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# The Ark Brought to the Temple
# First Kings 8:1-11 and Second Chronicles 5:2-14

**The ark brought to the Temple DIG: From where did Solomon remove the ark? What was the purpose of Solomon's sacrifices? Why was the ark placed in the Most Holy Place? Why is the length of the poles noted? Why mention the tablets? Why does it appear as the Sh'khinah glory?**

**REFLECT: What's the most exciting worship service you have ever experienced? How did it affect you? What in your life makes you feel close to God? Are you close now? If not, what changes do you need to make? When and where do you feel spiritually "at home?"**

**The Temple without the ark was like a body without a soul.**



Without question, it was the most extraordinary worship service **Isra'el** had ever witnessed, and perhaps more awesome than any worship service has ever been offered to the living **God** on earth. Try to imagine the scene. For an entire week the whole nation of **Isra'el** had gathered around **the Temple** of **ADONAI**. As the celebration came to its climax, **King Solomon** appeared, and with him the leaders of **Isra'el**. As the people watched, myriads of **priests** came streaming out of **the Temple**. These **men** had dedicated **themselves** for the service of **YHVH** by

washing in the great Bronze Sea that stood near **the Holy Place** by wearing white linen. **Singers** in the Levitical choir with **their** various instruments stood outside **the Temple** with their **harps** and **lyres** and **cymbals**, not to mention **one-hundred-and-twenty trumpets**. It was the orchestra of the living **God**.

On cue, all these musicians burst into praise. With one voice they offered a melody of thanksgiving to **the LORD**. Their musical text was a famous refrain from **King David, "His steadfast love endures forever" (Psalm 136).** As the people worshiped, **the** Sh'khinah **glory** came down to fill **Solomon's Temple**. Wow. It was the visible manifestation of the living **God**. With the addition of **the ark** of the Covenant, **the Temple** would become what **Solomon** had built it to become; not just a beautiful building, but the center of **His** people's worship, the earthly dwelling place for the true and living **God**.[155]



**The ark was brought in:** To bring **the ark** into **the Temple**, **Solomon** first had to go get **it** from **the tent** that **David** had pitched for **it** at the base of Mount Moriah **(Second Samuel 6:17).** Now it was time to bring **the ark** all the way up the mountain. The divine homecoming demanded the presence of everyone in **Isra'el** starting with **the king himself**. **Then Solomon assembled all the leaders of Isra'el, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the paternal clans of the people of Isra'el, to King Solomon in Yerushalayim, to bring the ark for the covenant of ADONAI out of the City of David, also known as Tziyon.**

The divine homecoming demanded the presence of everyone in **Isra'el** starting with **the king himself. All the men of Isra'el assembled before King Solomon at the festival in the month of Ethanium** (today known as the month

of Tishrei)**, the seventh month.** The timing of **the festival** seems to be significant. **Solomon** finished building **the Temple in the eighth month (First Kings 6:38). The ark** was **brought up** in **the seventh month**, which presumably means that **the Temple** was dedicated eleven **months** after **it** was finished, which would give enough time for **the priests** to make all the necessary preparations. During **the seventh month,** all of **Isra'el** would be celebrating **the festival** of Sukkot. It was then that **Moses** renewed the covenant with the second generation of freed **Israelites**. **He** also commanded **them** to read the Torah at that observance every seven years (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy, to see link click Ft – The Reading of Deuteronomy**). **Solomon's** choice of the Sukkot for the dedication, then, was strategic in that it was a traditional time of national gathering, a reminder of **Isra'el's** conquest of Canaan, and a time of religious renewal.[156]

**The priests and Levites took the ark of ADONAI and brought it up from the tent of meeting along with all the holy utensils,** in keeping with the Torah (see the commentary on **Numbers At – The Clan of Kohath**). The **God** who deserves everyone's praise also demands every sacrifice. We see this in the countless offerings people made as **the ark** ascended the Temple Mount. **King Solomon and the whole community of Isra'el assembled in his presence and were with him in front of the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen in numbers beyond counting or recording (First Kings 8:1-5; Second Chronicles 5:2-6).**

Appropriately enough, **the ark of the Covenant** was put in **the Most Holy Place** in **the Temple**. **The priests brought the ark for the covenant of ADONAI in to its place inside the Sanctuary to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim.** This sacred place was made in the shape of a perfect cube covered with pure **gold**. It was the throne room of **YHVH** – an earthly copy of the place where **God** rules in heaven **(Hebrews 9:24).** To be more specific, **the ark** of the Covenant was the place where **ADONAI sits enthroned above the cherubim (First Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1). Cherubim** are **holy** angels who are constantly worshiping and serving **Ha'Shem**. **The cherubim spread out their wings over the place for the ark, covering the ark and its poles from above.**[157] This emphatic comment probably is intended to clear up the possible misconceptions that **Aaron's staff (Numbers 17:10)** and **a jar of manna (Exodus 16:33)** were there as well. Those items were placed alongside **the ark** but never in it, but by **Solomon's** time **they** were no longer available for placement

in **the Most Holy Place.**[158]

**The poles,** placed horizontally between **the** giant **cherubim** on either side of **the ark, were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the sanctuary, but they could not be seen from outside. The priests** who served in **the Temple** never saw **the ark**, but **they** could see **the poles** that were used to carry it, and thus **they** knew that **the ark** was still in its rightful place. **There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moshe put there at Horeb, when ADONAI made the covenant with the people of Isra'el at the time of their leaving the land of Egypt (First Kings 8:6-9; Second Chronicles 5:7-10).**

Whenever we come into the presence of **YHVH** for worship, we should honor **Him** for **His** holiness. We should set **Him** apart as the one and only **God**. We should recognize **His** supremely perfect being. We should bow before **Him** as **the holy, holy, holy, God**. If we understand that **God** is everywhere and that **Yeshua** is with us wherever we go, then everything in life will be bathed with a sense of divine **holiness**. The same **God** who is adored by angels and dwells in awesome majesty is also living in us by **the Ruach** making our hearts a sacred space. Therefore, anywhere a believer stands is **holy** ground – even in places of darkness and sin. We carry **God's glory** with us wherever we go. Furthermore, every conversation we have is a **holy** opportunity that **the Spirit** can use to help us bear witness to the Gospel of the crucified and risen **Messiah**.[159]



**The glory came down:** This brings us to the most dramatic moment in the story of **Solomon** and **the ark of the Covenant**, the moment when **God** descended in unapproachable **glory**. The whole worship service had been spectacular. **When**

**the priests came out of the Holy Place (for all the cohanim who were present had consecrated themselves; they didn't keep to their divisions; also the Levites who were the singers, all of them – Asaf, Heman, Y'dutun and their sons and relatives – dressed in fine linen, with cymbals, lutes and lyres, stood on the east side of the altar; and with them 120 priests sounding trumpets), then, when the trumpeters and singers were playing in harmony, to be heard praising and thanking ADONAI, and they lifted their voices together with the trumpets, cymbals and other musical instruments to praise ADONAI.** But shortly after **the priests** carried **the ark** into **the Temple**, **they** came running back out because **the house of ADONAI was filled with the** Sh'khinah **glory; and as a result, the priests could not stand up to perform their service, for the** Sh'khinah **glory filled the Temple (First Kings 8:10-11; Second Chronicles 5:11-14).** So, just as **ADONAI** authenticated **the Tabernacle** (see the commentary on **Exodus Hh – The Glory of the LORD Filled the Tabernacle**), **God** now authenticated **the Temple** in the same way.

For all its magnificence, **the Temple**, with all its **golden** splendor, was made infinitely more magnificent with **the Presence** of **the** Sh'khinah **glory**. Here is how the Puritan Matthew Henry described what **Solomon's Temple** would be without **God**, "**The Temple**, though richly beautiful, yet while it was without **the ark** was like a body without a soul, or a candlestick without a candle, or a house without an inhabitant. All the cost and pains to build the splendid structure would be lost if **God** did not accept them; and, unless **He** desires to own it as the place where **He** will dwell, it is, after all, but a ruinous heap."

We could say the same thing about the Church of **Yeshua Messiah**, made up of Jewish and Gentile believers **(Ephesians 2:14)**. We are nothing without our **God**. This is true of buildings where we worship. Is anything more tragic than to see a magnificent house of worship where **YHVH** is no longer worshiped, where the Gospel is no longer preached, and where **the Spirit of God** is no longer present? The same principle holds true for the ministries of the Church. Unless **the Lord** is with us, none of our work that we do – none of the teaching and preaching, none of the caring and sharing, none of the mercy or missionary evangelism – will make any difference for the Kingdom of **God**. What would a prayer meeting be without **the Presence** of **God** to guide people in their prayers? What would a children's class be without the help of **the Ruach** in teaching and applying the Scriptures? What would mercy ministry be without **the** living **Presence** of **Messiah** in feeding the hungry

or visiting the prisoner?

But when **ADONAI** is in the house, **His Word** goes out with power and **His Spirit** changes people's lives from the inside out. What a blessing it was for **Isra'el** to see **the** Sh'khinah **glory** filling **the Temple** of **the LORD**. It was a blessing for **the king**, because the Sh'khinah confirmed that **God** would indeed bless **the house** that **Solomon** built in **His** name. It was a blessing for **the priests**, too, because it showed them the glorious holiness of **the One they** were called to serve.

It is also a blessing for us, because we too are in **the Presence** of **the God** of **Solomon**. **He** has revealed **Himself** to us, especially in **His Word**, so that we can perceive **His glory**. But we will never be able to manage or control **YHVH**. We will never be able to keep **Him** in one place and say that we know everything there is to know about **Him**. There will always be glorious mysteries about the character of **ADONAI** that go beyond our finite comprehension. The more we get to know **Him**, the more awesome **His glor**y will seem to us.[160]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, How Holy and Wonderful **You** are! **You** are Awesome in so many ways. **Your** Holiness is like a beautiful frame of exquisite gold around the Awesome picture of all **Your** other fantastic characteristics! **Your** steadfast love is so great! **For Your steadfast love is great to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds. (Psalms 57:10)**. It is even more wonderful because **You** are holy which means your love is always a perfect love! **Your** grace and mercy are so undeserved and so wonderful, yet **Your** holiness deepens the beauty of **Your** mercy and grace. In perfect holiness **You** know all about each person, nothing is hidden from **Your** omniscience; yet **You** in holy righteousness give those who love **You, Jesus'** righteousness so we may enter **Your** holy heaven and live there with **You** forever**. He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).** I bow in humble worship and adoration of my Wonderful and Awesome Holy Heavenly **Father**! May my life be a pleasure to **You** as I love to follow **You** in all I say, do and think. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*