

THE TABERNACLE: FUNDING, ARK EXODUS 25:1-22

Moses is now on Mt. Sinai where he was for forty days and forty nights receiving instruction from Yahweh concerning the Tabernacle, its furnishings, the priest's garments, the procedure for the priest's consecration, the sacrifices, the priest's food, the incense, and the anointing oil. Moses was also told the identity of the men who were skilled to do the work required to construct everything revealed to Moses. The Sabbath was identified as the sign of this covenant we now call the Mosaic Covenant. At the end of providing all this revelation to Moses, God wrote the Ten Commandments on the two tablets of stone.

In order to build the Tabernacle, the appropriate materials had to be collected so it could be constructed according to God's specifications.

Exodus 25:1–7 ¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Tell the sons of Israel to raise [יָקָה] a contribution [תְּרוּמָה] for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. ³“This is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, ⁴blue, purple and scarlet *material*, fine linen, goat *hair*, ⁵rams' skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, ⁶oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁷onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

Raise, יָקָה, means to take or to get. Contribution, תְּרוּמָה, in its most basic sense simply means an offering and that is how every other English translation reads. It also means a gift and the TANAKH uses the word that way in this verse. The word refers to what is given or set aside as a special, voluntary contribution to a person, a deity, or a cause whether a whole of something or a part. The

command was for the purpose of generating the contribution of the materials that would be necessary for constructing the Tabernacle and its accoutrements.

What is interesting about this is it is the first revelation of grace giving in the Bible. Moses was not ordered to command the people to give nor was he to coerce the people to give as the result of forcible taking or command and it was not a tithe of their possessions. Nor was there a command to forcibly appropriate the offerings from other people in the area; it was the wealth of the Israelites that was to go into building their God's Tabernacle. They were to give as each man's heart moved him to give.

The offering was for the building of the Tabernacle, but it was specifically given to and for Yahweh; He said, "raise a contribution for Me" and "you shall raise My contribution." The offering was to God for the purpose of building God's house. The idea in the minds of the people should have been that while they were contributing materials to build the Tabernacle, they were doing it for God and the offerings were to Him to do with as He wanted. It wasn't simply an offering for the purpose of constructing an inanimate object; it was a voluntarily given gift to the living God for His purposes whatever they may be.

Much of the material required for the Tabernacle was procured as the result of Egypt's desire to rid themselves of the Israelites by giving them the wealth of Egypt to get them out of there.

Exodus 3:22 ²²"But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."

Exodus 11:2 ²“Speak now in the hearing of the people that each man ask from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor for articles of silver and articles of gold.”

Yahweh then specified the materials He wanted the people to donate for the construction of the Tabernacle. Moses was not the author of the blueprints for the Tabernacle and furniture; God was the Architect and He specified the materials that were to be used in the construction. Moses didn't design it and he didn't decide how it was to be built and He didn't decide the materials out of which it was to be constructed; God did all that. We do not have all the minute details of the design, but God empowered skilled craftsmen to do the work (Ex. 31:1-11) and He revealed to them or guided them in the design and construction of that which He called them to perform both in terms of the skills to build it and for the production of artistic elements to adorn it.

Exodus 31:3–4 ³“I have filled him [Bezalel] with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, ⁴to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze,

The first items the Lord required for the Tabernacle were gold, silver, and bronze. Gold is obviously the most precious of metals and much of the work on the furnishings in the Tabernacle involved its use. It represents that which man considers the most valuable of physical assets. Gold is very malleable which makes it ideal for decorative use and it can be worked to be as thin as .0001 mm. Another source said gold can be hammered into a sheet only 230 atoms thick. One ounce of gold, 28 grams, may be beaten thin enough to cover 300

square feet. In the Bible, gold was used for jewelry, idols, scepters, worship utensils, and money.

The Bible indicates major sources of gold in Havilah (Gen. 2:11), Ophir (1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chron. 8:18), and Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-2). We also know gold was found in Egypt and Asia Minor.

Silver is likewise a precious metal and in the Tabernacle, it was used in a decorative sense as well as in some construction applications. In the Bible, it also had many uses including money, articles used in the Tabernacle order of worship, idols, and jewelry. For example, silver trumpets were used to communicate with the Israelites.

Numbers 10:2 ²“Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out.

Today, we probably wouldn't consider bronze to be a precious metal, but at that time in history it was very valuable because of its usefulness and the advance in prosperity it represented for society at that time. It was a major progressive societal step to use bronze over stone, bone, and wood for tools and utensils. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin that resists corrosion. Bronze was used as a Tabernacle construction material. The Bible indicates bronze was used in many ways. Goliath's armor was made of bronze (1 Sam. 17:5-6), prisoner shackles were made of bronze, (2 Kings 25:7), musical instruments, at least cymbals, were bronze (1 Chron. 15:19), doors and gates were made of bronze (Ps.

107:16; Is. 45:2), and pagans used the alloy, as well as gold, silver, and wood, to make idols (Rev. 9:20).

All three of these metals—gold, silver, and bronze—were used in some of the artistic design elements of the Tabernacle.

The cloth materials were to be used for the various curtains used in the Tabernacle and for the priest's clothing. The skins were used as a roof over the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The oil was for lighting the Menorah in the Holy Place and spices were used for another oil used for the purpose of anointing people and objects. There was a special blend of spices that were used as incense which was not to be duplicated by anyone for any purpose other than the purpose for which God designated it.

Exodus 30:37–38 ³⁷“The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD. ³⁸“Whoever shall make *any* like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people.”

The stones were used for the priest's apparel and each tribe was represented by a particular stone worn over his breast which means all the tribes of the nation were represented before God each time the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies.

The first instructions Moses received from Yahweh concerned the construction of the Ark of the Covenant. Ark, אָרוֹן, simply means a box, a chest, or an ark. It was also used to refer to Joseph's coffin (Gen. 50:26). In this context, it refers to the box, covered in gold and topped with what would be called the

Mercy Seat upon which God's glory resided and two cherubim. Obviously, this ark is differentiated from all other boxes because of the sacred use to which it was intended. Eventually, the stone tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were engraved by God were placed in it along with a jar of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The completed book of the Law Moses penned was to be placed beside it and there is no biblical record it was ever placed inside the Ark even though the language used, beside the Ark, is no different than placing the manna and the rod before the Lord. We know from the revelation of the New Testament, the tablets, the jar, and the rod were, in fact, in the Ark; the Old Testament only refers to the tablets actually being placed inside it. Unger believes, apparently based on the similar language, the written book of the Law was placed in it as well but it is difficult to find anyone who mentions it whether they agree with him or not.¹

Deuteronomy 10:5⁵ "Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the LORD commanded me."

Deuteronomy 31:26²⁶ "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you."

Exodus 16:33–34³³ "Moses said to Aaron, 'Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations.'" ³⁴As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept.

¹ Merrill F. Unger, s.v. "Tabernacle of Israel," in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed. (Chicago, Moody Press, 1988), 1244.

Numbers 17:10 ¹⁰But the LORD said to Moses, “Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die.”

Hebrews 9:3–4 ³Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, ⁴having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant;

By the time Solomon dedicated the first Temple, the only items remaining in the Ark were the tablets. No one knows where the other items went.

1 Kings 8:9 ⁹There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

Just as the Tabernacle as a complete unit was known by several names, the Ark was also known by several names all referring to the same object. Obviously, I’ve been referring to it as the Ark of the Covenant.

Joshua 3:6 ⁶And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

The most common name seems to be “the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord” and/or “the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God.”

Numbers 10:33 ³³Thus they set out from the mount of the LORD three days’ journey, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD journeying in front of them for the three days, to seek out a resting place for them.

Joshua 3:3 ³and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

It was also simply called the Ark of God.

1 Samuel 3:3 ³and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was,

The pagan Philistines referred to it as the Ark of the God of Israel.

1 Samuel 5:7 ⁷When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god."

It was also called the holy Ark.

2 Chronicles 35:3 ³He also said to the Levites who taught all Israel *and* who were holy to the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel built; it will be a burden on *your* shoulders no longer....

The point is, all these names refer to the same thing and that is the Ark of the Covenant constructed first and placed in the original Tabernacle.

At this point in the narrative, Moses began to receive the specific instructions for the construction of the Ark of the Covenant.

Exodus 25:10 ¹⁰"They shall construct an ark of acacia [אֲרָק] wood two and a half cubits [אֲמָא] long, and one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high.

The question is, what is a cubit? The fact is the cubit was not a standard measure and no one knows exactly what the Israelites used as the length of a cubit. Various commentators have competing ideas on this issue. Some think because Moses was raised in the royal court of the Egyptians and the Hebrews built royal Egyptian buildings, they must have used the Egyptian royal cubit. Others believe they used the shorter Egyptian cubit which is very close to the same length as the common Israelite cubit.

The cubit was originally a rough measure from the tip of the middle finger to the point of the elbow which is approximately eighteen inches. Obviously, this varied from person to person, but eventually various cultures standardized it within their own society, but differences still remained between the various people groups. In Hebrew, cubit, *אמה*, means measure or cubit as a unit of measure, but the basic meaning is the forearm. In Greek, *πῆχυς*, also means forearm and it too came to represent cubit as a unit of measure; this Greek word is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *אמה*. We know the length of the cubit various cultures used because archaeologists have discovered measuring sticks in those various locations. In addition to a measurement for what would be considered to be a common cubit as a standard unit of measure, there was a measurement called a royal cubit which is a handbreadth longer. There is no mention of a royal cubit in the Old Testament, however, Deuteronomy 3:11 refers to an “ordinary” cubit in the NASB and which literally translated means “the cubit of a man” which is how the KJV and the ASV translate it. The NKJV has it “standard cubit,” the RSV translates it “common cubit,” and “standard measure” is the translation used by the HCSB and the NET Bible. If a cubit has to be identified as “common” or “standard,” then it is reasonable to conclude there is another cubit of a different measure. Also, Ezekiel refers to a cubit that was handbreadth longer than the standard Israelite cubit which may be referring to what most call the royal cubit. The text reads “a cubit and a handbreadth” (Ezek. 40:5). The resources vary among themselves; therefore, the figures below are probably close

but I wouldn't get dogmatic about claiming any certainty concerning the length of a cubit.

The Egyptian cubit was six handbreadths or palms which was about 17.6 inches in length. The royal Egyptian cubit was a palm longer making it about 20.65 inches.

The Babylonian cubit was 19.8 inches with their royal cubit being 20.65 inches.

The Israelite cubit was 17.5 inches with the royal cubit 20.4 inches both of which are very close to the Egyptian measure of a cubit.

The dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant are approximately 45 inches in length, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches deep. It was built of acacia wood. Acacia, אַצְטִימֹן, means acacia wood, an acacia tree, or shittim wood. It was a "large thorny tree with rough, gnarled bark. The orange-brown wood was hard-grained, and it repelled insects. It bore long locust-like pods with seeds inside and produced round, fragrant clusters of yellow blossoms. Many species of acacia grew in the desert of Sinai, in southern Canaan and in Egypt."²

One thing to remember as we discuss the furniture of the Tabernacle, is that no one knows exactly what these objects looked like. Various artists have quite different renderings of how they think these objects must have looked. Obviously, we have a good idea, but the specifics are not identified in the Bible and therefore much harder to accurately pin down.

² Ronald F. Youngblood, s.v. "Plants of the Bible: Acacia" in *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014), 904.

This box was to be overlaid with gold and a molding was to be set around it.

Exodus 25:11 ¹¹“You shall overlay it with pure [טָהוֹר] gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and you shall make a gold molding [זָר] around it.

The Ark was to be covered in gold sheets, inside and out, presumably somewhat thin, over the wood used to construct the box. Molding, זָר, means a circlet, molding, a crown, or a border around the edge of a central body as though pressed out from it. This was probably around all the edges of the Ark in one form or another. Most artists show an ornate border around the top of the box, but the text doesn't specify the design. The crown around the top probably served to help keep the Mercy Seat in place during transport. This gold overlay was pure gold, meaning it was not an alloy and it had been refined to remove any impurities from it. Pure, טָהוֹר, refers to something pure in the sense it has no foreign particles or impurities in it.

The Israelites were to make four rings and attach them to the Ark and two long poles to go through those rings in order to transport the Ark from place to place.

Exodus 25:12–15 ¹²“You shall cast four gold rings for it and fasten them on its four feet, and two rings shall be on one side of it and two rings on the other side of it. ¹³“You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴“You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them. ¹⁵“The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it.

This is the first mention of feet on the Ark. Some artists depict the Ark with feet on it and some depict a base upon which the Ark rests with no feet. The text

clearly reveals feet were to be attached to it and they would have kept the actual box off the ground. The four gold rings were to be fastened to the feet one on each foot which means two are one side and two are on the other side.

Two long poles of acacia wood were to be cut and they were overlaid with gold. The poles were slid through the rings and that allowed four men, one on each end of both sides, could carry the Ark on their shoulders.

This presents a couple of problems. One problem concerns the pure gold which is relatively soft. One would think the movement and resulting friction on the poles and rings would have worn the gold necessitating frequent repairs. The acacia wood was quite hard, but the gold was soft and could be easily worn off. It could be that God supernaturally kept the gold from wearing in those spots but the text never says that. However, that would not be out of the question and it certainly isn't beyond the capabilities of the Creator God to do that; the Bible tells us the shoes and the clothing of the Israelites never wore out during the Exodus.

Deuteronomy 29:5⁵"I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandal has not worn out on your foot.

It wouldn't be prudent to disregard the possibility of supernatural preservation of the Ark during its travels around the wilderness and into Canaan. We also have to remember the Ark didn't travel the whole time. It was in the Tabernacle at Kadesh-Barnea for thirty-eight years and once the land was to a great extent occupied by the Israelites, the Ark was resting in the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

The other problem I see with this situation concerns the stability of the Ark while being transported. If the Ark was carried by poles at the bottom of the Ark, which is where the text seems to indicate they were to be placed, it seems that it would have been top heavy which would have made it inherently unstable to carry. Two poles anchored at the four corners at the top of the legs would have served to increase its stability. If the poles were along the top of the Ark, the center of gravity would be lower and more in line with the center of gravities of the men carrying it and therefore more stable. Again, we cannot discount divine providence in preserving the Ark unharmed on its journeys.

The command was issued to place the poles in the rings and they were not to be removed after that. The Ark was to be wrapped and covered for transport so the Israelites could not see it. The book of Numbers indicates the poles could be removed from the Ark before wrapping it, but they were immediately put back in place in order to remove the Ark from the Holy of Holies and out of the Tabernacle for transport. Wrapping it prevented the Kohathites from seeing it and therefore being put to death and presumably, the rest of the Israelites were not to see it either. The priests wrapped and covered the furniture; the Kohathites transported it.

Numbers 4:5–6, 20 ⁵“When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it; ⁶and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over *it* a cloth of pure blue, and shall insert its poles.... ²⁰but they [the Kohathites] shall not go in to see the holy *objects* even for a moment, or they will die.”

The command was given to Moses to house the Testimony that the prophet was soon to receive.

Exodus 25:16 16“‘You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you.

The Ark was not only the place where God's glory would reside, it was the house for the stone tablets.

Constructing the Mercy Seat was next on God's list of things to do in order to properly furnish the Tabernacle.

Exodus 25:17 17“‘You shall make a mercy seat [כַּפֹּרֶת] of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide.

The Mercy Seat was to be built of pure gold and it was the exact size to fit on top of the Ark and act as its lid. This was not said to be a wooden lid covered with gold sheets; it was solid gold. This would be the place where God's glory would reside and He would, in that way and in that place, be with the Israelites. God is omnipresent and cannot be confined to one place, but He was in this Tabernacle in the Holy of Holies on the Mercy Seat of the Ark in some significant way. The molding around the top should have served as outside border to confine the Mercy Seat to its assigned place. Without that, it could easily slide off while under transport, and that would be tragic for those carrying it.

Mercy seat, כַּפֹּרֶת, means lid and propitiation and it refers to the place of atonement. In the Septuagint, ἱλαστήριον translates this word meaning place of forgiveness or atonement cover. In Romans 3:25, this word is used and translated “propitiation,” in “whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood

through faith.” Mercy Seat does not adequately convey the meaning in English; it would be more meaningful and accurate to say, “place of propitiation.” It didn’t have anything to do with mercy and it wasn’t a seat.

Cherubim, two of them, were to be constructed, and placed one at each end of the Mercy Seat facing one another. Most people understand this Scripture to be saying the Mercy Seat and the cherubim were constructed as one solid piece. However, the words, “of one piece” are not in the text. The text simply says “make the cherubim with the mercy seat” which does not sound as though it had to mean all one piece, but most of the theologians seem to think it does, in fact, mean one solid, continuous piece and perhaps that should be understood in terms of Jewish thought. On the other hand, Unger believes the cherubim were constructed and fastened to the Mercy Seat.

Exodus 25:18–20 ¹⁸“You shall make two cherubim [כְּרֻבִים] of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹“Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim ~~of one piece~~ with the mercy seat at its two ends. ²⁰“The cherubim shall have *their* wings spread upward [מַעַל], covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be *turned* toward the mercy seat.

Cherubim, כְּרֻבִים, (singular כְּרוּב) are angelic beings of some sort the representation of which varies from place to place. They seem to always be near the throne of God worshipping and serving Him which explains their presence on the Mercy Seat. They were built to face the middle of the Seat where the glory of God was present and their wings were spread out covering the lid of the Ark. The NASB translates the Hebrew word מַעַל as upward, but “above” may be a

better translation because the wings are stretched out over the top of the ark wingtip to wingtip as the representations of the angels face one another. The TANAKH reads, "The cherubim shall have their wings spread out above, shielding the cover with their wings...."

Besides the place for the Lord's glory to reside, the Ark was built to house the testimony meaning the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 25:21 ²¹"You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you.

At this time, the Ten Commandments had been verbally revealed to Moses, but the tablets had yet to be written. Once the tablets were inscribed and the Ark built, they would be housed in it.

The Lord revealed to Moses that the Mercy Seat would be the place where the two would meet and Yahweh would provide Moses with instructions and revelation for the Israelites.

Exodus 25:22 ²²"There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

This was an amazing and awesome privilege extended to Moses. He could approach the Ark and know Yahweh was there to meet with Him. No one else would ever be privileged to do that, not even Aaron. The High Priest could only come in once a year on the Day of Atonement and then only after making atonement for his own sins and the sins of his family. Leviticus 16 explains the procedure the High Priest was to follow.

Leviticus 16:2, 6 ²The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.... ⁶"Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household.

What happened to the Ark of the Covenant? It has obviously not been seen since the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple in 586 BC. It was not in the second Temple nor was it in Herod's Temple because it has not been seen since. The most likely explanation is it was either destroyed at the time the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, or it was taken to Babylon and lost to history there. There are other more fanciful explanations all of which seem to be based on the fact people think the Lord will bring the Ark into the Millennial Temple, but is that correct?

One theory is the Ark is located in a church in Azum (or Aksum), Ethiopia, at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion also known as the Chapel of the Ark. The monks assigned to guard the Ark perform this duty until they die. Every Orthodox Church in Ethiopia has a replica of the Ark. "According to the Coptic tradition, the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon had a child: Menelik I, the founder of a dynasty of Solomonic Emperors that ruled Ethiopia. He would have been in charge of moving the precious chest, made out of gold and acacia wood. In an interview with National Geographic, the temple's Deacon, Zemikael Brhane, said 'God Himself chose this land, and Aksum is our holiest city. Westerners always demand visible proof, but we Ethiopians do not need to see the Ark to know it is here: we just feel it, we know it.' No one aside from the guardian monks is allowed to enter the church. One of the few people even permitted to talk to these monks is the historian Ephrem Brhane, who has devoted himself to

guiding pilgrims, faithful and tourists from all over the globe around Aksum. He claims that 'Abba Gebre Meskel is 100% convinced it is the authentic Ark: it not only has the exact shape described in the Bible but, moreover, it shines with an enormous light.'"³

Other people believe the Ark was hidden underground below the Temple Mount waiting for the Lord to return to recover it and put it in the Millennial Temple. "The Temple was built as a place to house the Ark of the Covenant. To make provision for the Ark's safe keeping, Solomon constructed a sand-hydraulic elevator in the Most Holy Place. The emergency escape route and the stone sarcophagus in which the Ark was hidden during Nebuchadnezzar's [sic] siege were recently discovered in the elaborate tunnel system that honeycombs Mount Moriah – the Temple Mount in Jerusalem."⁴

Two apocryphal books mention the Ark but with two different results. 2 Esdras 10:19-23 laments the destruction of Israel and the theft of the Ark.

2 Esdras 10:21–22 ²¹For you see that our sanctuary has been laid waste, our altar thrown down, our temple destroyed; ²²our harp has been laid low, our song has been silenced, and our rejoicing has been ended; the light of our lampstand has been put out, the ark of our covenant has been plundered, our holy things have been polluted, and the name by which we are called has been profaned; our free men have suffered abuse, our priests have been burned to death, our Levites have gone into captivity, our virgins have been defiled, and our wives have been ravished; our righteous men have been carried off, our little ones have been cast out, our young men have been enslaved and our strong men made powerless.

³ <https://aleteia.org/2016/05/22/is-the-ark-of-the-covenant-in-ethiopia/> (accessed 25 Jan. 2018).

⁴ Michael Rood, A Rood Awakening, <https://www.aoodawakening.tv/biblical-teachings/biblical-archeology/> (accessed 24 Jan. 2018).

2 Maccabees makes the claim Jeremiah hid the Ark in a cave. It also says the prophet secreted the tent in a cave, but the Tent of Meeting had been replaced by the Temple for hundreds of years by that time. It is seriously doubtful it would have survived the ravages of time that long and there would have been no need to replace it because Solomon's Temple had replaced it.

2 Maccabees 2:5–8 ⁵And Jeremiah came and found a cave, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense, and he sealed up the entrance. ⁶Some of those who followed him came up to mark the way, but could not find it. ⁷When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: "The place shall be unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. ⁸And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated.

The Bible says otherwise; there is no need for an Ark in the future. The implication is the Ark was destroyed never to be seen again.

Jeremiah 3:16–17 ¹⁶"It shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land," declares the LORD, "they will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' And it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor will they miss *it*, nor will it be made again. ¹⁷"At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.

This Scripture is in a pericope concerning the Messianic Kingdom. The Ark, the residence of God in the Holy of Holies, will not be necessary. God Himself will be ruling from David's throne in the Temple in Jerusalem right there in their midst. The Ark will be totally unnecessary because the God-man in the flesh will be right there with them. His glory will be residing there in the person of Christ and there will be no need for His glory to reside on or above the Ark. The whole of Je-

Jerusalem will be considered "the Throne of the Lord," but more specifically His actual throne will be in the Temple. This Scripture clearly reveals to us the Ark is gone, it will not even be remembered or come to mind, it will not be missed, and it will not be replaced with a new one. There will be no need for a seat of propitiation in the form of the Mercy Seat because the true propitiation will be present of which the Mercy Seat was only a type. The Mercy Seat was sprinkled with the blood of animals that could not take away sin, but the true substitutionary sacrifice, the God-man, will be in the Temple. All the talk about finding the Sinaitic Tabernacle's Ark of the Covenant and restoring it to its place in the Millennial Temple, is contrary to the Word of God. The glory of the unseen God in Solomon's Temple will be replaced by the greater glory of the God-man personally dwelling with His people in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel was granted a vision of the glory of God filling the Millennial Temple and God revealed to the prophet that would be the place of His throne and the place where He would be located.

Ezekiel 43:7 ⁷He said to me, "Son of man, *this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die,*