



Journey Of The Ark:
From Sinai to Golgotha



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Journey Of The Ark: From Sinai to Golgotha

An illustrated journey through the places,
the symbolism and the prophecies.

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THE ARK WAS NEVER LOST, WE WERE.

God's people started their journey in Egypt as they were about to be delivered from slavery. They were about to experience salvation from their oppressor, but they could not leave until they had celebrated their first Passover, and the Passover lamb was slain. This powerful symbol of our salvation from the slavery of sin, pointed to Christ dying in our stead. God led them from Egypt to Sinai where He reintroduced His people to His law and Kingship. Then they were ready to enter the promised land to become citizens of God's kingdom.

Well that was the plan. It was only intended to take a few months to implement God's 'Plan A' and for them to enter the promised land, but they didn't cooperate with this plan. I'm sure this is also the case with many of us too. God has a 'Plan A' for our lives too, one that is straight forward and simple and brings His peace to us sooner, but we rarely choose God's plan for our lives. Fear, and

doubt that God wants the best for us take us down many roads God never intended for us to travel, leaving us with heartache that could have been avoided - and so everyone had to die in that wilderness. A new birth is the only path to salvation.

So whenever you may have experienced turmoil in your life, God had planned a more straight way, but how is all this related to the Ark of the Covenant? Well the Bible is full of practical examples, put there to lead us onto the right path. Right now there are people claiming the Ark of the Covenant is hidden in many different places, and so which one is correct? Perhaps the answer to this question is right there in the symbolism found in Scripture.

One of the purposes of the Ark in the wilderness was to search out a resting place for them. "And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the

covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them." (Numbers 10:33). One of the tasks was therefore to go before God's people to lead them to a place which would provide rest and their other needs. I want you to remember the specific wording, "rest". Why didn't God say as usual that "He" would go before them in this particular verse? Why specify that the Ark itself had this task? Nothing in the Bible is accidental. When they had finally entered the promised land the Ark was taken to Shiloh. Shiloh was probably named after the Ark was taken there, as 'Shiloh' was a prophetic name for the Prince of Peace, The Messiah that they were waiting for. They probably thought they had reached their resting place after 40 years wandering in the wilderness, but as we know, Israel's true, spiritual rest had not really arrived.

The Bible says, "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God... ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." (Joshua 3:3). So could this message still be relevant today? Where is the final resting place God wants to lead His people? The place where they could obtain true freedom and peace at heart? To the foot of the cross. How beautiful, if the purpose of the Ark is to guide us to our resting place, and it travelled all the way to Skull Hill, right at the foot of the cross! And it hasn't moved

from the cross since. Israel had long relied on their ceremonies, as well as victory over their enemies to give them rest, but that didn't give them rest. For the real rest, they needed to "go after" the Ark, to the cross. There God will take your burdens, and give you salvation through Christ's righteousness. There is the Ark. There is your spiritual resting place, where your carnal man dies and a new spiritual man is born, now a citizen of heaven. The cross is the last place where people can find rest on this Earth before entering heaven, and the Ark is at the gateway. Praise the Lord for that!

Yet how sad it is for those who think the Ark is hidden in Egypt – the symbol of Satan's kingdom of sin. Some say it's in Ethiopia and tell you to go on a pilgrimage there. Ethiopia is connected to punishment upon Israel, and to disobedience. In the Bible, Ethiopia was Egypt's ally. In fact the term "rest" is only used in connection to Ethiopia when God said He would overcome the Ethiopian army and thereby give Israel rest. So here, "rest" pertains to the destruction of Ethiopia's army. (See Ezekiel 30, 2 Chron 14:1-12; Deut 12:2, 10; Isaiah 18, Isaiah 20; Isaiah 43:1-7; Isaiah 45:14; Jer.46, Deut 25:19, Amos 9; Ezek 38, Nahum 3; Zephaniah 2-3). Some allege the Ark is in the wilderness, but the book of Hebrews clearly states those who wandered there did not enter into "God's rest" (Hebrews

3:7-13 to 18).

Some say the Ark is in Mount Nebo in Moab. What did God say about that place? While they were there He said, “For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.” (Deut 1:1, 5 & 12:9).

Some say the Ark is underneath the old temple site, but the Bible says that those who think they can be saved through the ceremonial law are still in captivity. They have not received God’s rest. That was the old covenant system, the sacrificial laws that were flawed and couldn’t save. Would the Ark really lead the people of God there? The blood of animals could never save (Hebrews 10:4).

What did Christ say? “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24).

If the Ark led us to any other place it would have failed its task of leading God’s people to rest. So did God’s throne fail? You know where the Ark is don’t you? It is where it always wanted to lead the children of Israel to, because “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6).

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If the Lord of the Ark led you to any of these other places then surely such places wouldn’t be a resting place at all, but a place of death, sin and confusion. But the Ark isn’t in Egypt, Jordan, Ethiopia or the Temple Mount – it couldn’t have led people there – that wasn’t its task.

It’s final station is the cross – it points to the cross. The law points to the cross. There is your rest – there is your salvation. There is your faith and your deliverance.

Don’t be fooled and follow the counterfeit allegations of the Ark in Egypt, the wilderness or the place of the imperfect, old covenant, sacrificial system. Follow the real Ark discovery. You know where to go. You know where our resting place is in this world, and don’t think you are being led to a cave. No one was allowed to see the Ark veiled in the Sanctuary in the wilderness. They had to look up, to the Shekinah above His throne – the real Leader. The Ark was a symbol of kingship, but their salvation was with their King. You too must not run to a cave below Golgotha to find rest, but look up to where Christ died for us. God wants to remind the world of what took place there. So we can as a people still follow the Ark and trust it will lead us to our resting place, at the foot of the cross.

The Ark was never lost – we were.



Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Mount Sinai

The earthly Ark was first built at the foot of a mountain in Arabia known under the names Horeb and Sinai in the desert of Midian.

While the people of Israel (who had recently been emancipated from slavery in Egypt) camped at the foot of the mountain, their leader Moses mediated for them, and met with God on top of the mountain. Here Moses was given a vision of the Ark and the sanctuary God wanted built.

*** The Ark of the Covenant was built in two separate pieces by man's own hands.**

*** The gold that overlaid both the base of the Ark and the Mercy Seat with the cherubims, comprised of voluntary offerings from the people themselves.**

These two points are very interest-

Pictures to the left: Map showing Mount Sinai in Arabia. Below is the camp site at the foot of the mountain. Several finds indicate this is the correct mountain and that there was anciently a large camp here.

ing as regards the building of the Ark, God's earthly throne. This might indicate how God wants His kingdom among men to be built - on the voluntary offerings of the hearts of His citizens. That we uplift Him and love Him is the foundation of His kingdom in our hearts. He doesn't wish to be our King by force or manipulation. In the Bible, gold can symbolise faith, and when the people of Israel gave the gold to build the Ark, it could symbolise the importance faith has in our spiritual life.

Instead of sending us an Ark made in heaven, He asked the people themselves to build it. There is beautiful symbolism in letting the people build God's dwelling place among them, but the appearance of the Ark was primarily influenced by the appearance of the Ark in heaven. It was built after God's own pattern, not by man's imagination. In the same way, God's kingdom must be built on His standard and His ways, not according to man's invented pattern. Only one item was made by God's own hand. The tables of the law were made of rock

- rock from here on Earth, connecting the Divine law to Earth, but the handwriting and the words of the law were written with God's own finger.

Thus God purposefully distinguishes the law from the Ark, showing us how the law is by Him and must not be tampered with by man. It wasn't given to any man, not even Moses, to write the words of the law that were to be the foundation of His throne.

Man can allow God to rule in his heart but he cannot decide, or tweak God's law. Man is not given the task of defining God's law, and what it is or isn't. Only the King Himself had the right to define the law of the kingdom. This law is untouchable and isn't created through human democracy, priesthood or leadership. The law that was placed into the Ark was made of stone cut out by human hands, but it was written by God. We can and must give God our hearts for Him to write the law upon, but it is He that writes it. The law is made by the Lawgiver and sealed by His name. As Jesus Himself says:

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:18-19).

Most Christian denominations and Jewish groups today have decided for themselves which parts of God's law is valid and which isn't, and who should keep it and who shouldn't. Some have even changed the wording and/or removed parts of the law! In such cases God is neither King nor Lawgiver in their life. Their faith, their hope of the blood of a Substitute is taken from God's Kingship to a false "Ark of the Covenant" where all the parts are made by man.

"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" Jesus said (Mark 7:7). Never was any atoning blood sprinkled over a man-made law. Forgiveness through the blood was for those who accepted God's kingship by acknowledging His law, and that they were guilty when they violated 'this' law. When approaching God's throne and acknowledging that they have broken the law (sinned), and that this was wrong of them as it is a valid and a just law, they are now offered the blood of the Substitute. The blood of Him that perfectly kept this law, and His righteousness is given to us as a gift. Thereby we are no longer viewed as transgressors of the law.

However those who have changed God's law, or rejected parts of it, fail to acknowledge it, and to acknowledge that they have sinned when they broke it. They therefore fail to accept Christ's observance of the law as righteousness, as they don't view the law as righteous. If they viewed it as

righteous why then would they feel the need to change or remove parts of it? Thus they rob themselves of God's forgiveness as they don't seek it for themselves. This type of Christianity is the false gospel that cannot save as they don't come to God's throne - they come to a false, man-made religion.

A cherubim's purpose (like those cherubim at each end of the Ark) is to protect or guard. While God promises protection to those who keep His law, there is a curse upon those who do not (See Deut 4:1 & Rev 22:14).

Symbolism of the Ark in our daily life.

In Revelation "gold tried in fire" is used as a symbol of a faith tried and tested, and victorious (Rev 3:18). No man can conquer without faith and trust in the Lord. These two characteristics will determine whether or not we let God rule as King in our hearts. Faith is the hand that reaches for God's hand.

Hebrews 10:38

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

1 John 5:4

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Revelation 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the command-

ments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

The Ark shares close symbolism with Christ the Messiah. He kept His Father's law. He was righteous just as the law is described as righteous. He was the Word that became flesh. He came to show man mercy and forgiveness. Then He gave His life to save mankind, subsequently desiring them to partake in His righteousness and His covenant. The Ark of the Covenant has remarkably close symbolism with the covenant He wants to make individually with each of His followers.

Gold - Our faith tried and tested.

The Law - The law He wants us to have written in our hearts.

The Blood of a Substitute: Our salvation is His mercy and the blood of Yeshua.

The Shekinah.

God dwelt over the Ark in the form of the Shekinah (a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night). Under the covenant confirmed at the cross, man no longer had a human mediator. Jesus said He would dwell among His people through His Spirit, by giving it to each and every heart. He would no longer dwell above the earthly Ark but in the very hearts of the believers. In that way, by our converted life and faith in Jesus, we uplift Him as King of all mankind (Rev 14:12).

So if you want to build God's throne in your heart, bring the gold (your faith) and let Him take up residence in your heart - but the law that is

written there must be written by God alone. For His Spirit (or dwelling place) is intrinsic to God's law like the Shekinah was intrinsic to the Ark with the law. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also **the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.**" (Acts 5:32). "If ye love me, **keep my command-**

ments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:15-17).

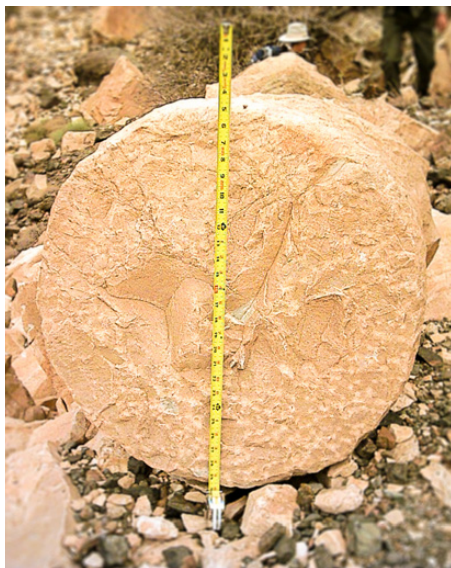


Left and below: Remains from the Israeli camp at Mount Sinai.

Next page; top right: The Bible records 12 pillars at the foot of Mount Sinai. Several pillars have been found.

Next page, bottom right: Pictures of calves etched on the rock by the foot of Mount Sinai. (Pictures by Aaron Sen)





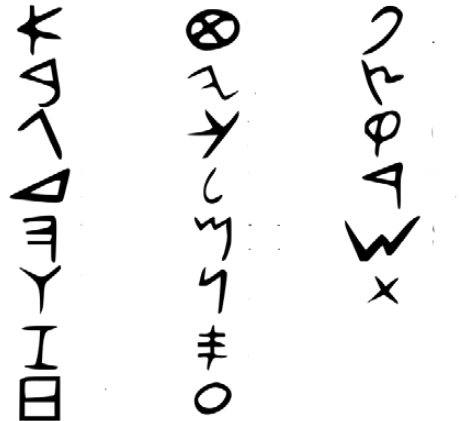


The Ark of the Testament was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. Here is the acacia tree; a thorny tree common to Israel, here from the Negev desert.

The Tables of Stone.

Some speculate that the first tables of stone were cut from sapphire stone as sapphire was miraculously present when Moses met with God in the mountain. “And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness... And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” (Exodus 24:10&12).

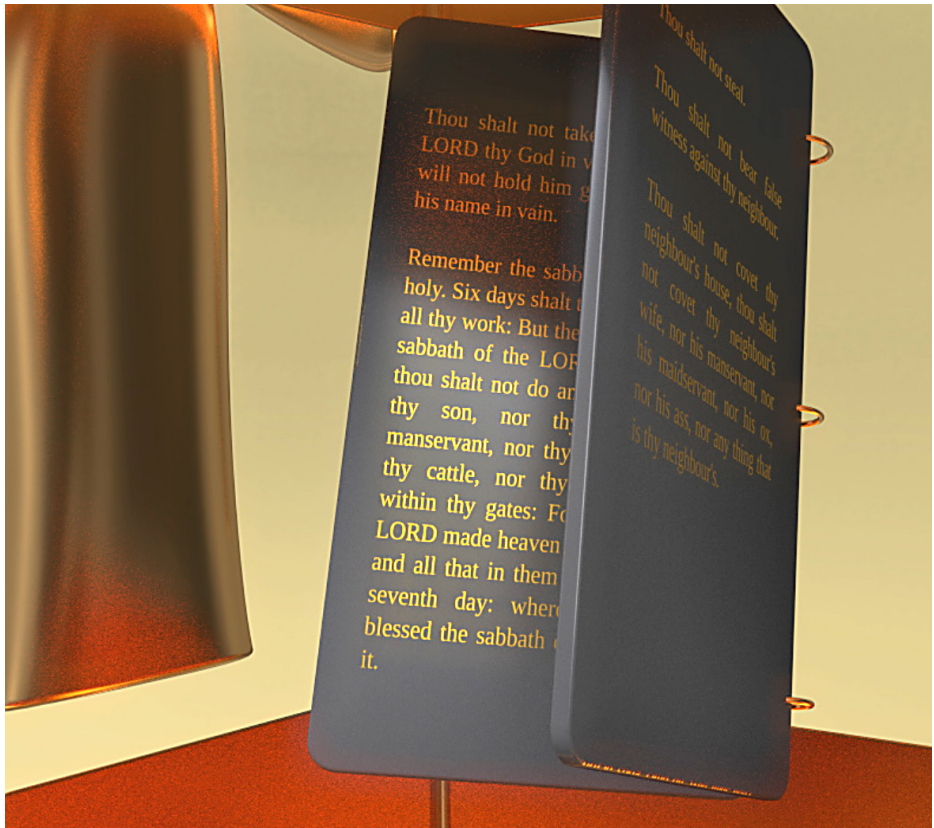
Yet there is no evidence to support this view. The first tables were broken after Israel made a graven image. Then we learn that the tables placed in the Ark were made from stone, “And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first



tables, which thou brakest.” (Ex 34:1). In the next verse we see Moses at the bottom of the mountain when he hewed these tables of stone, and there was no sapphire present at all. So they were most likely to have comprised of the common rock in that area, granite rock. The writing on the tables is believed to be the forerunner of what later became the Hebrew language.

Before this time all writing was pictographic which might not have sufficed enough to record the complexities of the ten commandments. This could indicate that God waited until man had developed a written language complex enough to explain the law

perfectly, before giving the previously 'oral' law in writing. We know the law existed before Sinai, through Noah, Abraham and other patriarchs, but no written records have been found as yet from them, so they most probably only had the law as oral tradition. (Genesis 26:5 & 7:1-2, Exodus 16:28).

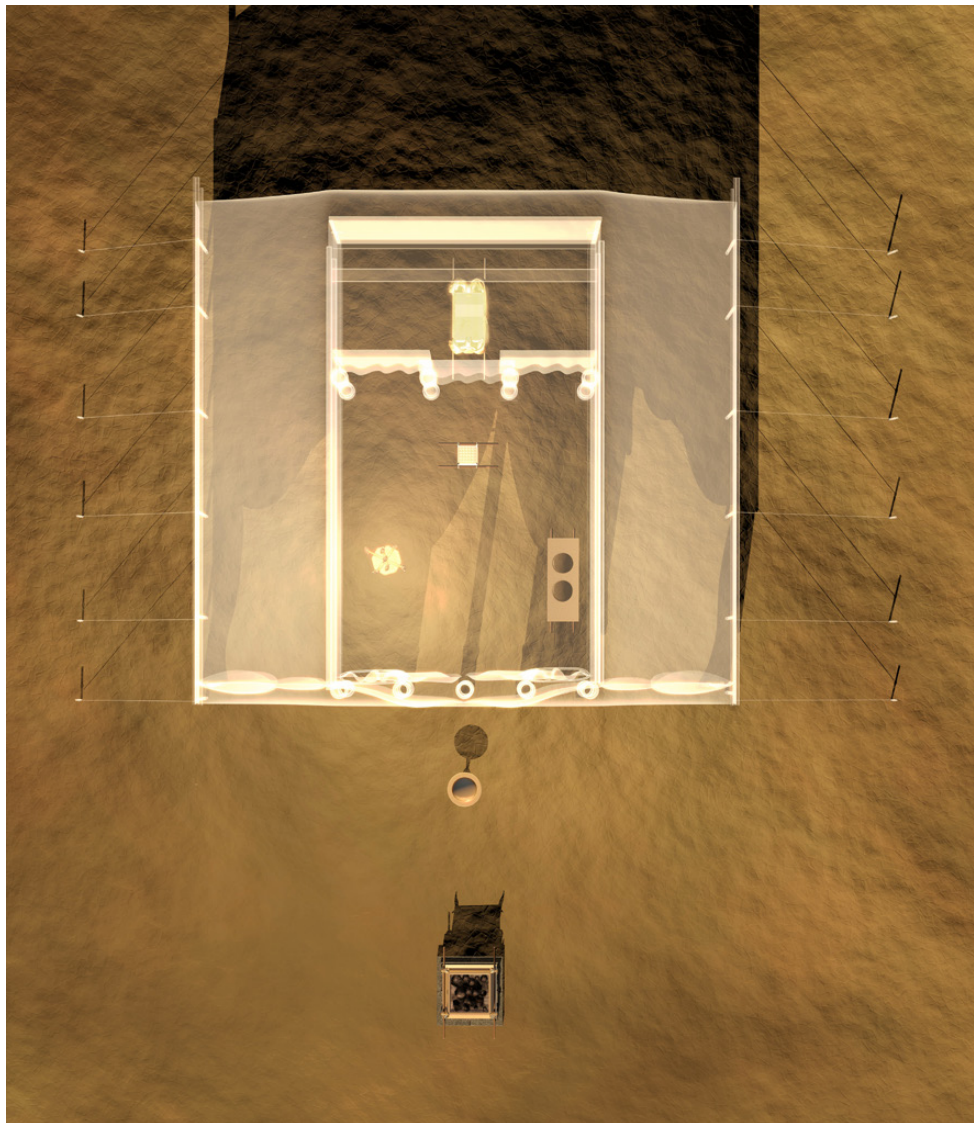


According to Ron Wyatt who found the Ark beneath Skull Hill, the Ten Commandments were written on both sides of the tables of stone (picture shows English for illustrational purposes only).

No man has the ability to write in stone with their finger, however this is what God did and the discovery reveals this miraculous writing.

The Sanctuary

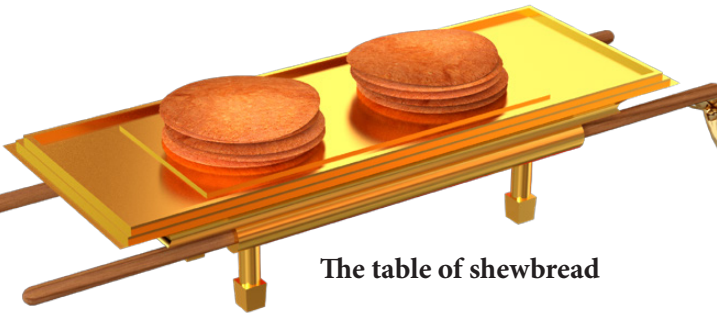
An aerial view of the main sanctuary items that they were instructed to build.





The brazen altar

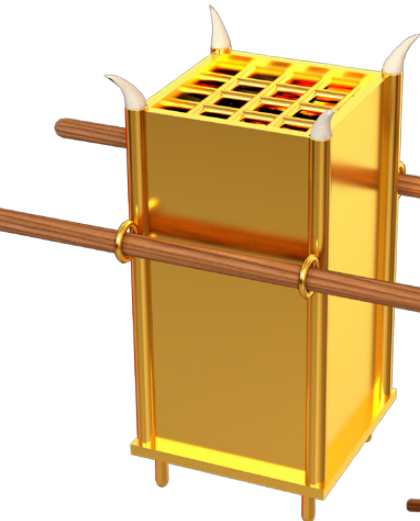
The laver



The table of shewbread



The seven branched candlestick



The altar of incense

From Sinai to Golgotha



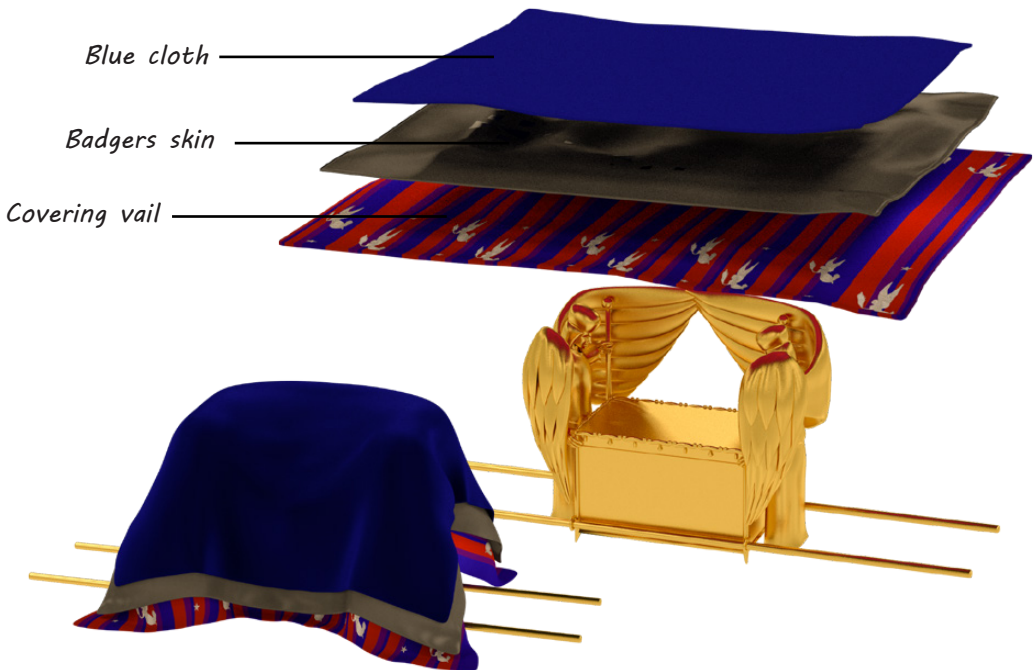
Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: The Ark Outside the Sanctuary

God's throne wasn't inactive when it was taken outside of the sanctuary. While the sanctuary service illustrated how fallen man was to be reunited with God's kingdom and His throne,

the throne was still significant on its own. It wasn't only important inside the sanctuary service. The Ark has a history of its own, independent of the Sanctuary system.

Tabernacle	Ark
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Led the people in the wilderness. * Go before and after them in the Jordan River * Gilgal * In the war with Jericho * Ceremony at Mount Ebal * Bethel (?)
* Shiloh	* Shiloh
	* Philistine cities
	* Beth Shemesh
* Nob	* Kirjath Jearim
	* Obed Edom
* Gibeon	* City of David
* Mount Moriah	* Mount Moriah
* Second Temple	
	* North Moriah / Golgotha

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: How the Ark was Transported



“And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it: And shall put thereon the covering of badgers’ skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.” (Numbers 4:5-6).

Many modern illustrations, including illustrations in this book, show the Ark being transported openly. This is usually for illustrational purposes only. The Ark was never transported in that way. It was always covered as instructed by God. At one time a certain distance between the people and the Ark was commanded. There may be many reasons for these in-

structions. Like today, many might have wanted to see the Ark but were denied the privilege. In the same way God doesn't allow most people to see Him physically, or to be able to see heaven with our own eyes. He could easily just appear to all in Person and tell us what we need to know, or send an angel to stand at every corner of the world. Instead we are left to seek Him through faith and spiritual eyes rather than physical eyes.

In the Bible we learn how only specially chosen priests, leaders and messengers were allowed to see or carry the Ark; people that were sanctified and anointed by God. In the same way God reveals Himself through His Spirit and signs to those who believe in Him today. Evidence isn't used to

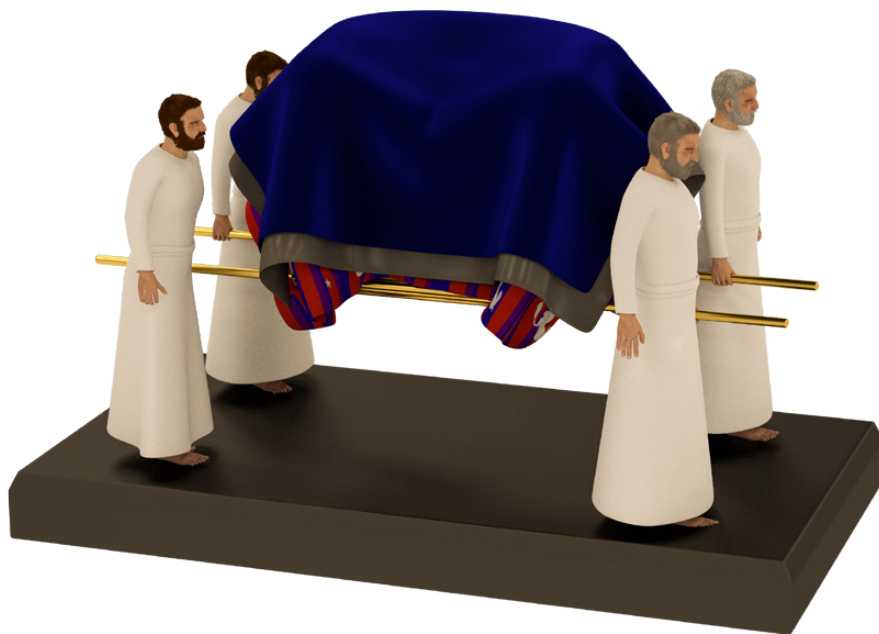
scare people into obedience but to strengthen those who already believe.

It's the heart that unites God to His throne, not the eyes. By covering the Ark He is telling us where we should be focusing. Instead of admiring it's appearance, perhaps even being tempted to worship it, God takes the focus from the Ark's appearance to it's significance - it's meaning. God may have wanted to force our eyes to behold what it symbolised, and not just what it looks like. To this very day people would rather see a photo of the Ark than understand it's meaning, failing to realise that understanding the Ark will reveal more about the throne of God than any picture or video can.



A distance of 2000 cubits was commanded between the people and the Ark before they crossed the River Jordan (Joshua 3:4).

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: The Ark's Carriers.



Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, who was later renamed Israel. His twelve sons grew to become the twelve tribes of Israel. One of these sons was named Levi, whose descendants were called Levites. God gave the Levites the priesthood. Different families were allocated different tasks in regards to the Ark. The first tribes from Levi were from his three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

* Aaron and his lineage were given

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the high priestly honor of entering the Most Holy Place once a year, where the Ark was situated in the sanctuary.

* The sons of Gershon had responsibility for the sanctuary, the tent and the altar (Numbers 3:25).

*** The sons of Kohath were given the task of carrying the Ark as well as the other main sanctuary items (Numbers 3:27 & 30).**

* The sons of the third and last son of Levi was Marari, and they were put in charge of the boards, bars, pillars and

sockets of the tabernacle, and all the vessels (Numbers 3:37). Being in such a privileged position, chosen to work so closely with the Ark of the Covenant, didn't automatically remove the possibility of falling away from God, misunderstanding Him, or disobeying when He tried to lead them.

Many wish to see the Ark, thinking this will suddenly make them 'holy' and make them willing to listen and be led by God. But Jesus said God's kingdom starts within us. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20-21).

Two of Aaron's sons were killed when they refused to show the proper respect to God as Lawgiver, and disgraced His sanctuary.

Kohath's sons had been given the task of carrying the Ark, but that didn't stop them from questioning God's leadership, even to a point that nearly led to a revolution. Kohath's grandsons were unhappy with their position beneath Moses and Aaron. Moses said to Korah, "Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of

the tabernacle of the LORD... And he hath brought thee near to him... For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?" (Numbers 16:9-11).

The situation became so dramatic that Korah "gathered all the congregation against them..." (v19). So although he had been selected to minister near to God and the Ark, it didn't stop him from trying to usurp the leadership.

Even today, many give priests and leaders too much glory and are distracted by them. These priests and pastors are supposed to direct people to God's leadership but instead they draw people to themselves. People who once had been close to God are sometimes blindly trusted never to fall from that position, but anyone who draws attention from God's leadership to their own, is not God's faithful worker at all.

Those carrying the Scriptures, the gospel and God's law, are just as vulnerable as anyone and can just as easily mislead people. I myself am no exception. They were not to venerate those who carried the Ark, only the King of the Ark, He was the true Leader. In like manner our attention must not be distracted away from the King and onto those who claim to represent Him. If they lead in two different directions, follow the King.

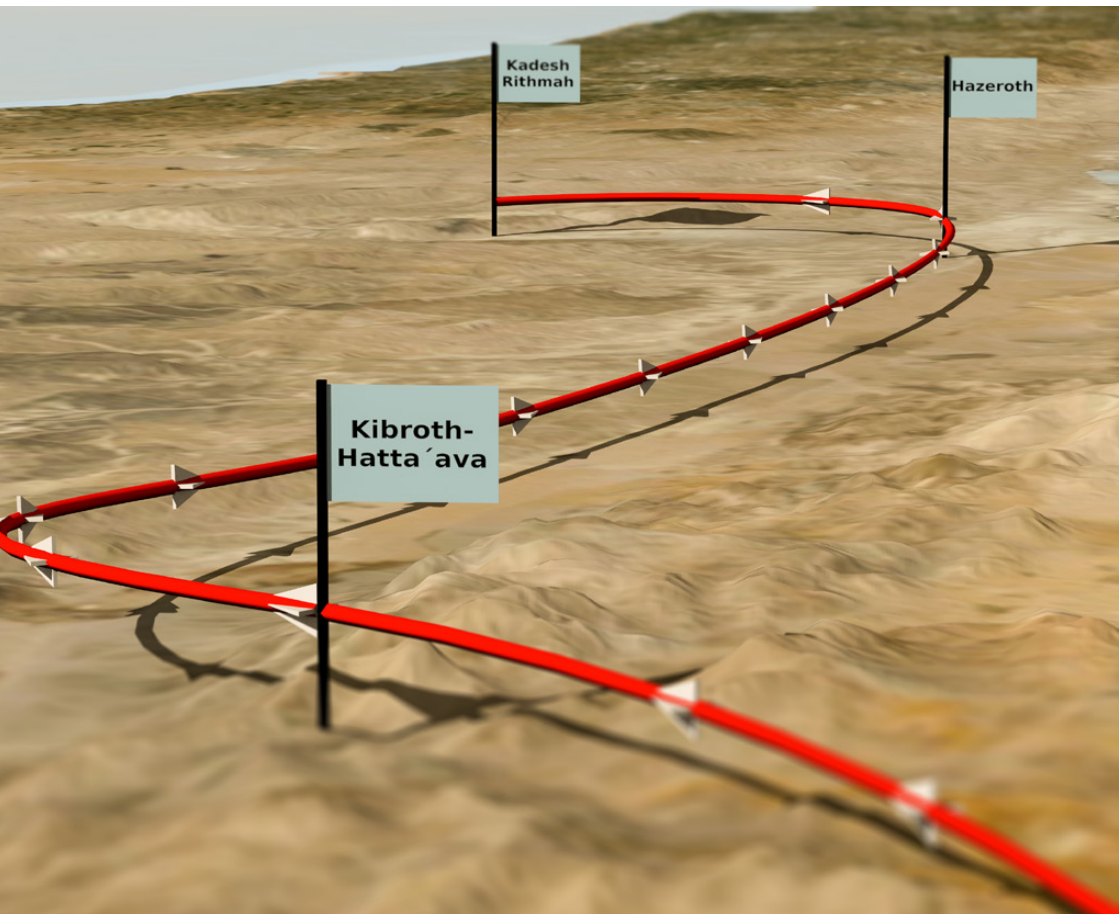
We learn two great lessons from the story of those who carried the Ark. One is that we need God's kingdom within us. It is not found searching for a physical artifact. The second, that many in apparently blessed positions can mislead God's people back

to Egypt and the slavery of sin. While they appeared to be carrying God's law, they were in fact leading people away from that same law they claimed to be protecting. Sadly this happens today as well.



God used an almond staff to illustrate who the priestly service in the sanctuary belonged to. The candlestick was also in the image of an almond tree. In the book of Revelation the candlestick represents His churches.
(Photo: Anonymous)

Journey of the Ark from Sinai
to Golgotha:
Kibroth-Hattaavah,
Hazeroth
& Rithmah/Kadesh



Kibroth-Hattaavah.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1).

The exact location of the first station is a little uncertain, but here is a suggestion based on a place with an Arabic name which matches the biblical name. Even if it wasn't exactly where I am suggesting, it couldn't have been too far from here.

This is the place the people started to complain about only having manna to eat. Manna was seed which God miraculously gave them from heaven, which they made bread from, but they grew tired of it and wanted meat, so God sent them birds by the way of the Red Sea through a strong wind, and they gathered them up and indulged themselves in the flesh. Many of the Israelites died as a result.

Throughout history God's people have failed in very similar ways, rejecting God's providence and the food He had designed for their health, instead asking for that which satisfies the carnal appetite. In the Bible bread is compared to receiving God's word (Matthew 4:4). We are given the following prophetic warning regarding our own time, ***“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears...”*** (2

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Timothy 4:3). The results of this, we learn, will lead to death (2 Thess 2:11-12).

Not only in doctrine will many prefer that which satisfies their lusts, but in food too, and in the choice of husband and wife, and in the friends they choose. In many Christian congregations the spirit of self-glorification is preferred over the true Spirit. People go to churches that offer rock music, theatricals, flattering sermons, games and even mesmerising preachers rather than a humble place with God's Spirit.

Hazereth.

This is where Aaron and Miriam began to complain to Moses wanting to be equally as important as him. Miriam is also discontented with Moses' wife. God gives Miriam leprosy for seven days and Israel stays put until she is well again.

Rithmah/Kadesh.

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” (Hebrews 4:1)

When they finally arrived at Kadesh they sent out twelve men, one representative from each of Israel's tribes, to scout out the land God had promised them. Ten of the men returned and reported that the land was beautiful, full of fruit and rich soil, but that the inhabitants presently living there were like giants. Their description caused

the people to fear and they refused to enter the land. Only two of the scouts encouraged the people to go forward with God's plan for them. They were nearly stoned to death (Numbers 14:10) and as a result God judges the Israelites, and they do not possess the promised land, but wander in the wilderness for 40 years until the next generation could enter the promised land instead (Numbers 14:33-34). When they are told of their fate they realise their error and decide they should take the promised land after all. So they go to battle without God's blessing and suffer a terrible defeat, at which time they begin their 40 year wander in the wilderness.

God wanted to take them without delay into the promised land, but their unwillingness to trust Him to lead them, resulted in a very long delay by any standards. Still we see that God did not leave them, and He stays with them during their years in the wilderness. In the same way we don't always choose to trust God's leading and try to do everything our own way. We make a 'golden calf' and call it by God's name, while we feel safer as we can now control 'the calf' with God's name rather than following what appears to be an unknown.

Some might think God was being harsh when He ordered them back to the wilderness, but while God is all powerful and didn't need their help to conquer the land, He did need some-

thing else from them. How could He rule them if they had no faith in Him? He wanted them to take part in the work and learn to trust Him.

Jesus could heal anyone He wanted to. Yet we learn that He could do little in Nazareth, "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew 13:57-58). It wasn't that He was unable to heal or perform miracles, but that His work would have no saving effect there. Their unbelief stopped them from coming to Him - stopped them from letting Him into their hearts - stopped them from taking part in His blessings.

God doesn't manipulate one's belief. He doesn't force His love or mercy upon anyone. He doesn't force our feet to walk in His ways. We must take our own steps and He will inspire and guide. A lack of faith is like going to the dentist with a toothache but refusing to open your mouth. The dentist cannot do anything before you willingly open your mouth. You can demand him to fix your teeth without you opening your mouth, but you will be greatly disappointed.

When Christ was hanging on the cross, two unbelievers mocked Him and said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of



*Top photo:
Here (or somewhere
nearby) was the camp
at Kibroth-Hattaa-
vah. It had to have
been large enough to
hold all of Israel. Now
located in Jordan.*

*To the right: Small
village at Hazeroth,
Israel.*





Next to a small mountain ridge lies a vast wilderness, most probably the biblical Kadesh. According to the Bible, Kadesh lay in the area later given to the tribe of Judah. Top photo: A sign showing hiking trails in the area.



Left, & bottom right: A rock with erosion where water has flowed down into the encampment. We learn that this was also the place where Moses later struck a rock and God let water flow from it down into the camp. This could be the remains of this. Bottom left: Camp area with Mount Hor in the background.



Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” (Matthew 27:42). If Christ had met the condition they imposed on Him, there would be no reason to believe. God’s plan of salvation would be ruined. We must not try to make God act against His better judgment as a precondition to us showing Him faith and love. His relationship with us is based on our willingness to let Him work for and in us.

In the book of Revelation we learn that the last church is in a terrible state, and may even end in being lost. Here Christ is standing on the outside, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:20). By showing faith in Him we open the door and give Him the opportunity to help us, but He will not break the door down. That’s why He could not do many mighty works in Nazareth, and this is also why He could not lead them into the promised land. In the book of Hebrews we learn that unbelief was the main reason that God would not let them enter the promised land, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in

any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” (Hebrews 3:12).

The Israelites were disobedient because they feared the Canaanites were too powerful to defeat. Today many feel they are powerless in overcoming sin. They say, “There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.” (Jeremiah 18:12).

If we do not believe God can heal us from our sins and help us turn from our ways then we actually prevent this from happening. God both can and will help us fight the ‘giants’ (sins) in our lives. No sin is too great for Him to free us from, so that we can stop, but without faith in Him we are forced to go back into the wilderness where many died lost. Not because God wasn’t willing or strong enough, but because we didn’t let Him, or didn’t believe in Him enough to allow Him to help. Only death of self can bring us back to the border of the promised land. Only faith in Him can take us to God’s rest. We must believe Him to allow Him to lead.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Rimmon-Perez, Libnah & Rissah

Rimmon-Perez.

*“Unless the LORD had been my help,
my soul had almost dwelt in silence.
When I said, My foot slippeth; thy
mercy, O LORD, held me up.” (Psalm
94:17-18)*

Leaving Kadesh they followed the route southward, most probably ending in what is today The ‘Ramon’ Crater (as it is spelled today). This type of crater is a geological landform found in several places in the Negev desert, but this one being the largest. It has steep walls of rock surrounding a deep, closed valley. From their high aspirations of a better life in the promised land, they now literally lived in a hole in the wilderness. Regret and unbelief must have been felt bitterly in the camp.

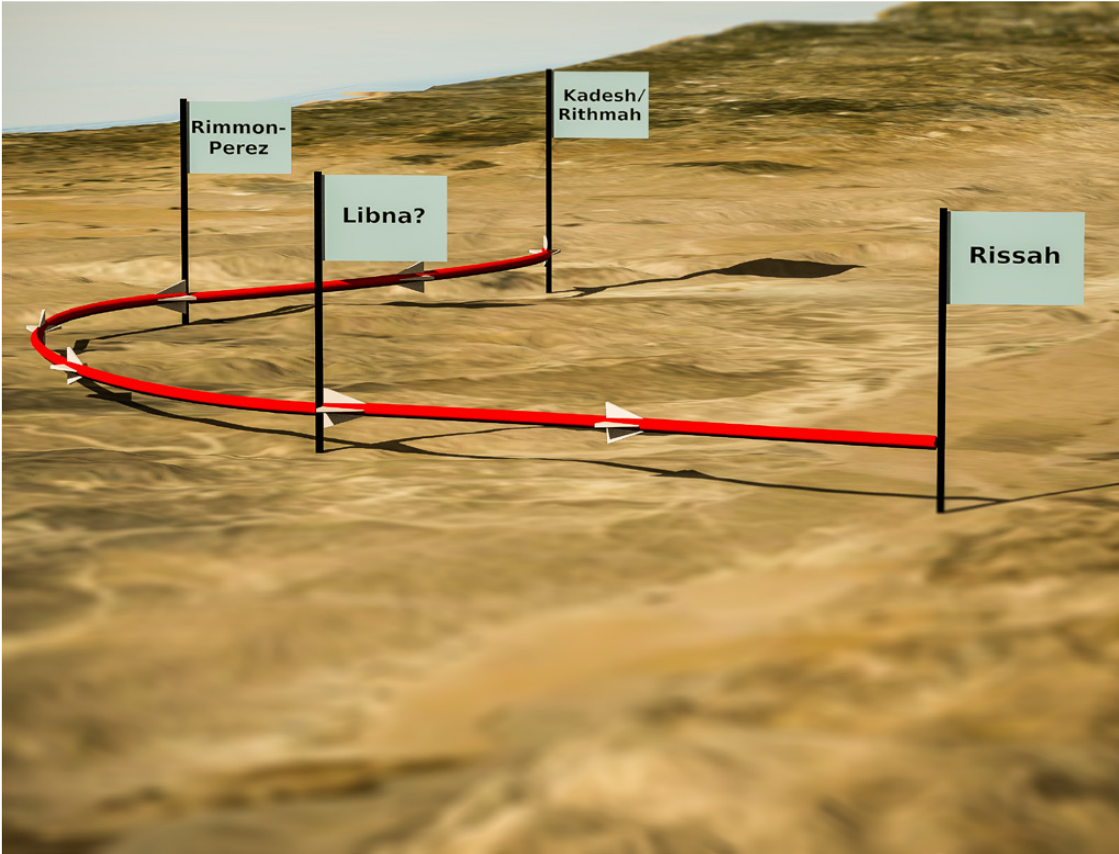
Libnah.

“Come now, and let us reason together,

*saith the LORD: though your sins be as
scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they be red like crimson, they
shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18).*

Their next encampment was at a place called Libnah. Libnah simply means “white”. Without knowing where this exact spot is one can still try to follow a logical route, coming to a place far higher than the valley-crater of Rimmon. So they moved from the depths of a hole to an exalted mountain. The area is full of greyish stone and rock formations. As I walked about taking photographs, I inadvertently scraped one of the rocks only to discover it was white under the grey exterior. All the rocks I checked were actually white.

*Right: The great Ramon Crater. A trail
all the way from Kadesh ends at this
crater and could have been the route of
the Israelites.*





Left and above: The rock appears to be a greyish-red, but is actually white underneath. Here (or somewhere very near) could be the biblical Libnah. This specific place is en route from Rimmon-Perez to Rissah.

This place was between Rimmon and Rissah, where we know they camped.

So it could well have been here, assuming God wanted to remind them that He could dress them in His righteousness, that He could take away their sin, and lift them up from their despair. Some have suggested that Libnah is further south from here, but either way, the most important point is the testimony that lies behind the name.

Rissah.

“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:47-49).



Rissah can still be found today on the Jordanian side. A small village can be found there, or very close by, where the Israelites once encamped. The Hebrew name 'Rissah' means 'a ruin' or something ruined by moisture. The Bible says little about their life there.

*Top photo:
Sign say-
ing Risha,
in today's
Jordan.*

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Kehelathah, Mount Shapher & Haradah

Kehelathah, Mount Shapher and Haradah.

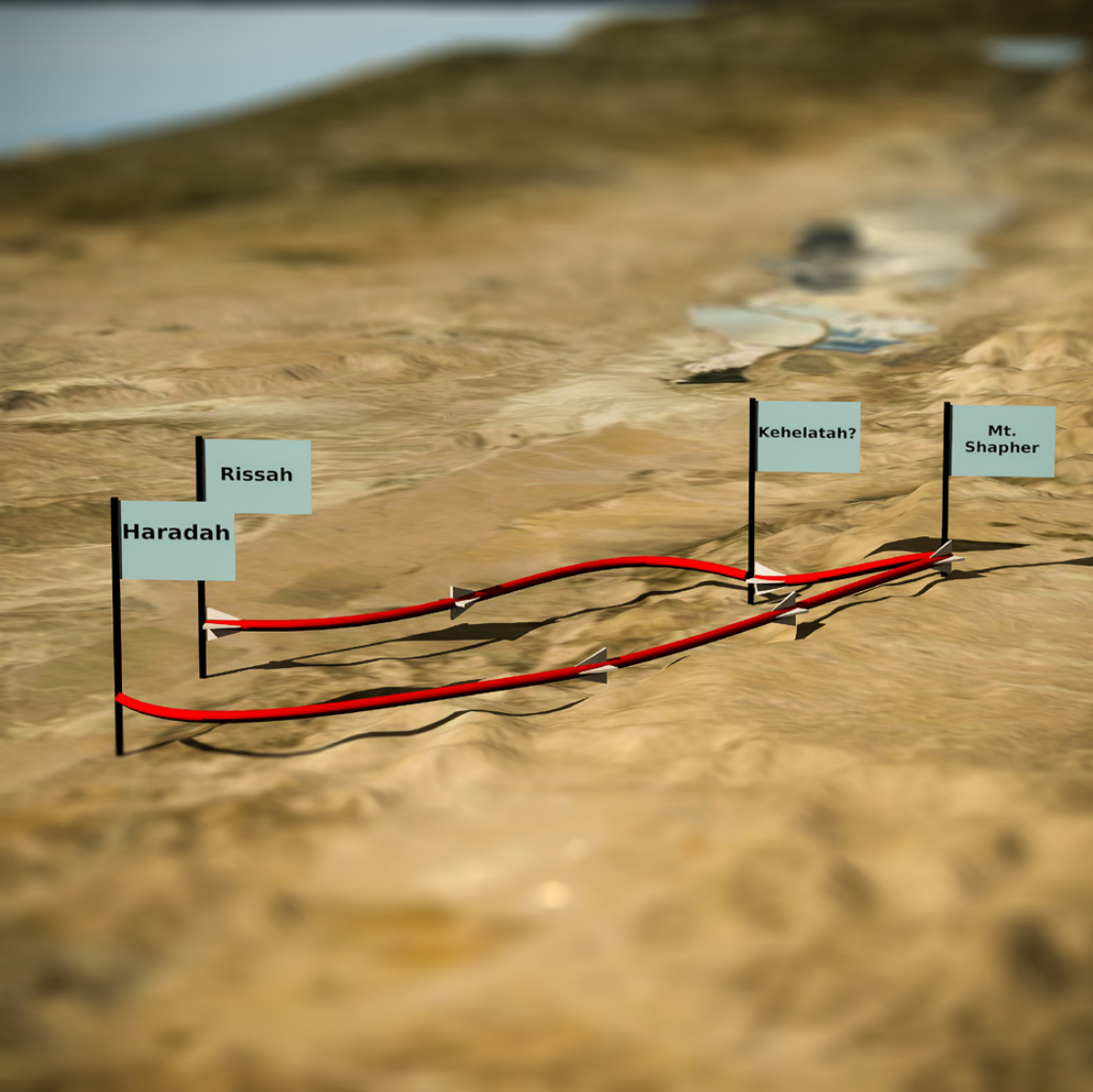
“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” (Psalm 78:40-41).

Unfortunately I don't know exactly where Kehelathah and Mount Shapher are for sure, but Shapher might be linked to the Sefar mountains. We do know that the Israelites are now on the other side of the valley, in today's Jordan. It is believed that Kehelathah is somewhere close to the ancient city of Petra. Many researchers agree that Moses was in Petra or near by, and here we find both a city and a spring named after him. Mount Shapher could be in what is today known as the Shara mountains. Then ending up in Haradah that lies back towards the same valley that they came from. This is a wilderness for sure, and their unbelief had brought about all

this aimless wandering. This was not God's original plan for them, but the consequence of not trusting and allowing Him to lead.

It can sometimes be the same with His followers today. We let God lead us when things are going well, when our faith isn't challenged and when there is no risk in following God's lead, but the moment our circumstances demand something from us, when we stand to lose something important to us, or risk facing mockery, unpopularity, or loss of money or property, many of us step out of God's path to escape the difficulty. Some even make it a way of life, they take what good comes with the gospel and reject everything that demands something of them.

Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.



Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
(Matthew 6:24).

This type of faith is half-hearted and will result in us leaving God at the most important times of our lives. When the test of faith would have brought us closer to God and a better understanding of His ways, we are left

going backwards or in circles instead. All the while blaming and cursing God for any misery that has come upon us. Sometimes it's the very thing we can't seem to let go of that we really need to let go of.

Whilst in Kehelathah, Mount Shapher and Haradah, God's people were in

the proverbial land of unbelief. While they were religious, they were not truly following the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Israelites didn't have water of their own and were forced to turn to their heathen neighbours for water from their wells.

The Hebrew word 'Haradah' is a word that means "anxiety, quaking, fear and trembling". Fear is often the reason we choose to disobey God. Is He really there protecting us or should I take charge over the situation myself? Fear and doubt are closely related and one can actually be a trigger for the other. Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:25).

"And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:29-30).

What God wants more than anything is to give us good gifts. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and

I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

Although many seem to want to combine their old way of life with their new life in Christ, it never works in the end. Christ reminded them, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." (Matthew 9:16-17).

Despite everything that had gone on before, God walked right there with them in the desert. The law in the Ark, the symbol of His kingship, right there among them. Yet to no avail since they shut Him out from their hearts "and limited the Holy One of Israel." (Psalm 78:41). Like Jesus standing knocking at the door of the last church, God was there with them in the wilderness hoping they would turn from their ways, and let Him lead them to a better life.

Right: The ancient city of Petra. The Israelite camp would have been in this area. Where the mountain wilderness ends we find Haradah, or today's Gharandal.





The next three places they encamped sadly remain unknown to me, but somewhere in the wilderness, the Bible says they encamped at Makheloth, Tahath and Tarah.

*Top: Sign showing 'Gharandal'.
Above: Notice the fine sand in this
exact area.*

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Mithcah, Hashmonah & Moseroth

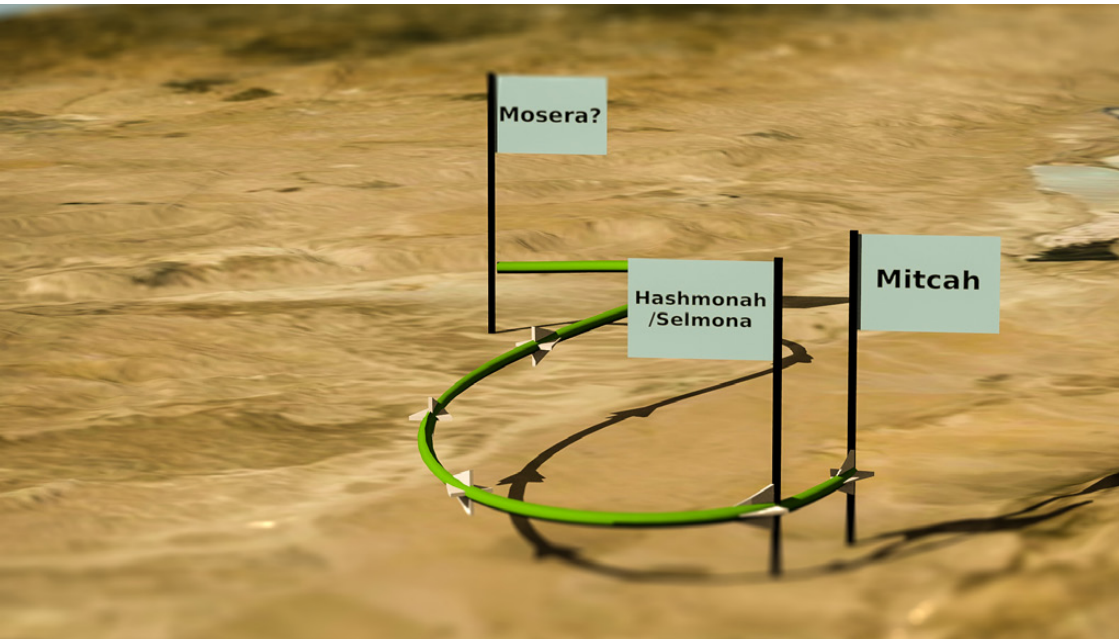
Jesus says to His church, “*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*” (Rev 3:19).

The Israelites continued their journey around modern day Israel and Jordan. ‘Mithcah’ is a word that is connected to sweetness, and ‘Hashmonah’ to fertility or wealth, and ‘Moseroth’ to chastisement and correction.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 14:12).

God hasn’t promised the peace of this world to us, but His peace.

God will always take care of those who turn to Him like Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart





be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
(John 14:27).

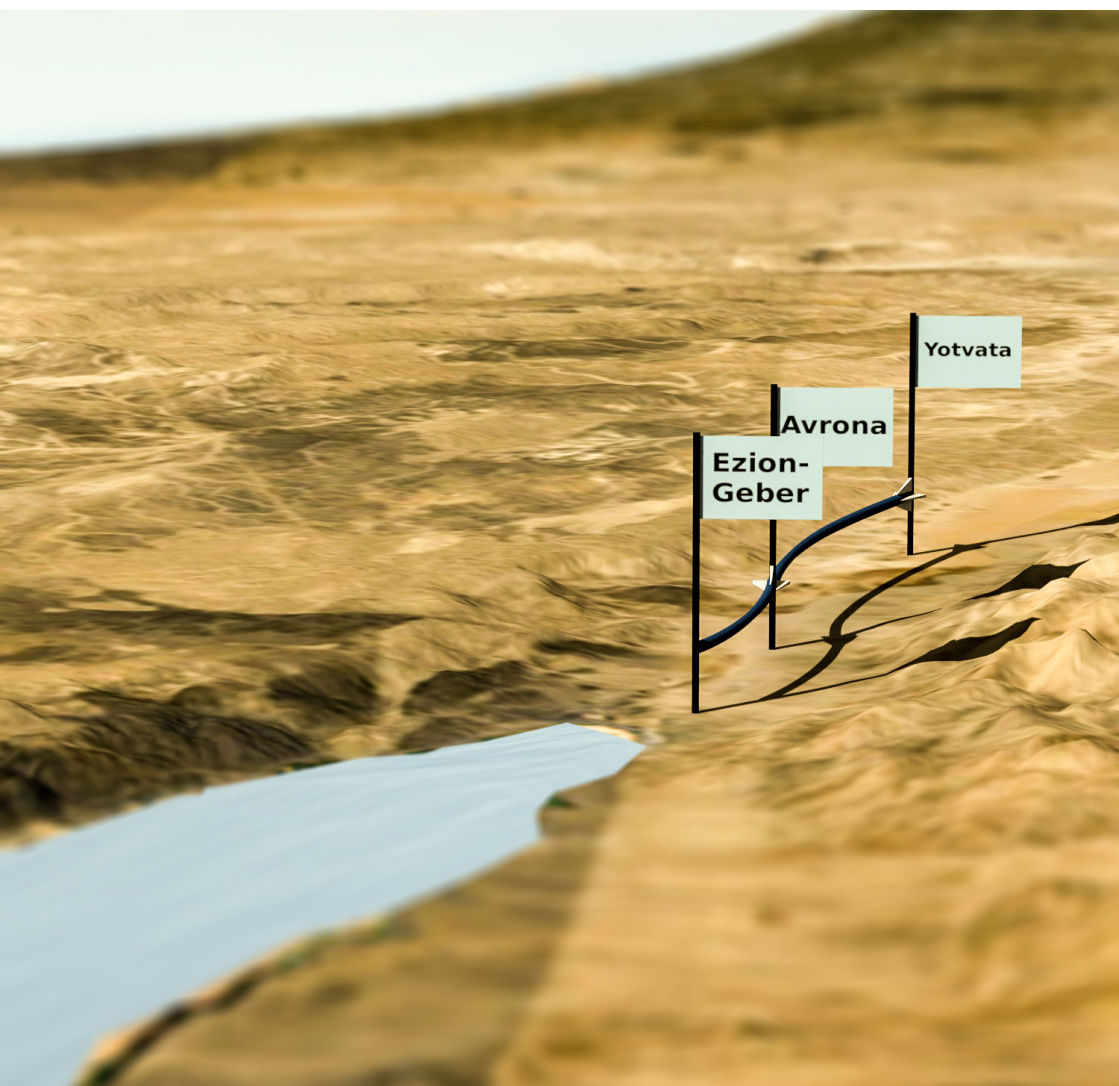
So if we only turn to Him to get attention, fame or riches we may end up disappointed. Judas followed Jesus in hope of these things and when he realised it wasn't going to happen the way he planned, he was willing to sell Jesus for a few pieces of silver. The wealth God wants to offer us is Christ's righteousness.

The Bible says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them

reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”
(Hebrews 12:6-13).

The next two places they camped were Benejaakan and Horhagidgad, which may have been south in the Arabian peninsula towards Jotbathah.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai
to Golgotha:
Jotbathah, Ebronah
Eziongeber



Yotvata/Jotbathah.

“I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” (Psalm 130:5-8).

The largest kibbutz in this area today is close to where the Israelites once camped. It's main source of income is a milk product factory. Although it's situated in a desert, the Jews have created an irrigation system so that they can grow onions, potatoes, corn, animal feed, garlic and pumpkins, but anciently when the Israelites wandered in the desert, this area, which today is the prosperous home to many of their descendants, was just another stop in a barren wilderness, en route to what God had promised them. Sometimes we waste so much time waiting for something good to come our way that we don't see the blessing and the potential in what God is giving us in the present. Faith is always about believing when there is no apparant reason to believe. Faith isn't needed when everything has been placed in our path for our eyes to see. However when we don't see, when we are spiritually blind or when God's leading seems not to make any sense, that is when we need to replace our

physical sight with spiritual sight; and that is a faith like gold. Jesus advises the last church to “anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” (Rev 3:18). The Israelites couldn't see the future, nor did they know where they were going step by step, but what they could see was that God hadn't abandoned them. They hadn't starved or died of thirst even though they were an enormous nation wandering in an arid and barren wilderness. Regarding Yotvata it is written, “to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.” (Deut 10:7). Here they could dwell on God's mercy upon them instead of dwelling upon that which they didn't understand or which they couldn't see, but today this area is nowhere near as fruitful as it was back in the time of the Israelites. It certainly doesn't seem like a good place to build a prosperous food product factory. Yet with faith the modern day kibbutz was built and became a success. Breeding milking cows in a desert seemed to many to be an impossible task. The Jewish Agency wouldn't even fund it. They started with only four cows and have now ended up with 700!

Just as fear and unbelief are intrinsically linked, so too is faith and patience, when you don't see and don't understand God's leading. Do the very best you can in the situation you are in and then wait with patience and faith for the Lord.



Top: Desert area behind the kibbutz in Yotvata. As there is no archaeological evidence it's hard to pinpoint the exact spot where the Israelites camped, but it was close to a water spring.

Right: Sign showing the ancient well in Ebronah.

Below right: My mother standing in front of the fenced in, now almost dried up well.



Ebronah.

“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” (Isaiah 64:8).

“And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.” (Num 33:34). The next stop in the wandering was Ebronah. Later this was used as an oasis for travellers in the wilderness and for a farming community. At this site they found an ancient well and a man-made system with shafts and connecting tunnels; 600 meters to a kilometer of subterranean tunnels. Again we see how this dry and apparently unfruitful desert is really a place where water can flow by faith and determination. The Lord can do great things for those who believe. Supplying water in the desert is the least of these things. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” (Isaiah 35:1).

When Job, afflicted with misfortune and disease, despondant and defeated, sees death as the only solution to his problems, God comes to him and tells him of His power and greatness as Creator. Then He restores Job giving him healing and giving him his life back. An entire book in the Bible has his name upon it.

Can a rose blossom in the desert? Many think that it's impossible when it comes to their own lives. God asked Jeremiah to go to a potter, “Arise,

and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.” (Jeremiah 18:2-6).

If we sin God doesn't just throw us away like garbage. Today this is how we treat each other and our things. Not many years ago, when something was broken they tried to fix it. Whether it was clothing, furniture or electronic items. Today, even minimal damage is enough to throw something away and just buy a new one. We even throw away perfectly good things just because it's not the latest version or the latest fashion. This has also affected how we treat each other. Most people have given up on many relationships before entering into marriage. Half of all marriages end in divorce. When our relationship doesn't work we throw the person away to find someone better.

God could have done this to us. He could have destroyed this whole planet and all the people with it. Then created a new paradise and new sin-

less people to rule it, but His heart and love for us was too great to throw away His own creation.

Instead of throwing us away He wanted to 'fix' us. A "new birth". Help us change into something good. This is why He continued to stay with the children of Israel in the wilderness wandering. That is why He kept calling each one of them, and keeps calling each one of us. We are not trash in His eyes just because we have fallen into selfishness and sin. He wants to save us.

In Ezekiel you see a vision, not where God makes new men out of the earth, but where He recreates those who once lived, failed and died. "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall

From Sinai to Golgotha

live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD... Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD." (Ezekiel 37:1-14). God can and will restore us if we let Him. We are still valuable to Him despite our failings, but if we want His salvation we need to let Him help us, like in the example He gave to Jeremiah. He says to us, "cannot I do with you as this potter?"

Ezion Geber

While they wandered without any permanent home, this next site close to modern day Eilat by the Red Sea, would one day become an important port for Israel. We read how Solomon had great ships, and "made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the

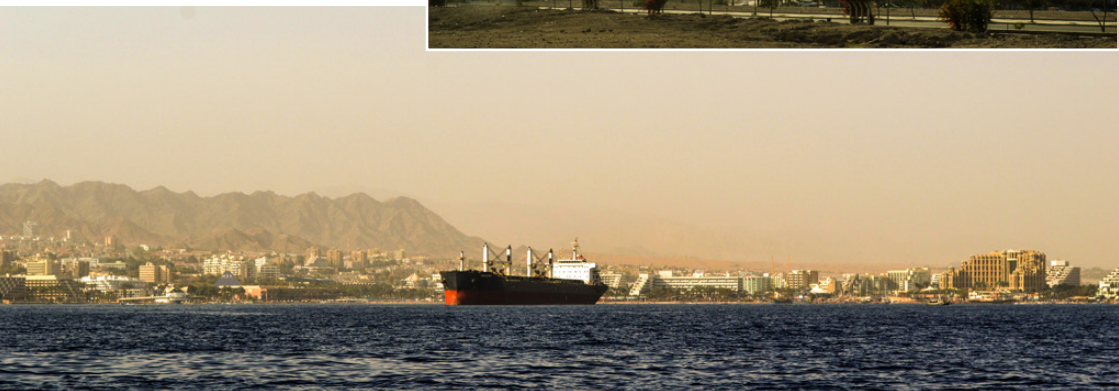
servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.” (1 Kings 9:26-28).

Again, the place seemed to represent their sins. They were once again back near the Red Sea where they once passed, in hope of the promised land. Now they were doomed to wander the wilderness for forty years as a result of their unbelief and unwillingness to allow God to lead them. They must have really felt their misfortune here, yet one day this port would be where ships with gold and other treasures would arrive. We have nothing to lose

Eziongeber was close to Eilat, the neighbouring city. Even today two cities lie next to each other. One on the Jordanian side (from where the picture to the right is taken) and the other on the Israeli side (below). The exact site of Eziongeber is hard to pinpoint but since Solomon made the ships in Eziongeber it would probably not be too far away from the sea.

by placing ourselves in God’s hands with a childlike faith. “And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:2-3).

A child trusts that his father knows what he is doing, and although not understanding everything, feels safe holding his hand. This is the relationship we need to have with God. He can see our past and future. He knows the end of every path we take, while we can’t see anything. Trusting in Him is therefore necessary for us to choose the right path at every cross-road in life.



Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Kadesh, Mount Hor, & Punon

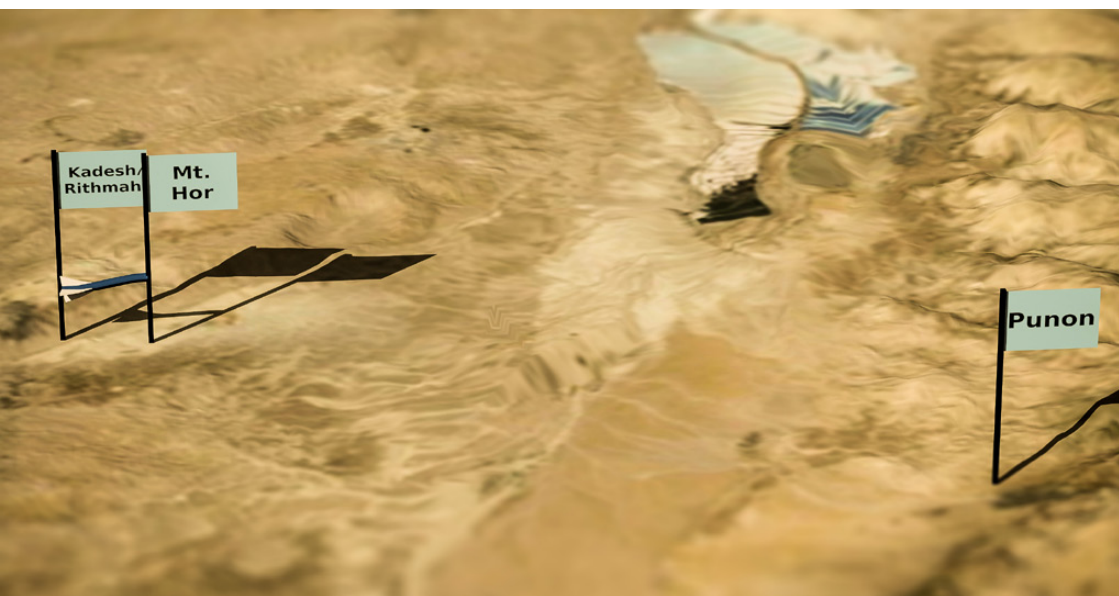
Kadesh.

The children of Israel find themselves back in Kadesh where a new revolt brews up against Moses and Aaron. Although it was winter it was still the dry season. Still today there is plenty of water here around the rainy season, but this time the area was dry.

“And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would

God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.” (Numbers 20:2-5).

However this time Moses lost all patience and committed a great sin.





God told Moses to speak to the rock and “it shall bring forth to them water out of [it]”, but in his irritation Moses took the rod God gave him and went with Aaron, “gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.” (Numbers 20:9-11). God was displeased with Moses and Aaron for changing the symbol of His redemption. The rock and the water both symbolised Christ. Moses had failed to recognise the people’s disobedience as a revolt against God and not himself. He was just the mediator but he said, “must ~~we~~ fetch you water out of this rock”. It was God’s provision that gave the water, not Moses’. It’s important for God’s messengers not to think that opposition is directed at them. This will make them weak. It’s important to know that this is a spiritual battle and we are only the messengers. God can and will fight for His honour, but His work must not be dragged down to man’s level, just because His messenger is failing. We shouldn’t be looking at nor admiring the messenger as our example anyway.

Picture: Possible Mount Hor in the wilderness of Zin. Possible remains of a grave have been found at the top.

It’s important to direct people to God, whether they complain or rejoice.

Mount Hor.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (Revelation 14:3).

Miriam died at Kadesh and now Aaron was to die. The distance between Kadesh and Hor was very little, but God kept them busy to avoid any further rebellion. They were also afforded the opportunity to show one of their leaders a final token of respect, by camping at the foot of the mountain where he was to die. “And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.” (Numbers 20:27-29).

Punon.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have eternal life.” (John 3:15).

The children of Israel had even driven their leaders to sin, and now two of them were gone; Miriam and Aaron. Of the three only Moses remained, and eventually they would have to enter the promised land without him - even him who had been a firm but humble leader in all their years in the wilderness.

Mount Hor lay at the border of Edom and while they were in Kadesh they requested permission to pass through Edom, but Edom said they would meet with the sword if they tried. So once again the Israelites had to detour south towards the Red Sea, and travel all the way around Edom. They ended up in Punon which was also by Edom. Now they were tired and ready to complain again. “And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and

set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.” (Numbers 21:5-9).

This is a perfect example of how only those who demonstrate trust in the Lord will survive. Many refused to believe this symbol could save them and they died. In Egypt the serpent was a sign of power and idolatry. Now they were told if they looked at this symbol hanging from a cross, it would save them. Jesus later taught that this was a prophetic symbol of Him crucified, symbolising how He would thereby restore life to mankind.

So why would God use a symbol of an evil, Egyptian power; a false god? Why on a pole when He had just taught them in the law that anything hanging on a tree was cursed? How could something cursed bring them healing and life? Perhaps God could have explained further, but He asked for their trust. This occurred many times throughout the Bible. It can seem like God puts stumbling blocks in the pathway of people who refuse to trust His leading.

That Jesus was born in a lowly shelter and not a grand palace was a stumbling block to some. That He was

raised in Nazareth was a stumbling block to others. Dining with sinners and outcasts was another stumbling block to many. He allowed a sinner, a woman, to wash His feet, and prior to that He conversed openly with a Samaritan woman. The fact that He wasn't accepted by the priests and leaders was a stumbling block to the common people.

What about the apostle Paul, a terrible persecuter whom Jesus blessed by appearing to him face to face. Surely that was a stumbling block to all the faithful disciples who never received any miraculous revelation.

The Old Testament is also full of stumbling blocks to many in those days. God could have put a lamb on that pole in Punon. He could have done everything people expected of Him in order for them to trust and obey Him. Jesus could have been born and raised in a palace, or been the son of the high priest himself, or even of the king - but He wasn't. He doesn't want to reach us subject to the conditions we impose upon Him, for His ways are perfect, and by operating this way, He separates the sheep from the goats (Matt 25:32). His way reveals those who love Him simply because they love Him, and not because they want to reap the rewards He offers, like a good reputation or money. God has to show the whole universe why some will be saved and others lost. To

do this He has to test people. Not so He can destroy them but so they can see their sins and turn from them. However many become offended by God's ways and refuse to change. They see fault with Him and not with themselves, robbing themselves of the salvation that God has provided.

Many of the prophets in the Old Testament were rejected because they didn't fit the peoples expectations for how they thought a prophet should look and talk. Instead they listened to the false prophets that flattered them. Eventually they rejected Christ to save Barabbas, who was a murderer (Matt 27:26).

That serpent was subsequently destroyed because Israel ended up idolising it. King Hezekiah "removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan." (2 Kings 18:4). God knew this would happen but it didn't stop Him from using a brazen serpent.

In the same way certain Christians have taken the gospel of Christ and tried to incorporate the worship of idols. All good things from God can be corrupted. That is when we need to stay with God's word and not seek the counsel of others.

It's important that we don't try to dictate the terms of our salvation to God, but instead listen to Him, trust Him and do what He asks, even when it seems strange to us. In the time of Christ all the stumbling blocks that led them to reject Him might have seemed unnecessary at the time. Did Jesus really have to heal that man on the Sabbath? Yet if He had come in the manner they required before they would believe in Him, His truth would never have gone out to the world. What were stumbling blocks for them, have encouraged mercy and love for all the generations thereaf-

ter. That which was nonsensical to them and the cause of their rejection of Him, is the same which has now led to the salvation of millions worldwide. It was His profoundness that confused them, but made His words so famous around the world for thousands of years thereafter. Our minds are limited and often we can only see the world from our viewpoint. If God had done it our way He would have accomplished less, and He wants to save as many as He possibly can. Even today God might do things differently than we would expect. We will, like everyone before

us, be tested. We are called to serve God whilst not fully understanding everything He does from the beginning to the end. We too will be asked to trust Him while He seems to make unexpected turns, while He asks of us things we won't understand. Perhaps even things that can cause offence and even seem wrong at the time - and then, only then, will we see if we can stand where the children of Israel failed.

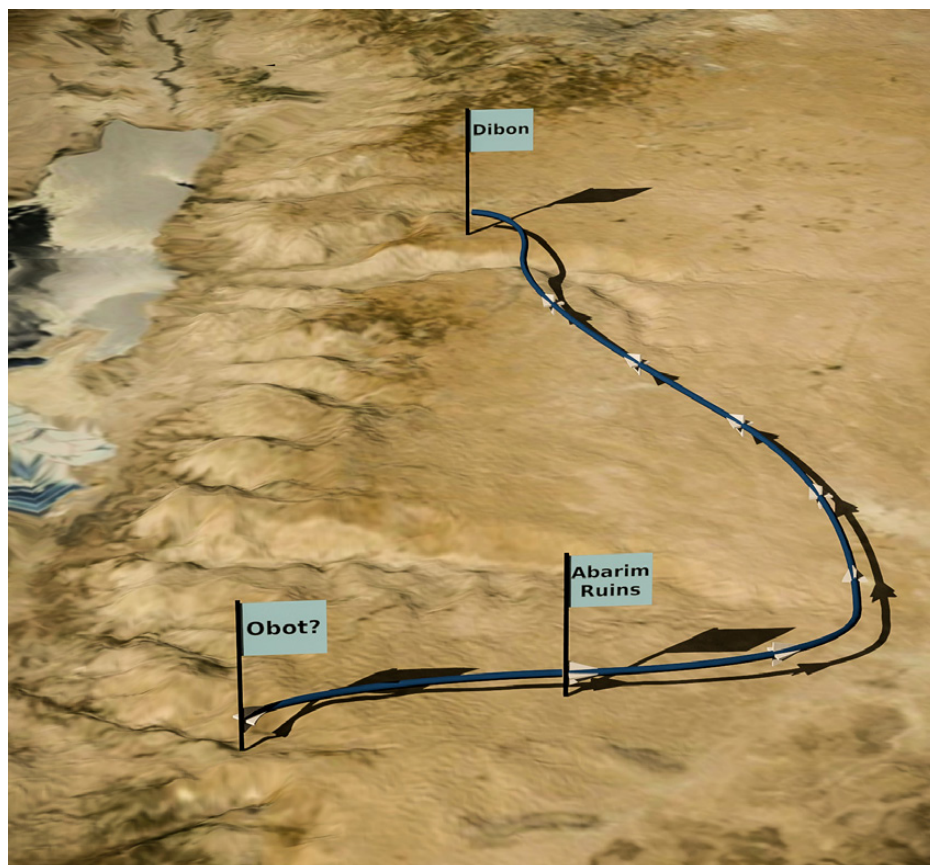


Serpent on a pole
erected as a memorial at
Mount Nebo.

God doesn't ask this of us just to be difficult. Just as our children can't always understand what we ask of them, even when we try our best to explain it to them, they may just be too young to understand. God can't make us understand everything in

advance. Our universal view is limited as is our maturity. So the only way we can walk with the Lord in the most perfect way through our lives, is if we have complete trust in Him and allow Him to lead.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai
to Golgotha:
Oboth, Sered creek, Dibon
Gad, Almon Diblathaim,
Mt. Nebo &
Plain of Moab





Dibon

Dhiban is a city located in Jordan, in the Governorate of Madaba. It's about 70 Km south of the capital Amman, and just east of the Dead Sea. It is also directly north of wadi Arnon which divided Moab from Ammon in the time of Moses. As we know, the Israelites crossed straight through Moab without stopping.

In the more recent past it has mostly been nomads who lived here, but since the 1950s many people have been settling here. The city is also mentioned in the Moabite Stone.

Almon Diblathaim

Possibly the same place mentioned by Jeremiah, namely Bat Biblathaim (Jeremiah 48:22). It was also called

View from the mountain where Moses looked upon the promised land.

Diblath. Numbers 21 also mentions this place, but by the name Beer. Here they were digging for a well on the word of God, the Lawgiver, and found water. On the Moabite Stone it is called 'Diblaten'. At a later time, the King of Moab also built a temple there.

Mount Nebo.

Moses wasn't allowed to lead the people into the promised land, but was told that he would die. He would first rest and then be risen up to an even better land. The Bible tells us that Satan made claim on Moses' body, but Christ defeated Satan and took Moses to heaven where he would join another privileged man, Enoch (Jude

1:9; Genesis 5:24). Later the prophet Elijah was taken alive, straight to heaven (2 Kings 2:11). When Jesus was walking the Earth we can read how Moses and Elijah came down to strengthen and encourage Him (Luke 9:30). After all, their salvation still depended on Christ succeeding.

So although Moses was denied something that at the time seemed a great privilege, Jesus loved Him and gave him something better. The most important thing was to leave the people with the right message - that He could not accept a leader like Moses sinning in the way he did. Although those who did enter the promised land were probably worse sinners, God expects more of a leader who has been so close to Him. After Moses there would be judges and kings in the land of Judah, so Israel and her leaders must not be left to think they could ignore the counsel of the Lord. Many future rulers did lead the people astray, but God would not give them any excuse to think they were an exception to His rules.

Plain of Moab.

About to cross the Jordan river the people were now readying themselves for the greatest event, of finally entering the land they had been promised. Today it is us that are standing on the border to the promised land. This Earth is about to enter it's closing scenes - but are we ready?

Many will die before the final tribulation. The great leader Moses died just when they felt they needed him most. His tomb was hidden, God Himself buried him in a secret location perhaps to prevent the people being tempted to worship or pray in front of it. They needed to trust God and God alone. People today are leaning on their priests and pastors, of whom many will fail to light up our pathway; fail to steer us in the right direction. Now more than ever is the time to lean on God first and foremost. He will not disappear, He will not fail, He will not die, and if we lose everything else we won't lose Him if we choose to serve Him.

All through time people have become 'stuck in the past' and leaders have refused to reform and move forward under God's guidance. Whether it was the Israelites, the first Christians, the Lutherans, Anabaptists etc. etc. They all stopped reforming where their leader stopped, not believing God was calling them to continue their journey.

Many churches today have also stopped reforming, content at sitting motionless under the name of their church founders, not thinking that God might have more light for them. If we truly trust their leading we must take what they gave us, but continue to find more truth and honor their efforts by taking the torch they carried to the next step. Yet many stop and



refuse to learn new things or continue to grow in the light God is giving.

God never gives all the truth at once. He gives it piece by piece, step by step. That is why many of the apostles thought Jesus' great coming with all power and glory would be soon after His departure. If they knew the truth, that it was nearly 2000 years away, they would have become discouraged and it may have hindered their work. Yet their work stands as among the most important ever done by man, to bring the gospel to the four corners of the world. Yet even they didn't understand everything. Instead of digging into the depths of the truths revealed, the new converts often went backwards whilst others became side-tracked. We are extremely privileged

to be brought from the crooked path directly to the right path, by just one prayer and one decision.

Perhaps you are an evolutionist, a Jew, or a Muslim. It doesn't matter where your starting point is, giving your life into God's leading will get you to the right destination, and that is what it's all about.

Today you can decide to ask God to lead you to His truth and to lead you home. Placing yourselves in God's care, following where He leads, will take you to the right place no matter where you came from. There are many churches and many congregations. Perhaps you are not in the right one.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Jordan River

Jordan River.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Rev 1:8).

The Ark of The Covenant plays an important role as the people are about to enter the promised land. Before them lay a great river, and all that was to meet them on the other side was

Jericho, a great walled city, seemingly unconquerable.

First, God demands a distance of 2000 cubits between the people and the Ark. Then the priests were to enter the river first. Confronted by the Ark, the river would suddenly and miraculously cease to flow, and as long as the Ark was in the middle of the river the people could pass. The Ark went in



first and left last.

The people weren't granted access to the promised land by their own works of righteousness. The law in the Ark, and the Mercy Seat is what stopped the river from flowing. In the same way it is through Christ's righteousness alone we are granted the gift of life and invited to His kingdom in heaven and the new earth - the true promised land.

Only by Christ's righteousness, and "not by works of righteousness which we have done", can we pass through the river of death with the hope of resurrection. The site of the crossing happened around the same place as Christ later performed the symbol

of baptism. He asked John to bury Him in the water and then to resurrect Him from it. This symbolised the death and resurrection of Christ, and that by partaking in this symbol we declare that we want part in His death and resurrection. Only through this can we be saved - through His merits. The symbol Christ performed in the Jordan river reveals our only path to the heavenly promised land. The King of the Ark will again bring His people safely across.

Not only did the Ark go before them, but it also went after them, because no one could cross without the Ark being there. He didn't leave anyone behind.

Picture shows Jordan river today. The water level is lower then what it was when the Isralittes crossed it.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Gilgal, Jericho & Ebal.

Gilgal and Jericho.

Once on the other side of the river the Israelites camped at Gilgal. We don't know exactly where it was but we do know it was not too far from Jericho.

From here they were to fulfil God's judgment upon Jericho. God Himself gave the details of how Jericho was to be conquered. "And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven

priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your



voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.” (Joshua 6:8).

So this is how the army advanced:

- * Front - Armed Soldiers
- * Before the Ark: Seven priests with seven trumpets.
- * Ark of The Covenant
- * Rereward (rearward) army shouting with a great shout.

God commanded this order Himself, just as He once ordered the exact design of the tabernacle and it's items. This suggests that this order has importance, perhaps a symbolic value. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, we can see the same symbols used in the last days of Earth's history.

Armed soldiers.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God... And out of his mouth

goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations.” (Rev 19:11-15).

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians we learn that our sword is the word of God, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:17).

In the final battle, the sword we have been given is the word of God. The truth has been attacked and God's enemy has trodden it under foot, so it is of great importance to have it restored.

Seven trumpets.

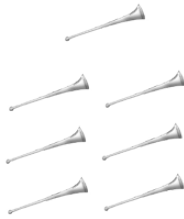
The next scene is of seven priests blowing seven trumpets. We also find these symbols in the book of Revelation, where seven trumpets are blown before Christ's coming. “And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.” (Rev 8:2).

Ark of the Covenant.

When the seventh trumpet sounds we learn that the Ark of the Covenant is seen. “And the seventh angel sounded... And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the



Armed men



7 trumpets



Ark of The Covenant



Great Shouting

ark of his testament.” (Rev 11:15 & 19).

Great Shout.

The task of the troops at the rear was to shout a great shout right before the walls of Jericho fell down, and we find the same scene in the book of Revelation. Here we see three angels one after the other proclaiming a message with a loud voice. All three messages warn the world to turn from their sins before God’s judgment comes (Rev 14:6-9).

Jericho falls.

As the people shouted with a loud voice the walls of Jericho came down. In the book of Revelation it is Babylon that is coming to ruin, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” (Rev 14:8).

Again this is biblical evidence that the Ark of the Covenant is significant not only at the fall of Jericho

The order of the army against Jericho shares similarities to the events at the end of the world in the book of Revelation.



but the fall of Babylon, right before the second coming of Christ. We learn that the symbolic city of Babylon will fall in one day just like Jericho did. “Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.” (Rev 18:10). We also learn that Babylon’s destruction was by God Himself, “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” (Rev 18:20).

In the parallel we see how Jericho’s walls also fell by God’s word and not by man’s hand. God made it fall after the word of God was preached, the trumpets sounded

Modern day Jericho is larger than the ancient old city, but remains of the older city can still be seen today at an archaeological site in the middle of the modern day city.

and the people gave a loud cry. This is what was required of man, but it was God who brought the walls down, and will bring the walls of Babylon down so that the city can be destroyed.

Mount Ebal.

After conquering Jericho and Ai, the Ark of the Covenant was brought to mount Ebal. Here the conditions for God’s covenant were again presented to them, and Joshua wrote the law in stone when the people renewed their promises. “And he wrote there

upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.” (Joshua 8:32). “And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount

Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.” (Joshua 8:33-34).

So after the fall of Jericho the law was renewed for the people and even re-written on a stone on Mount Ebal.



Recently discovered remains of an ancient structure, possibly Joshua's altar at Mount Ebal.
(Photo: Jan Gregersen)

The same altar seen from
a distance. The remains
were not found at the
top of the mountain but
on the slope.
(Photos: Jan Gregersen)



Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Shiloh & ‘Bethel’.

Shiloh.

The first place the tabernacle was set up in the promised land was Shiloh, this during the time of Joshua. “And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.” (Joshua 18:1). In the beginning the

Ark wasn’t situated on Jewish land but in the hill country of Ephraim. One of the reasons might be that the leader Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim and therefore it was natural to keep it close to the leader. Joshua had in the past gone to the Ark to seek God’s counsel. “And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD



until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.” (Joshua 7:6). Also Joseph was the firstborn of Israel’s second wife and next in line after Israel’s first wife’s firstborn. Ephraim was the second son of Joseph but received the blessing which was due the firstborn. When Joseph’s children failed, the next in line was Judah, the second son of the first wife of Israel. After the Ark was taken from the land of Ephraim it eventually ended up in the land of Judea.

Eli and his two sons ministered in the tabernacle at Shiloh, but soon a complete shift in the priesthood was about to take place. It is written that the sons of Eli slept with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they stole the meat that was supposed to be sacrificed (1 Samuel 2:16 & 22). “Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.” (1 Samuel 2:17).

Eli did try and discipline his sons but not firmly enough, and without any penalties. This was very serious in God’s eyes, as Eli didn’t deal with the problem. “Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the LORD God

of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” (1 Samuel 2:29-30).

Even then, it didn’t end there. When there was a battle between the Philistines and the Israelites, Eli’s sons brought the Ark of the Covenant to war with them without even seeking God’s counsel. It was a futile attempt at forcing God to fight for them. However God did not help Israel and the Philistines not only won the battle but captured the Ark! Both sons of Eli died and the news of their death and the loss of the Ark even killed Eli, “And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy.” (1 Samuel 4:18).

Sadly, despite this ensample, things haven’t changed much. Among Christians today there are many priests who live well off the people’s offerings, and let their children bring false teachings and theatrics into the congregations. They say, that to ensure the children and youth stay in the church they should let them have fun, but the warning to Eli is also a warning to us. We must think of God’s honour in God’s house, and not to

satisfy the carnal lusts of the youth. God isn't to be converted to us but us to Him, and there is no salvation for those who do not wish to turn from their ways. Many compromise because they fear empty churches and then the church employees will lose their wages. It's not our job to entertain people while others who would receive the truth are left in darkness. "And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?" (Ezekiel 13:19).

The Bible clearly specifies who the real prophets and teachers are, "But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." (Jeremiah 23:22).

The message of peace and salvation for transgression is that of false prophets. Many preaching this kind of message then go on to attack those who are trying to turn from their sins. "Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." (Ezekiel 13:22).

Such priests and pastors, even if they were elected by God Himself, like Eli and his sons, will be rejected by God even as they were. The law was taken from them and the Ark of the Covenant removed from Shiloh forever. In the same way as the presence of God once resided above the Ark in the Shekinah, now we have the presence of God in the Spirit, but this will also be taken away from these churches, and unclean spirits will take their place. These are dangerous churches that try to make others drink of the wine of their fornication.

Bethel.

The Ark was at Bethel, south of Shiloh for a shorter period of time than it stayed in Shiloh. It's uncertain why and exactly how long it was there for. "Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days..." (Judges 20:26-27).

In the English Bible, 'Bethel' translates as 'house of God' from the Hebrew word 'Beth-El' which could just be referring to the tabernacle. So some translations refer to it as the name of a city while others translate it just as "the house of God", i.e. the tabernacle. Some think that it is

therefore speaking of “God’s house” in Shiloh and not the actual city of Beth El. So there is some uncertainty about this stop.

What is clear, is that the people of Israel are in a difficult situation and come to God’s house in order for the high priest (Aaron’s grandson) to ask God on their behalf how to deal with the sins of the tribe of Benjamin.

Here we find a strange lesson. Three times they ask for counsel if they should go up and fight the tribe of Benjamin, and all three times God tells them to go. Yet the first two times they lose the battle and appa-

rantly God didn’t give them victory.

They were quick to judge their brother but how was their own life? Were they fit to judge? It was the same in Christ’s day, “And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

Remains from where the
tabernacle stood in Shiloh



So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.” (John 8:3-9).

It had not been long since Israel had faced the same situation. The first time they attacked the city of Ai, while sin was amongst them, God did not give them victory. Not until they had cleansed their sin away did God allow them to be victorious.

After having twice lost the battle against the tribe of Benjamin, they seek God’s counsel a third time. That is when they “wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.” (Judges 20:26). The first two times they had been brave, but the third time they sought forgiveness through sacrifice and humbled themselves to the Lord. This time God promised them victory and gave it to them. It seems that those who died whilst trying to judge their brother, actually judged themselves at the same time.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Aphhek, Ashdod, Gath & Ekron.

Aphhek and Ashdod.

The Ark was captured at the battle of Aphhek against the Philistines. The greatest token of victory over a nation was to capture the symbol of their

god. In this way they could declare their god greater and more powerful than the god of the enemy. The Philistines knew very well how the God of Israel sent plagues over the land of





Top: From Aphek, where the Ark was taken in battle.

Bottom: From the remains of the Philistine city of Ashdod.

Egypt. When Israel first brought the Ark to the battlefield they feared terribly, “Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.” (1 Samuel 4:8). So they surely had a sense of enormous victory and pride over the greatness of their own god as they stole away the Ark to Ashdod.

However, God, for their own sake, would not permit His name to be condescended, for they had no salvation through their god. Dagon was just a figment of their imagination, the invention of fallen angels. False religions are designed to turn man away from God, the only One who can save. Therefore God would not allow the Philistine’s ignorance to be supported by Israel’s disobedience. The Philistines placed the Ark with their own god Dagon as a token of Dagon’s victory and the next day Dagon had fallen on his face before the Ark. They raised him back up but the next day God’s point was made even clearer. Dagon had again fallen before the Ark, “and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.” (1 Samuel 5:4).

Additionally God sent plagues upon the people in Ashdod and it says He smote them with emerods. (1 Samuel 5:6).

From Sinai to Golgotha

Gath and Ekron

Instead of ridding themselves of their powerless god they decided to rid themselves of the symbol of the true God. “And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.” (1 Samuel 5:7-8).

Gath was a large city and perhaps they thought it would be advantageous to have the symbol of the God of Israel in such a great city. Here rumours of their god’s strength would spread faster, perhaps even awe the people by their greatness, but their bravery was short lived. They too received plagues and the biblical record says they even suffered emerods “in their secret parts”. They were so convinced that the Ark caused these plagues that they sent it to the next Philistine city, Ekron. They were not so brave, “And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.” (1 Samuel 5:10).

Those who didn’t die were smote



The few remains of the ancient Philistine city Ekron.



with emerods, so all the leaders of the Philistines gathered to discuss what they should do with the Ark. No one wanted it in their city anymore. The Ark was passed around the Philistines for seven months in total. Still not turning to God and only considering the bad omens, they finally decided to send it back to Israel with conciliatory gifts of gold, "Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land." (1 Samuel 6:5).

Still a little doubtful that the God of Israel really proactively brought these curses upon them, they said, "...see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us: it was a chance that happened to us." (1 Samuel 6:9). But the Ark was taken to Bethshemesh.

Many think that because they do not believe in the God of the Bible they cannot be punished by Him. This is not the case. The whole world will be judged by God no matter what religion they subscribe to, or whether they believe in a God at all. We cannot escape the truth just because we don't want to believe it. In the book of Revelation it says just before Christ comes back but before

the seven last plagues are poured out upon the inhabitants on Earth there will be a message to everyone to turn to God. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev.14:6-7).

"To every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." It doesn't matter if you don't even believe God created the Earth. The message is for you no matter who you are or what you believe. God does exist, He did create this Earth and He can and will judge it; whether you are Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Jew or Muslim. Buddha will save the Buddhist as much as the Philistine Dagon did the Philistines. There is only one true God and whether we want to or not, we will face Him one day. We can do as the Philistines did and try to get rid of God's message to us, but closing our ears will not make God go away.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God... And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened



Remains from the great
Philistine city of Gath that
was situated on a hill over-
looking a large plain.

Photos: ETHB

And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles... And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the

earth.” (Rev 15:1,5,6 &16:1).

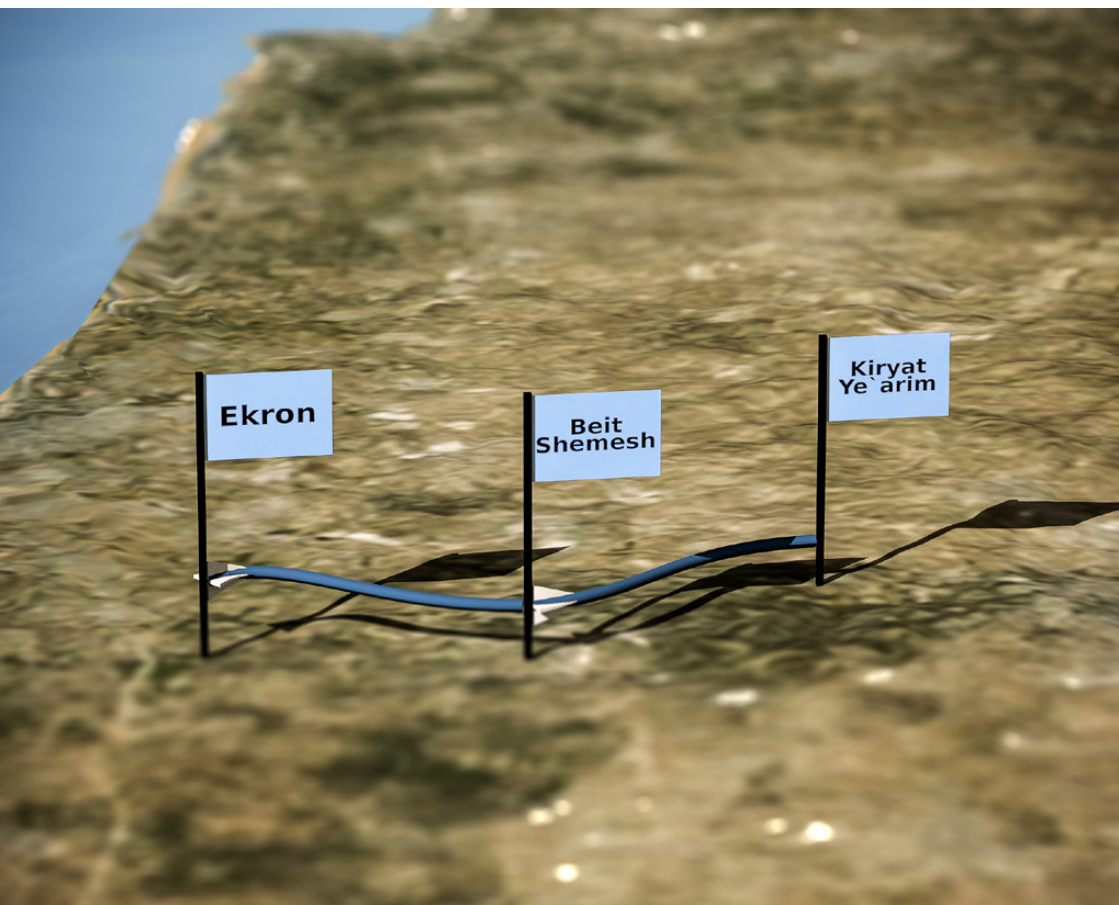
One day in the near future, the whole world will have to face the consequences of their rebellion - and no man-made god or belief can save anyone on that day.

Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: Bethshemesh, Kirjathjearim & the house of Obededom

Bethshemesh.

The Ark was back in Israel, but remember it didn't belong to the people but to God Himself. So God did not

allow the Israelites to dishonour it either. They were not favoured and allowed to condescend the symbol which had such an impact on the Phi-



listines. When they violated the law of the Ark and looked into the Ark of the Testimony, God killed them in judgment.

Many Christians and Jews make one rule for themselves and another for everyone else, but when it comes to that which belongs to God, His Mercy Seat and His law, the same rules apply to everyone. He is King of all the Earth. No priest can offer mercy to man or forgiveness of sins, only God can grant that. Thus it is with the law, only He is Lawmaker. Only the Lawmaker can grant pardon to the lawbreaker. Anyone tampering with those two symbols of His throne are rising up against God Himself.

Yet the people of Beth Shemesh felt the problem was God and not them, "And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you." (1 Samuel 6:21).

So the Ark is moved again, this time to another Jewish city, Kirjathjearim (today 'Kiryat Ye'arim'). The Ark is taken to the house of Abinadab on the hill, "and [they] sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD." (1 Samuel 7:1). The Ark stayed here for approximately fifty years. They were

From Sinai to Golgotha

not afflicted with plagues as they followed God's laws regarding the Ark.

It was not until David had become king and had taken the City of David that the Ark was moved again. "Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims... And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark... And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." (2 Samuel 6:1-4 & 6-7).

David was understandably shocked and disappointed when God smote Uzzah and from that day became afraid of God. Instead of bringing the Ark to the city he therefore brought it into the house of a Gittite named Obededom - but God's plan was to have it in Jerusalem. God blessed Obededom for the three months the Ark was there and showed David that if they followed His regulations the Ark would bring blessings, even to a

Gittite, a non-Israelite.

Right there and then it may have seemed unfair of God to kill Uzzah, who apparently only wanted to protect the Ark, but God didn't want man to think that the Ark, His throne on Earth, needed any help from man - either then or at any time in the future. You can imagine the utter disbelief in the episode with Uzzah that day.

Right up until this very day the

Ark is protected by God. Not by the help of man, but by angels and more directly by Himself. We don't have to fear that it will end up in the wrong hands, for God will conquer all enemies. Even when He allowed it to be given over to enemy hands for seven months among the Philistines, He was still in perfect control the whole time - and He still is. We must not flatter ourselves and think God is dependent on us, it is us that are dependent on Him.

Below: Remains of the ancient Israelite city of Bethshemesh



The city on the hill still exists today as a Jewish town with the same biblical name.



Journey of the Ark from Sinai to Golgotha: City of David, Mount Moriah & Golgotha.

The Ark was initially brought to a tent in the city of King David, “And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.” (2 Samuel 6:17).

David wanted to build God a temple for the Ark, “That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.” (2 Samuel 7:2). However God sent a message through Nathan that David wasn’t chosen to build Him the tem-



ple. “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.” (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

David’s son, Solomon, who was yet to be born and would eventually become king, was prophesied to build the temple. In fact David had not yet even met the mother-to-be. Yet David had to accept what he had been told, and although he was not to build the temple he did draw up the plans for it and choose the site where it was to be built.

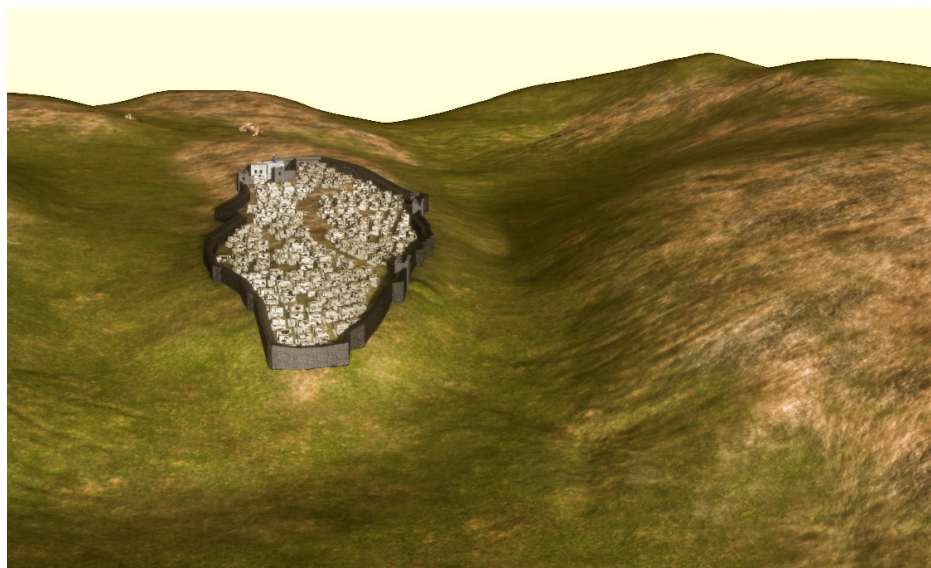
There had been a punishment delivered upon Jerusalem which resulted in the death of many people, “And

when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite... And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be





City of David is believed to have been situated on the southern slope from the Temple Mount. Excavations (above) have confirmed this. To the right: Taken from the City of David slope overseeing the valley. Right bottom: From City of David towards Mount of Olives.





stayed from the people. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.” (2 Samuel 24:16,20,21,25).

This is the same place where the temple was subsequently built by David’s son, King Solomon.

So the Ark was carried into the temple, and God’s Shekinah moved over the temple and resided in the Most Holy Place above the Ark. Then the Ark was removed from the temple when the land was ruled by kings who disobeyed God. It was later placed back into the temple again, but exactly where it had been hiding is not known. The priests probably had a prearranged hiding place for it, in case enemies conquered the city.

The temple took about 7 years and 6 months to build. It was started in the second month and finished in the eighth month (1 Kings 6:37-38). The following year the Ark was brought into the temple, in the seventh month during the feast of Sukkot (1 Kings 8:2). The temple was completed in Solomon’s eleventh year and the Ark was most likely therefore placed into it in Solomon’s twelfth year. This was approximately 488 years since the Israelites had entered the land. (1 Kings 6:1). For most of these 488 years the Ark had been in the tabernacle at Shi-

loh, but now the Ark was to remain in the temple which Solomon built until that temple was destroyed, approximately 363 years later. So the length of time the Ark was housed outside the temple was longer than the time it rested in the temple.

The Ark was in Kirjathjearim for over 50-80 years, then 3 months in the house of Obed Edom, 7 months in the Philistine cities and around 40-45 years in the city of David. Collectively the tribes of Israel and Judah were responsible for the Ark for nearly 900 years. It was approximately 891 years from when they received it at Sinai until the second temple was destroyed and the Ark was hidden.

That leaves around 2600 years in one hiding place. That is a very long time.

According to the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant at Golgotha, it is still on the same mountain as the temple, only further north. There are many tunnel systems under this mountain, all the way from the Temple Mount to Golgotha. Some of these tunnels used to carry a water supply to the city.

The largest cave inside the mountain is Zedekiah’s Cave. It extends about 650 feet into the mountain, starting just south of Golgotha. At it’s widest it is 330 feet wide, and there are tunnels extending to the north, south, and east of this cave. Tunnels travel all the way to Golgotha which is the

most likely way the Ark was taken to it's present hiding place. This cave which now houses the Ark and the other temple furnishings constructed at Sinai, is several feet below modern ground level.

The Ark presently rests under British

owned property but in the Palestinian section of Jerusalem. The Jewish nation undoubtedly claim ownership of the Ark, however it's currently not in their hands. The Ark will always belong to the King of the Ark and not to man. It has been moved from place to place, from the hands of the enemy, from Israel to Judah - and it will forever remain safe no matter where it is.



Only a small section of the large cave extending inside Mount Moriah.





A subterranean tunnel extends all the way to
the mountain on the other side.

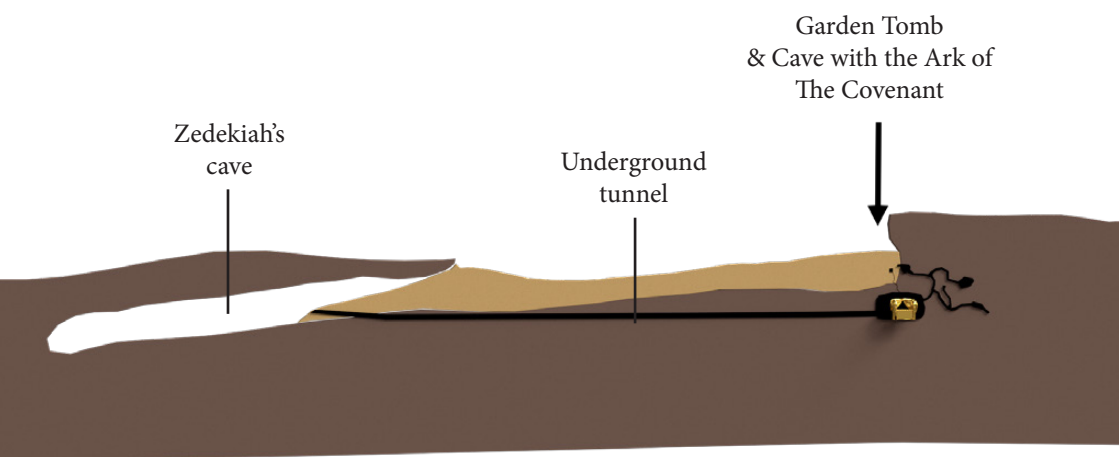
Temple
Mount.

Where Antonio's
fortress once
stood.



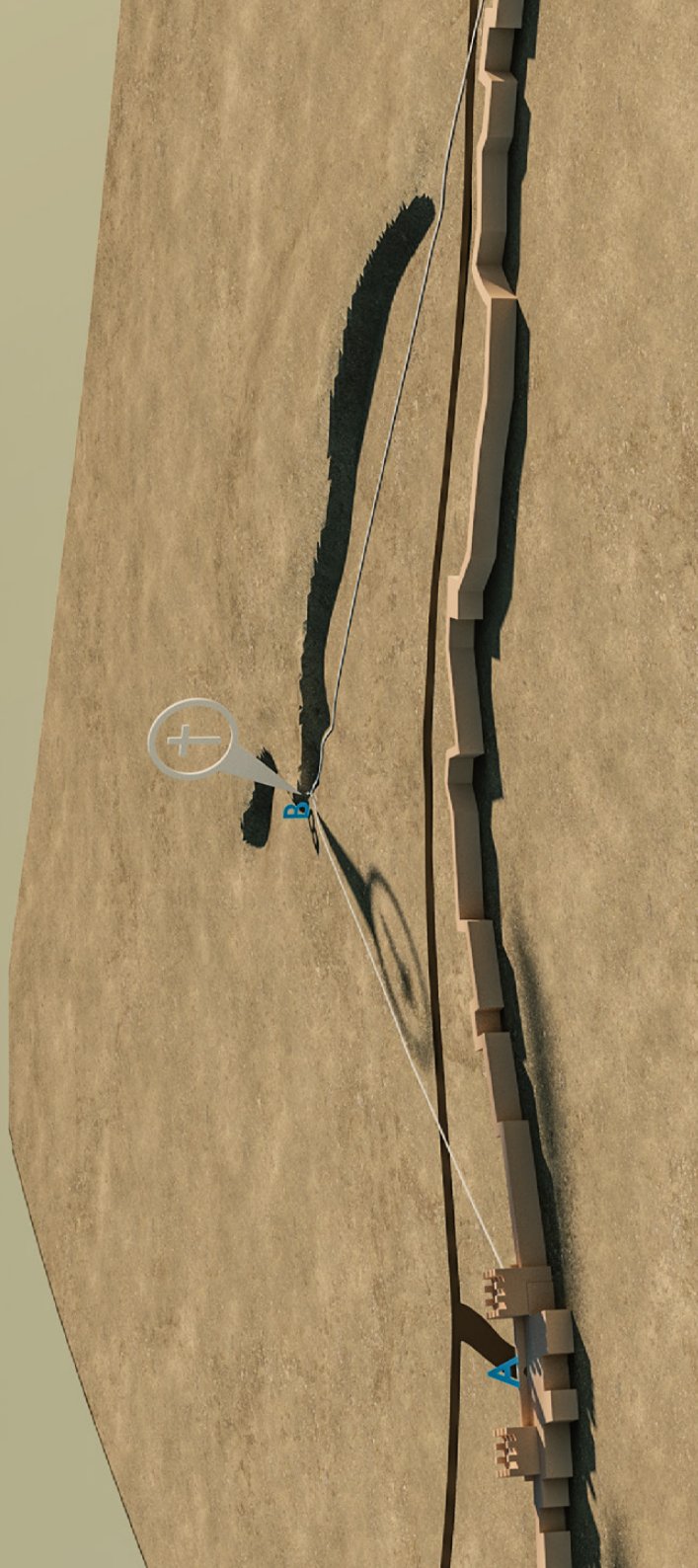


Two of the niches in the cliff face can still be seen today, 14 feet above the cross hole.



A  B

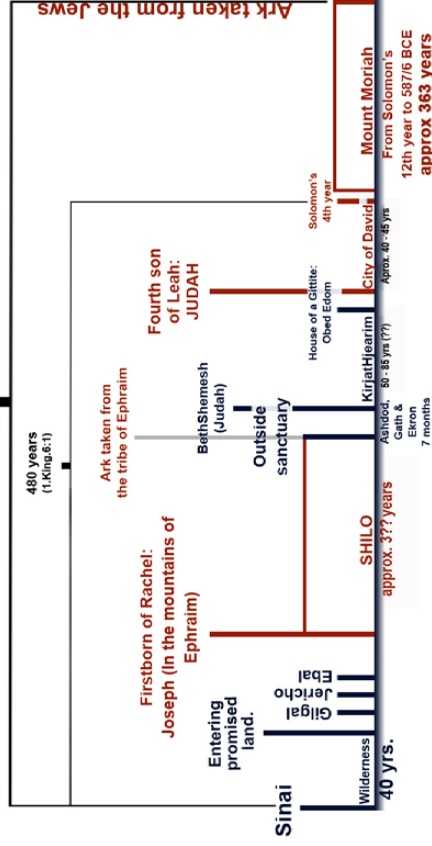
B  C



Christ was crucified on a hill which can be seen from Damascus Gate. This hill is on the same level as Herod's gate.

From Sinai til 2014

$$40 + 440 + 8 \text{ (approx)} + 363 \text{ (approx)} = 851 \text{ years (approx)}$$





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