



What happened to the sacred **“Ark of the Covenant”** (**Hebrews 9:4 LSV**) that was kept in the Holy of Holies at “the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness” (**Acts 7:44 LSB**), and later at **“God’s Temple”** (**2 Chronicles 4:19; 2 Chronicles 5:1 NIV**) in Jerusalem that was built by Solomon?

The final direct mention of the physical Ark in canonical Scripture is found in **2 Chronicles 35:3**, which records King Josiah, in 622 BCE, telling the Levites to put the holy Ark back into the temple built by King Solomon.

SPECULATIVE THEORIES AS TO WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Because the canonical Bible ends its story without any mention of what finally happened to the Ark of the Covenant, many readers and scholars have looked to other speculative sources and traditions, such as:

- Hidden by Jeremiah: The non-canonical book of 2 Maccabees claims that the prophet Jeremiah hid the Ark and the altar of incense in a cave on Mount Sinai (the mountain Moses climbed) before the Babylonian invasion.
- Destroyed by Babylon: Many scholars and theologians believe the Babylonians broke the Ark apart or burned it during the destruction of the temple. Opinions are mixed on [r/AskAChristian](#), where some users suggest the Ark’s purpose ended with Jesus and it was lost in the exile, while others believe it was safely hidden away.
- Other Legends: Traditions claim the Ark was taken to Ethiopia, hidden on Mount Gerizim, or taken up to heaven (as seen in an apocalyptic vision in [Revelation 11:19](#)).

The only viable option of the above three speculations is the second one. But, the biblical text does not state whether the Ark was captured, hidden, or melted down for its gold. The

fact is that we really don't know what happened to the Ark of the Covenant. The following section gives solid scriptural evidence that even makes the section speculation, above, questionable, at best.

“Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have treasured up to this day will be taken to Babylon; nothing will be left,’ says Yahweh” (Isaiah 39:6 LSB). *“A precise forecast: nothing vague or symbolic, but literal deportation to a named empire. Fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar removed temple and palace treasures in 605 BC, 597 BC, and finally 586 BC (2 Kings 24:13; 2 Chronicles 36:18; Daniel 1:1-2)” (Bible Hub Study Bible).* With this prophecy, namely, “nothing will be left,” we can be absolutely certain that, if it was still in existence, the Ark of the Covenant would be taken to Babylon

ARK NOT MENTIONED AMONG ITEMS DESTROYED OR CARRIED OFF FROM GOD’S TEMPLE
About 17 years after the last Biblical mention of the Ark of the Covenant at **2 Chronicles 35:3**, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Jerusalem and looted the temple. About 18-19 years later he returned and burned the city, but no mention is made of the Ark of the Covenant.

2 Kings 24-25, 2 Chronicles 36, and **Jeremiah 52** list many gold and bronze items taken or destroyed by the Babylonians, but never mention the Ark of the Covenant.

605 BCE

“Jehoiakim ... Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of the house of Yahweh and put them in his temple at Babylon” (2 Chronicles 36:5,7 LSB).

“The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god” (Daniel 1:2 NLT).

597 BCE

“Jehoiachin ... the king of Babylon ... in the eighth year of his reign ... brought out from there all the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon the king had made in the temple of Yahweh” (2 Kings 24:12-13 LSB).

“Jehoiachin ... At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of Yahweh” (2 Chronicles 36:9-10 LSB).

586 BCE

“Now the bronze pillars which were in the house of Yahweh, and the stands and the bronze sea which were in the house of Yahweh, the Chaldeans shattered and carried the bronze to Babylon. They also took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the spoons, and all the bronze vessels which were used to minister. The captain of the guard also took away the firepans and the bowls, what was fine gold and what was fine silver. The two pillars, the one sea, and the stands which Solomon had made for the house of Yahweh—the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight” (2 Kings 25:13-16 LSB).

“All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king and his officials, he brought them all to Babylon” (2 Chronicles 36:18 LSB).

“Now the bronze pillars which belonged to the house of Yahweh and the stands and the bronze sea, which were in the house of Yahweh, the Chaldeans shattered and carried all their bronze to Babylon. They also took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the bowls, the pans, and all the bronze vessels which were used to

minister. And the captain of the guard also took away the cups, the firepans, the bowls, the pots, the lampstands, the pans, and the offering bowls, what was fine gold and what was fine silver. The two pillars, the one sea, and the twelve bronze bulls that were under the sea, and the stands, which King Solomon had made for the house of Yahweh—the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight” (Jeremiah 52:17-20 LSB).

No mention is made of the Ark of the Covenant among the Temple articles destroyed or carried off. We not only don't know what happened to the Ark, we don't even know if the Ark was still in existence at the time of the final Babylonian invasion destruction of the Temple in 587-586 BCE.

ARK NOT MENTIONED AMONG TEMPLE ITEMS RETURNED BY THE MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE

“King Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of Yahweh ... by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. Now this was their number: 30 gold dishes, 1000 silver dishes, 29 duplicates; 30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls of a second kind and 1,000 other articles. All the articles of gold and silver numbered 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought them all up with the exiles who went up from Babylon to Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:7-11 LSB).

“This is the copy of the letter which King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra ... ‘ the utensils which are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem’” (Ezra 7:11-19 LSB).

No mention is made of the Ark of the Covenant among the Temple articles returned to Jerusalem after the Exile. In view of its great importance under the Law Covenant, it seems highly likely that the Ark was no longer in existence at the time of the Jews return from exile in 538-537 BCE..

ARK OF THE COVENANT NO LONGER NEEDED

“‘It shall be in those days when you are multiplied and fruitful in the land,’ declares Yahweh, ‘they will no longer say, “The ark of the covenant of Yahweh.” And it will not come upon the heart, not will they remember it, nor will they miss it, nor will it be made again. At that time they will call Jerusalem the ‘The throne of Yahweh,’ and all the nations will be gathered to it’” (Jeremiah 3:16-17 LSB). God’s prophet Jeremiah predicted the Ark of the Covenant would no longer exist, or be needed, and Jerusalem will be called Yahweh’s Throne with all nations gathered to it (Revelation 7:9-17). Why?

“‘There are days coming,’ declares Yahweh, ‘when I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I cut with their fathers ... My covenant which they broke’” (Jeremiah 31:31-32 LSB). That **“old covenant” (2 Corinthians 3:14 LSB)** was with **“physical Israel” (1 Corinthians 10:18 CJB)**, which needed the literal Ark of the Covenant, whereas “the new covenant” is with the Christian **“Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16 LSB)**, which doesn’t need a literal Ark of the Covenant. Why not?

The **“Ark of the Covenant”** is mentioned in a historical explanation, as being **“after the second veil”** in the ancient **“tabernacle” (Hebrews 9:2-4 LSB).**

“But when Christ appeared a high priest of the good things that have come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation” (Hebrews 9:11 LSB margin). In this **“spiritual temple” (1 Peter 2:5 NLT).** **“the Ark of His Covenant was seen in His temple” (Revelation 11:19 LSV).** *“The ark recalled the law given at Sinai, God’s merciful provision, and His holy authority. In the heavenly sanctuary, it also points to the perfect fulfillment of God’s covenant through Jesus Christ, whose blood establishes the new covenant and secures forgiveness for all who belong to Him (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:11-15)” (Bible Hub Study*

Bible).

CONCLUSION

Speculative theories notwithstanding, the Bible doesn't tell us what happened to the Ark of the Covenant. We can trust that Almighty God hasn't revealed that information, because it is not necessary to know it. What we do know is that we don't need a literal Ark of the Covenant ([Jeremiah 3:16-17](#)), because we have the symbolic "Ark of the Covenant" ([Revelation 11:19](#)) in the "spiritual temple" ([1 Peter 2:5](#) NLT). All this is confirmed because, **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"** and proper use of it makes us **"complete"** ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) NKJV).