

# The Tabernacle

## Where Is The Ark?

### Timeline

- **1490 B.C.** – made and placed in the Tabernacle – Exodus 40
- **1112 B.C.** – captured by the Philistines – I Samuel 4:11
- **1121 B.C.** – returned to Jews – I Samuel 5-6
- **1046 B.C.** – brought by David to Jerusalem – II Chronicles 1:4
- **1104 B.C.** – placed in Solomon’s Temple – I Kings 8:6-9
- **971 B.C.** – Shishak king of Egypt invades and took away Temple treasures (I Kings 14:26, II Chronicles 12:9), but no mention of the Ark.
  - Possibly it is spared or hidden away.
- **701 B.C.** – seems to be in the Temple as Hezekiah prayed (II Kings 19:15)
- **623 B.C.** – returned to Solomon’s Temple by Josiah (II Chronicles 35:3)
- **586 B.C.** – Babylon sacks Jerusalem and carry off Temple treasures (II Kings 25:13-17, II Chronicles 36:18, Jeremiah 52:17-23), but no mention of the Ark.
- **538 B.C.** – Cyrus the Great returns the Temple treasures to the Jews (Ezra 1:7-11), but no mention of the Ark.
- **517 B.C.** – The Second, or Zerubbabel’s Temple completed, but no mention of the Ark. It is universally believed that it never was in this Temple.
  - 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia: “According to Josephus, this contained nothing; but, according to the Mishnah (Mid. iii. 6), the "stone of foundation" stood where the Ark used to be, and the high priest put his censer on it on the Day of Atonement. According to the Babylonian Talmud (Yoma 22b), the Second Temple lacked five things which had been in Solomon's Temple, namely, the Ark, the sacred fire, the Shekinah, the Holy Spirit, and the Urim and Thummim.”
- **63 B.C.** – Roman general Pompey the Great captures Jerusalem and enters the Temple, but no mention of the Ark.
  - “There were in that temple the golden table, the holy candlestick, and the pouring vessels, and a great quantity of spices; and besides these there were among the treasures two thousand talents of sacred money...” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book XIV, chapter 4)
  - “Cneius Pompeius was the first of our countrymen to subdue the Jews. Availing himself of the right of conquest, he entered the temple. Thus it became commonly known that the place stood empty with no similitude of gods within, and that the shrine had nothing to reveal.” (Tacitus, *History*, book V, chapter 9)
- **A.D. 70** – Roman armies under Titus destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. There is no mention of the Ark as being spoiled are spared.
  - The Arch of Titus in Rome does depict a *menorah* and possibly the Table of Shewbread being carried away as spoils.

## Theories

- Revelation 11:19 shows an Ark in Heaven, but it is unclear if it is the one made by Moses and Bezaleel or the one it was patterned on (Exodus 25:9).
- Many today believe it was hidden at the time of the Babylonian invasion in a secret chamber below the Temple mount.
- The apocryphal Book of II Maccabees 2:4-5 (written about 100 B.C.) says that Jeremiah had it hidden at Mt. Nebo before the Babylonian captivity:
  - “It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door.”
- A few believe it never came back from Babylon.
  - Ya’akov Meshorer, former Chief Curator at the Israel Museum: “...The Babylonians had taken it when they destroyed the First Temple, and it was not returned together with the other utensils at the time of the Return to Zion...” (*Treasury of Jewish Coins*, p. 56)
- A few think the “Copper Scroll” found among the Dead Sea Scrolls may point to its hiding place, though it makes no direct mention of the Ark.
- Some conspiracy-minded folks say it was found or taken by the Knights Templar or the Catholic church and is hidden away by them.
- A few believe it was taken to Egypt and Africa, possibly now residing in Ethiopia.
- A few, including Ron Wyatt, believe it is under Mt. Calvary and that Jesus’ blood leaked through the rocks and sprinkled the Mercy Seat.

## Will It Return?

- In the Tribulation?
  - Scripture is clear that there will be a Temple during the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, II Thessalonians 2:4), but there is no mention of the Ark.
  - A common theory is that the Antichrist will broker a peace treaty between the Jews and Muslims that will allow for the Temple to be rebuilt. Perhaps the finding of the Ark will precipitate that?
- In the Millennial Kingdom?
  - A Jewish book titled *Massekhet Kelim* (“*Treatise of the Vessels*”), printed originally in 1648 but thought to be ancient, says that the Ark “shall not be revealed until the day of the coming of the Messiah son of David.”
  - Jeremiah 3:16 states when Israel will forget the Ark during this time.
  - In Ezekiel’s description of the Millennial Temple, the Most Holy Place is measured but there is no mention of the Ark – Ezekiel 41:4

I think the safest assumption is that God’s work with the Ark is finished, its antitype of Christ fulfilled and completed its work as a type, so it is lost never found again.