. After the conquest of the Promised Land (c. 1467 B.C.E.), it was moved to Shiloh, c.25 miles north of Jerusalem. (**Josh 18:1**). It remained there until captured by the Philistines , in c.1140 B.C.E, as we just discussed. Then upon its return to Israelite territory it rested at various locations.

Nearly 70 years later when David was king, he wanted to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. But the method he first used led to disaster. Instead of having it carried by the poles on the shoulders of the Levites as instructed, David let it be placed on a wagon. (**Num 4:15 , 1 Chron 13:3, 7, 9, 10**)

The bulls caused a near upset; Uzzah was struck down because he reached out to grab hold of the Ark, contrary to God's law. The Ark was finally brought to Jerusalem, properly carried by the Levites , and there it remained in a tent during the remainder of David's reign. (**1 Chron 15:2, 15, 28, 29**) After Solomon completed the temple, the Ark was moved into the Most Holy of the temple up on Mount Moriah. (**1 Kings 8:1, 4, 6**)

What Happened to the Ark of the Covenant?

The only historical reference to the Ark of the Covenant, after the time of Solomon, is at **2 Chronicles 35:3** where King Josiah, in 642 B.C.E., commanded that it be returned to the temple. How it had come to be removed is not stated. Josiah came to the throne following some apostate kings, one of whom had put an image in the house of Jehovah, and possibly one of these wicked kings removed the Ark.

Jeremiah foretold a time when the Ark of the Covenant would be no more, but that it would not be missed and Jehovah's worshipers would experience no hardship because of not having it. (**Jer 3:16, 17**)

Just when and under what circumstances the Ark of the Covenant disappeared is not known.

In 607 B.C.E. the armies of Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and they carried off its treasures. Although some historians think they did, the Babylonians evidently did not capture the Ark, for **it is not listed among the temple articles carried off**. (2Ki 25:13 -17; Ezr 1:7-11). The Ark of the Covenant had disappeared and escaped greedy, pagan hands. Also, there is no mention of its being returned and placed in Zerubbabel's rebuilt temple; neither was a replacement made for it.

The Ark is mentioned in one passage in the apocryphal book 2 Maccabees chapter 2, which contains reference to a document saying that the prophet Jeremiah, being warned by God, took the Ark and other sacred items, and buried them in a cave on Mount Nebo.

Now it is found in the records of Jeremiah how the prophet, being warned by God, commanded that the tabernacle and the ark should accompany him, till he came forth to the mountain where Moses went up, and saw the inheritance of God. And when Jeremiah arrived he found a hollow cave: and he carried inside the tabernacle, and the ark and stopped the door.

Then some of them that followed him came up to mark the place: but they could not find it. And when Jeremiah perceived it, he reproached them, saying: "The place is to remain unknown, "until God gathers his people together again and shows them his mercy".

However the books of Maccabees are part of 'The Apocrypha' and are **not considered to be reliable, inspired accounts**.

2,600 years later, though, the Ark is seen once more. (**Rev 11:19**)

Remember Revelation was given is signs. In John's vision this Ark is not in an earthly temple. It appears in the heavenly sanctuary of God, and material/ physical things do not gain entry heaven.

This Ark of the Covenant relates to the new covenant of God with men. The appearing of the Ark was an indication that Jehovah was in his holy temple and again ruling by means of a king in the royal line of David. This time, the King is Christ Jesus, and he is enthroned in heavenly Jerusalem.

So where is the Ark? Ethiopian's state that a man named Menelik, supposedly the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, brought the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church claim to hold the Ark of the Covenant in Axum, in northern Ethiopia. The Ark is supposedly kept, under guard, in a treasury near the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion.

On 25 June 2009, the patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia, Abuna Paulos, said he would confirm to the world their possession of the Ark, by unveiling it the next day.

However, the following day, the patriarch announced that he would not unveil the Ark after all, but instead just claimed that it was in the treasury.

Jehovah would not allow such a once sacred object to become a holy relic or idol, especially so for a church of people who are not true worshipers. In fact it goes against Bible principles, even for true servants, to idolize any object.

So the logical conclusion is that **Jehovah removed it**, to avoid any such incident, particularly since its purpose was now finished.