

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

# The Ark of the Covenant

The most explosive archaeological find of all time



Due to restrictions by the host government not all the information on this subject can yet be made public

## Hidden for 2,600 years

**I**N 586 BC the Babylonian army destroyed the magnificent temple built by King Solomon several hundred years earlier.

The Bible lists (in *2 Kings* 24:13; 25:13-18; *Jeremiah* 52:17-23) the items which the Babylonian army carried away from Jerusalem. Missing from these lists are the important central objects of temple furniture, including the Ark of the Covenant. This reveals that these items never came into the possession of the Babylonian army.

Jewish traditional writings, e.g. *The Paralipomena of Jeremiah*, indicate that these important items were hidden just prior to the Babylonian invasion. Warned of the impending destruction, the prophet Jeremiah is said to have secreted the items in a cave.

When the Temple was rebuilt in later years, the instructions for the rebuilding of the Temple fails to make any mention of the Ark being re-instated.



1st Temple was destroyed in 586BC

Jeremiah had written that the Ark would be no more restored to the people for Israel (*Jeremiah* 3:16), and so it is evident that the Ark has remained hidden, its whereabouts unknown - that is until modern times.

Since the Hollywood film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* there has been a proliferation of unsuccessful attempts to find the Ark. But now, through someone who never planned to look for it, its exact whereabouts has been established finally.

# Discovered in Jerusalem

**R**ON Wyatt never intended to search for the Ark of the Covenant.

But while in Jerusalem in 1978, he had an extraordinary experience which led him to begin searching for it just north of the old city of Jerusalem. While walking near the "Skull face" of old Golgotha, he involuntarily pointed to a spot and spoke the words "That's Jeremiah's grotto, and the Ark of the Covenant is in there."



Tight squeeze - access was difficult

At the time, Ron was conversing with an influential person familiar with ancient antiquities, who subsequently offered to help obtain the necessary permits for Ron to begin excavating at the site.

Ron knew the experience was supernatural. But before accepting the offer, he decided to return to the United States to research the subject. After studying the subject carefully, he felt that the location he involuntarily pointed to was quite within the realms of possibility. In 1979 he returned to begin excavating.

Over the centuries, Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt several times, and each time the new city has been simply reconstructed on top of the old. Therefore Ron's crew had to remove many tons of rock and debris in the course of their excavation. All of it was sifted through for artifacts, a requirement of the Department of Antiquities, with which they would always comply.

Ron and his team dug along the base of the escarpment where he had pointed, in the vicinity of the "skull-face", a known Roman crucifixion site. During the next two years, in between his obligations as an anaesthetist, Ron and his team made some wonderful discoveries, and provided details to the authorities of their finds, along with any artifacts they retrieved.

As they excavated along the cliff face, they came to a base of bedrock with some squarish holes. Ron surmised that they were cross holes. They were approximately 12 inches square. The central one was covered with a stone plug, apparently to keep debris from falling into the hole when it was not being used.

Ron also noticed that there was a large crack that extended down the cliff face and into this central cross hole. It would be over a year later before he would learn that this crack extended 20 feet into the bedrock.

Considering they were excavating close to the "Skull face" on the Golgotha escarpment, Ron knew they had found the probable place of Christ's execution. The fact that the location was in the area of the Calvary escarpment and fit a number of aspects of the Biblical description made it the likely spot. However, Ron was not searching for the crucifixion site but the Ark of the Covenant. So he continued to search the cliff face for an opening of some kind. If the Ark was in that location, it certainly would be hidden in a cave, Ron knew.

Finally, a decision was made to break through the rock of the cliff-face. The rock is extremely hard, and it was difficult work, yet it wasn't long before they broke through into an open space. Enlarging the hole, they found the mountain was honeycombed with natural cavities and tunnels. Crawling through, they were inside the actual mountain called *Moriah*.

Ron and the team spent many hours chiselling through cave walls, searching for adjacent tunnels. This was difficult, arduous work, and took a toll on both health and spirits. But the work would ultimately bring the results sought after. In 1982 he finally located the cave chamber which held the long-lost temple items.

Ron realised that had he discovered the chamber containing the Ark of the Covenant without first searching the base of the Calvary escarpment, it is very unlikely he would have discovered the original crucifixion site. He then knew that providence had led in the circumstances prior to and during the entire excavation. It was not human wisdom which led to this discovery.



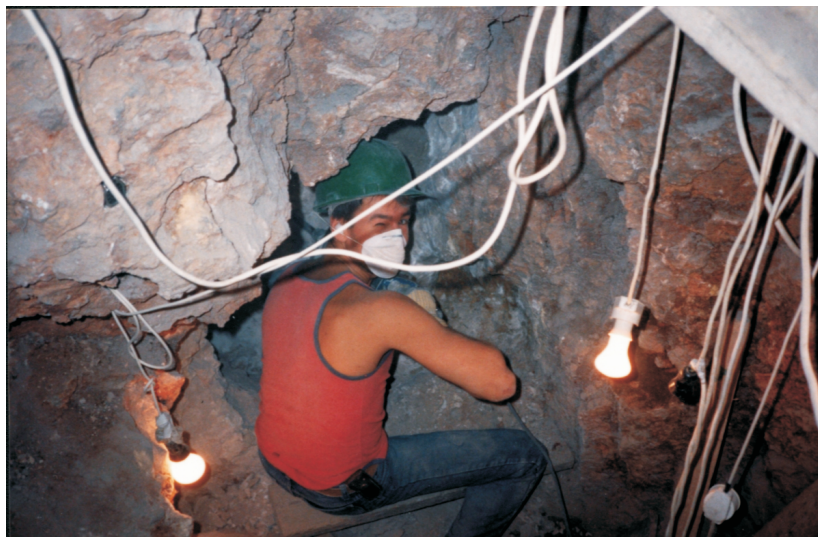
Trapdoor entry - Ron Wyatt at the entrance to the underground excavation

**O**N Wednesday, 6th January, 1982, Ron discovered the cave chamber where the Ark and other temple items had been hidden over 2600 years before.

The chamber was about 22 feet by 12 feet, although not exactly rectangular as one corner narrowed in. The chamber was filled almost to the ceiling with rocks. Beneath the rocks were dry-rotted timbers and dry-rotted animals skins, apparently undisturbed for quite some time.

Beneath the rocks, timbers and animal skins were missing items from the first temple, including the Table of Shewbread. At the far end of the chamber was a stone case, and housed within the stone case was the Ark of the Covenant, complete and intact, except that the carrying staves had been removed.

Ron was the first human to set eyes on these priceless items since they had been secreted from the city prior to its destruction in 586BC. But the biggest surprise was yet to come.



Difficult work - One of the Australian volunteers at work during the excavation



Cave System - Inside Mount Moriah, showing a portion of the excavation