

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXXVI

April 26, 2026

No. 17

Superseding the Ark of the Covenant

(by: Jerry Fite)

Mystery over the ark of the covenant has been couched in legend for centuries. One tradition has King Josiah hiding it in a most secret place prepared by Solomon in case the house of Jehovah would ever be set on fire. One legend has Jeremiah placing it in a hollow cave at mount Pisgah when Jerusalem was ransacked in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians.

According to some Ethiopians, the ark of the covenant has been protected for many years. Their legend tells of King Menelik, supposedly the offspring of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, bringing the ark of the covenant back to Tana Kirkos in Ethiopia following his visit with Solomon in Jerusalem. Solomon is supposed to have sent it back with King Menelik for protection. Now, the ark is said to be hidden northwest of Laka Tana in a small chapel in Aksum. Through the years it has been guarded by individual virgin monks. Upon the death of one, a succeeding monk takes his place. The appointed monk never leaves the chapel compound and fulfills his guardianship till death. He is not only a guardian, but is also a willing prisoner.

This raises an interesting question: What if the ark of the covenant is actually found, and it is publicly proven to be the genuine ark of the covenant according to the Scriptures. How should the Christian react to the find? He or she should understand that facts connected with the purpose of the ark of the covenant have been superseded by Jesus Christ.

The ark of the covenant was the place where God would make known His instructive and glorious presence. God says to Moses, “*and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel*” (Exodus 25:22). Today, God speaks to us in His Son (Hebrews 1:2-3). The “mercy seat” above the ark of the covenant was the place where forgiveness of “covering of sins” could be realized. Today, Jesus Christ is where we find God’s mercy for the forgiveness of sins. He, through His blood, is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2, Romans 3:25).

The ark of the covenant was also called the “ark of the Testimony” because in the relatively

small box the tables containing the Ten Commandments were placed. The Law was God’s testimony to His people and the foundation for His covenant (Deuteronomy 10:5). Also, a pot of manna, reminding the Israelites of God’s providential care for them in the wilderness, and Aaron’s rod that budded, reminding them of respecting God’s authoritative leaders, were placed before the ark, if not in it (Exodus 16:34). Jesus is the Word who came to bear witness of the Truth (John 1:1, 18:37). More than manna, Jesus is the bread of life offering eternal life (John 6: 31-35). Now, Jesus has been given all authority (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus superseded everything connected with ancient ark of the covenant. Pointing to include the Messiah’s rule, Jeremiah prophesied, “... *they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall it be made anymore* (Jeremiah 3:16). The ark was probably stripped and destroyed by Babylonians in the 6th century B.C. (2 Kings 25:8-17).

Today, Jesus offers a better covenant based upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6). So, what if they find the Old Testament’s ark of the covenant? We have Christ!