Ark*

Ark of the testimony
Exodus 26:30-34 (30) And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.
(31) And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made:
(32) And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.
(33) And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the **ark of the testimony**: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.
(34) And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.
*The Lord had given instructions; to bring into that most holy place within the vail, the **Ark of the Testimony**; in which the law of God, testifying His will, was put. The Ark was a 2½ x 1½ x 1½ cubit rectangular wooden chest, overladen with pure gold inside and out, with its lid being the Mercy Seat with the Cherubims of glory facing one another with wings outstretched. Only once per year on Yom Kippur could man enter beyond the veil. The veil separated man from the holy of holies. It was behind this veil and in the 10 cubit squared room called the holy of holies that the most sacred piece of furniture in the whole tabernacle structure was found. The lid on top of the ark was traditionally known as the Mercy Seat which was considered a separate piece of furniture but one with the ark. Concerning it's design turn to;*
Exodus 25:10-15 (10) And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the

height thereof.
(11) And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.
(12) And thou shalt 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 thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.
(14) And thou shalt 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.
Did The Ark exist? The Ark is mentioned about 203 times, name variations including The Ark, Ark of Witness, Ark of the Testimony, Ark of God, Ark of His Testament, however the Ark of the Covenant is the most common usage. With that number of references, the Ark is unlikely to be only a literary device, the Ark did exist! In the Israelite Tabernacle there was no actual throne, only the boxlike Ark with its tables of stone inside it and its cherubims on top of it -- an abiding reminder both of the invisible presence of the sovereign God and of His inescapable commands to his people. The real mystery is that after so many references, the Ark is lost and its location remains a mystery. It disappeared from the Jewish Temple sometime before or during the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem in 586 BC. In anticipation of the Ark's disappearance, and strongly suggesting that there is to be no reappearance, the prophet Jeremiah wrote: "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more" (Jeremiah 3:16).
Nothing more is said about the Ark of the Covenant in the old

testament. Therefore, even before Jesus was born, Jeremiah's prophecy revealed there would be no more need for the Ark of the Covenant in the future. God had a better covenant He would bring to pass -- the new covenant in His Son.

The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was a symbol of the Divine presence, given to the Jews as a token and pledge of God's dwelling among them, it shall no longer be necessary, and shall no longer exist; for in the days of the Messiah, to which this promise seems to relate, God's worship shall not be confined either to one place or to one people. The temple of God shall be among men, and every where God be adored through Jesus Christ. Neither shall that be done any more means; the Ark shall be no more established, nor carried from place to place, nor shall men go to visit it. However the mystery still exists. The last location in reference to the Ark of the Covenant, was when it was placed in Solomon's Temple, let's investigate;

2Chronicles 35:1-3 (1) Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.

(2) And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

(3) And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, **Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build**; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel,

This was just 35 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The Ark was in the temple by order of Josiah, but nothing is said in Hebrew scripture as to what happened to it after that. Whether it was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and taken to Babylon is not certain, because the Ark is not listed as spoils of war on any Babylonian documents. No mention of the Ark's location occurs after the

Babylonians raided the temple during the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, recovery of the lost Ark would be the greatest discovery of all time. Its discovery would also lead to significant pressure to rebuild the Temple for the third time. Premillennialists say the Temple, which was destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Romans will be rebuilt on the Temple platform in Jerusalem. I am persuaded they are considering the wrong place; turn with me to;

1Corinthians 3:16-17 (16) Know ye not that **ye are the temple of God**, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
(17) If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, **which temple ye are.**

2Corinthians 6:14-16 (14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
(15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
(16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

But what happened to the Ark of the Covenant?, perhaps the prophet Jeremiah hid the Ark of the Covenant on Mt. Nebo prior to the Babylonian invasion where it has been lost ever since. The primary reasoning for this conclusion comes from;

2 Maccabees 2:4-7 (4) It was also contained in the same writing, 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.
(5) And when Jeremias came thither he found a hollow cave: and he carried in thither the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door.
(6) Then some of them that followed him, came up to mark the

place: but they could not find it.
(7) And when Jeremias perceived it, he blamed them, saying: The place shall be unknown, till God gather together the congregation of the people, and receive them to mercy.
Nothing in the present Bible is said about the Ark in the Old Testament after the return from Babylon. The explanation in 2Maccabees was that Jeremiah hid the Ark in a cave before the Babylonian invasion, and that its location would not be revealed until God was ready for it to be found. Without the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple was an empty chamber. When the Roman General Pompey conquered Jerusalem around 63 B.C., he demanded the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. When he did, he came out saying that he could not understand what all the interest was about the sanctuary, when it was only an empty room. The Ark was so important in Israel from the time of Moses through the Judges and the First Temple era, that it seems remarkable that nothing is said of it in the Bible after the Babylonian Captivity, until the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. In Revelation, John claimed to have seen it, listen to this; And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail (Revelation 11:19). *Much speculation remains about the Ark of the Covenant, however, Biblical reasoning dictates it resides in heaven. And why not? It served its purpose and therefore having accomplished its task, apparently God removed it because of Israel's abominable adulterous sin. And even tho the holy of holies was empty during the entirety of the second temple, the veil was rent in twain at the moment Christ died, dictating His entrance into the Holy of Holies. I submit that Christ is our Ark of Safety in the last days, are you listening?;* Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal

redemption for us (Hebrews 9:12). *Satan would have you remain in sin, but do not be fooled by his falsity.*
We really are intelligent, the only one who seems to think we are not is satan and look at him, he fell because he tried to outsmart God and was cast out. Now turn with me to;
Romans 7:4-7 (4) Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.
(5) For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.
(6) But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.
(7) What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.
The law is the means of disclosing sin, not producing it. And because of the enmity which existed from the fall of man, reconciliation became necessary, thus the promise of the Messiah. Now we come to;
Noah's Ark and the Church
Genesis 6:12-18 (12) And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.
(13) And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
(14) Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.
(15) And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.
(16) A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt

thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.
(17) And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.
(18) But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.
The ark; It is not called a ship, for it was not made for sailing to distant places, but a place of protection or security emblematic of the Church of Christ in these last days. God had told Noah His purpose to destroy the wicked world by water. The same means exist now enabling believers to understand and apply the declarations and warnings of the written word concerning sin. Turn with me to;
1Peter 3:18-21 (18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
(19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
(20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
(21) The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
Noah was saved by water, so there is a sense in which water is made instrumental in our salvation. The mention of water in the case of Noah, in connection with his being saved, and by an obvious association suggested by the apostle, is the use of water in our salvation, and hence led him to make the remark about the connection of baptism with our salvation. The

water saved Noah and his family from perishing; to wit, by bearing up the ark above a sinful world. In like manner, Christ was raised up above a sinful world on His cross and believers baptized into Him are thus raised up above sin. Baptism, in the proper sense of the term, in like manner now saves us; that is, the water is that purifying by which we are saved. It is said to save us, not as a meritorious cause, but as the indispensable condition of salvation. No man can be saved without that regenerated and purified heart of which baptism is that appropriate command, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. *Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh - No outward ritual washing saves us, but that which pertains to the conscience. This important clause is thrown in to guard the statement from the abuse to which it would otherwise be liable, the supposition that baptism has of itself a purifying and saving power. To guard against this, the apostle expressly declares that he means much more than a mere outward application of water. Its conclusion is a faith that cometh by hearing the word of God, a faith that contains the procedural directives of the gospel pertaining to salvation matters, an obedient faith contingent on belief, that brings about repentance, confession that Jesus is the Son of God, and baptism into Him, of which obedience results in remission of sins and addition to His Church. He who is faithful to His baptismal covenant, taking God through Christ, by the eternal Spirit for his portion, is saved from his sins; through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and has the well-grounded hope of eternal glory. Now as the waters of the flood could not have saved Noah and his family had they not made use of the ark; in like manner without the water of baptism no man can make use of the ark of safety provided for us today, the Church that Christ built. The ark, and deliverance by it, as a type of the Church of Christ, and salvation by Him, so it was a figure of baptism.*
As the flood and ark was God's ordinance, and not man's

invention, so is baptism and the Church, it is heaven sent, and not of men. And as the ark, while it was preparing, was the scorn and derision of men, so is this ordinance of the Gospel; it was rejected with disdain by the Scribes and Pharisees, and it still is by many today. Christ gave a commission for it, and his disciples administered it: it saves not as a cause, for it has no causal influence. Christ is the only cause and author of eternal salvation; and those only, who by faith were in the ark, were saved by water, so those only, who by faith are in His Church, are saved by water; not by spirit only. Listen;
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, *so sayest Jesus* (John 3:5).
One can understand why atheists and evolutionists interpret Earth history in terms of great ages and evolution, rather than Creation and the Flood. They really have no other choice, once they have decided to reject the God of Creation and His record in the Bible. Therefore they scoff, there is no ark that one can point to and say 'this is Noah's ark.' However, 'Noah's Ark' and the 'Ark of the Covenant' were God's plan, they have fulfilled their purpose and are unavailable to the world in these latter days. What is available? Turn with me to;
Luke 1:30-33 (30) And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
(31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.
(32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
(33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; **and of his kingdom there shall be no end**.
He shall reign over His people on earth until the end of time. His is the only Kingdom that shall never have an end; Christ, the only King that shall never lay aside His royal dignity, the only King that can defend us from all our enemies, sustain us in death, and reward us in eternity. O how important, then,

to have an interest in His kingdom! Turn to;
Colossians 1:12-13 (12) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
(13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the **kingdom of his dear Son**:
The Church is the Kingdom on earth. It was inaugurated on Pentecost as Luke penned; And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). *God has determined that those who receive His gift of grace are those who obey His requirements. It begins with believing. Therefor, Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and repentance, confession, and baptism is the effect of faith. To the believing repented soul, baptism is the final act of receiving a formal, distinct, and specific absolution, or release from guilt. It is only those who have first believed the testimony of God, and by faith repented of their sins, and by faith confess Christ, and by faith are baptized into His death, that have the full and explicit testimony of God assuring them of pardon. It is hardly necessary here to remark, that as the disciples of Christ are declared to be in a pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved state, they are the only persons in such a state. If there is one here desiring a change of state from sinner to saved, we ask you, come repenting, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God and be baptized into Him for remission of your sin. Want of prayer is in order also, but not a sinners salvation prayer for it cannot take the place of;* He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. *Please come and make your request known while we gently persuade with song.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

Essays » Where is the Ark of the Covenant?
by Thomas S. McCall, Th.D. Dr. Thomas McCall
Dr. Thomas McCall, the Senior Theologian of our ministry, has written many articles for the Levitt Letter. He holds a Th.M. in Old Testament studies and a Th.D. in Semitic languages and Old Testament. He has served as Zola's co-author, mentor, pastor, and friend for nearly 30 years.
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Page Contents

- Introduction
- No Ark in Second Temple
- Needed for Tribulation Temple?
- Hidden in Temple Mount?
- Why Not Used in Second Temple?
- Attempt to Find Ark
- Interest Indication of Imminent Rapture

Introduction

The Ark of the Covenant disappeared off of the pages of history by the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Nothing in the Bible is said about the Ark in the Old Testament after the return from Babylon, but the Apocrypha states that the Ark could not be found when the Jewish people rebuilt the Temple at the time of Ezra and Zechariah. The explanation in the Apocrypha was that Jeremiah hid the Ark in a cave in Mt. Nebo before the Babylonian invasion, and that its location would not be revealed until God was ready for it to be found.

No Ark in the Second Temple

Thus, the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple was an empty chamber, without the Ark of the Covenant. When the Roman General Pompey conquered Jerusalem around 63 B.C., he demanded the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. When he did, he came out saying that he could not understand what all the interest was about the sanctuary, when it was only an empty room.
The fact that the Ark of the Covenant was not used in the Second Temple has led to the speculation of where the Ark is, or if it still exists on the earth. The Ark was so important in Israel from the time of Moses through the Judges and the First Temple era, that it

seems remarkable that nothing is said of it in the Bible after the Babylonian Captivity, until the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. In Hebrews it is described as it was in the original Tabernacle made by Moses; and in Revelation, the Ark is seen by John in heaven. In neither case is the Ark mentioned as something that remains on the earth now.

Is the Ark Needed for the Tribulation Temple?

One question that arises is, can the Temple be rebuilt if it does not contain the Ark? The Scriptures indicate that the Temple will be rebuilt and standing during the Tribulation period, and that the Tribulation Temple will be desecrated by the Antichrist. How can the worship of Yahweh be resumed as it was in ancient times if there is no Ark in the Holy of Holies? We have already seen, though, that the absence of the Ark of the Covenant did not keep the Temple from being rebuilt at the conclusion of the Babylonian Captivity.

The Second Temple stood for over 500 years without containing an Ark, and it was fully recognized as a valid house of worship for the Lord. Christ Himself declared the Temple to be His Father's House. So it would not be unthinkable to build the Tribulation Temple, even if the Ark is not discovered. If the Ark does still exist, however, and it were somehow discovered, it would certainly give rise to a strong movement in Israel and around the world to rebuild the Temple to house the Ark properly.

Is the Ark Hidden in the Temple Mount?

There persists a legend that the Ark does exist on earth, but is hidden. A recently published book by Randall Price, entitled In Search of Temple Treasures, presents the various views on what has happened to the Ark. Some of the traditions place the Ark outside of Israel, such as at Mt. Nebo, Egypt and even far-off Ethiopia. But all of these traditions have problems and seem unlikely, since there is a lack of any scriptural evidence for them.

A view that has predominated in rabbinic circles is that the Ark was hidden in a cave beneath the Temple Mount in the very heart of Israel. The theory goes that the priests hid the Ark beneath the Temple Mount, perhaps as early as during the time of King Josiah, since the coming prophesied invasion by the Babylonians was only a matter of time. By hiding the Ark and other Temple treasures, the

priests felt that the priceless sacred articles could be protected from desecration by the pagan invaders.

Why Didn't Israel Use the Ark in the Second Temple?

As it turned out, the Babylonians did invade Jerusalem. They destroyed the Temple and carried away many of the vessels and implements to their capital city a thousand miles away. No mention is made in the Scriptures of the Babylonians taking the Ark, the Menorah, or other key Temple items. If the Ark and the other implements were hidden under the Temple, why weren't they recovered and used after the Captivity? It's hard to imagine that the priests would have knowingly left the Ark out of the Holy of Holies if they could have utilized it during the 500 years of the Second Temple.

The explanation offered is that they felt that as long as Jerusalem was subject to domination by the succeeding powers of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome, the Ark and other treasures could be desecrated and captured by the Gentile armies. Thus, the sacred items would remain in seclusion until it was considered safe to bring them out to be placed in the Temple.

The Rabbinical Attempt to Find the Ark

At any rate, Rabbi Shlomo Goren and Rabbi Yehuda Getz, the rabbis in charge of the Western Wall area, are convinced that the Ark has been hidden in a cave in the Temple Mount directly under the site of the Holy of Holies, since the time of King Josiah. They probably represent the majority of Orthodox rabbis in their views. They have a concept of vertical air space, by which the space of the Holy of Holies sanctifies the ground directly below it. Thus, the ancient priests would have been careful to locate the cave repository for the Ark in the sanctified area below the Holy of Holies. The evidence for all of these suppositions about the location of the Ark, as Rabbi Getz concedes, comes more from the Talmud than the Scriptures. Nevertheless, there is a large and growing group of Orthodox Jewish adherents who believe that the Ark is in this cave below the Holy of Holies, and awaits the right time to be found. Rabbi Getz believes that in 1982 he was very close, within 40 feet, to finding the cave in which the Ark resides. He was conducting a search in an old tunnel that had been filled with the debris of centuries, which runs perpendicular to the Western Wall and under

the Temple Mount. However, when the Moslems discovered that there were diggings being conducted under the Dome of the Rock, they threatened a general riot and the diggings were stopped. The rabbi explains that, for the sake of maintaining peace with their Moslem neighbors, the Israelis had to reseal the entrance to the tunnel, and it remains blocked up to this day.

Temple Interest an Indication of the Imminent Rapture

The Scriptures are not clear as to whether the Ark of the Covenant still exists on the earth, but they are clear that the Temple will be rebuilt and standing during the Tribulation. There is no question that if the Ark were found, it would give enormous impetus to the rebuilding of the Temple to house it. Bible-believing Christians should keep a sharp eye out for any developments surrounding the Temple Mount, realizing that it is a key element leading to the Tribulation era. The closer we get to the Tribulation, the closer we are to the imminent Rapture of the Church, which, we believe the Scriptures teach, will precede the Tribulation. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.

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The Tribulation of Matthew 24 as explained in these modern times and the Rapture of the Church are contentious arguments not to be taken lightly, which I believe are false teachings due to misunderstanding. The Tribulation of Matthew 24 is documented in Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, book V and book VI. *The Tribulation is past, not future, therefore The Rapture is, was, and will continue to be nonexistent.* J.W.

Study Aids; Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible
Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
Barnes' Notes on the Bible

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