



The Lost Ark of the Covenant: The Remarkable Story of How the Fabled Ark Was Found

Tudor Parfitt

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"The Lost Ark of the Covenant" is the real-life account of an astounding quest--professor Tudor Parfitt's effort to recover the revered artifact that contained the Ten Commandments, sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

This holy object disappeared from the Temple when the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem in 586 BC and was lost--apparently forever.

According to the biblical account, the Ark was built at the command of God, in accord with Moses's prophetic vision on Mount Sinai. The Ark, believed to be the throne of God, was carried by the Israelite high priests in the wilderness during their harrowing search for a homeland. When the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, the Ark entered the domain of legend. The mysterious disappearance of arguably the most important religious artifact in history led to a plethora of theories about the location of the Ark. Its whereabouts unknown, adventurers risked their lives and fortunes for over two millennia in attempts to discover this sacred treasure.

With painstaking historical scholarship, groundbreaking genetic science, and hair-raising fieldwork, Parfitt, who the "Wall Street Journal" calls "a British Indiana Jones," debunks the previous myths and reveals the shocking history of the Ark and its keepers. From Israel to Egypt, Ethiopia, and the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, the journey leads to places Parfitt could never have imagined. He encounters a cannibalistic tribe in Papua, New Guinea.

He is ambushed and shot at in Africa. And he narrowly escapes being kidnapped by Islamist outlaws in the wilder reaches of Yemen. Throughout his search, he is aided by a motley crew of kabbalistic mystics, Muslim holy men, charlatans and crooks, tribal elders, and scheming politicians.

"The Lost Ark of the Covenant" is a vivid and page-turning account of the culmination of two decades of research by an acclaimed scholar and adventurer. In the end, legend becomes reality as an unknown history comes to light, and with it our understanding of this lost treasure is changed forever.

The Lost Ark of the Covenant: The Remarkable Story of How the Fabled Ark Was Found Details

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Author : Tudor Parfitt

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Jeff says

Kind of a slog in parts, but a fun book overall, like reading the real-life Indiana Jones. Fascinated by learning of groups of people around the world you'd least expect claiming to be part of the House of David. The analysis of the history and culture of Zimbabwe's Lemba tribe, and their claims of Jewish ancestry in African bodies (backed up by DNA), was fascinating. And more diaspora in...Papua New Guinea?!

Nile River floating, campouts in Yemen, spellunking in South Africa, dodging assassins in Zimbabwe and more, there's definitely some good adventure in this one.

Caitlin says

Parfitt takes his readers on a wild goose chase throughout the world to find the fabled ark of the covenant. It is very interesting and Parfitt has a wonderful, tolerant, scholarly personality. His findings are controversial, but they really make you think. Why is it that no one has found the lost tribes of Israel? Rumors of them have turned up in far off places such as Kashmir, Africa, and in the islands of the Pacific. While he never finds the tangible ark, he comes to thought provoking conclusions.

Andrew Morgan says

This was a compelling & fascinating read ; anyone who belongs to or is interested in the history of the Abrahamic Religions should read this.I

It details the long scholarly journey Tudor Parfitt & his colleagues took over the years in locating the Lost Ark of the Covenant. He travels & visits with tribes across Africa, who may or may not be some of the lost tribes of Israel, and even visits Papua New Guinea & interacts with a tribe of cannibals, all in his quest to locate this artifact.

Steve says

Interesting in subject matter and that it reads quickly and like fiction. Engrossing and informative though it was, the skeptic in me kept screaming, "How does he have direct quotes from conversations long past?" And, naturally, our doughty professor is the hero of the tale. The research and reasoning sound plausible enough as to what the ark may have been, but while the conclusions are scholarly conjecture, they are still conjecture. Still, it was educational and well-written, so that's always worth something.

Julie says

While Mr. Parfitt's claims of finding a representation of the legendary Ark of the Covenant seem somewhat inconclusive, this book and his journey is more about the symbolism of the Ark and its lore throughout the world and the ages. He did a great job illustrating the context of the legend from a number of religious and historical texts. He also questions what the Ark itself is/was specifically. There are references of it as a box carrying sacred objects such as the Ten Commandments, a drum or a weapon, and even that there were multiple Arks over the course of three millennia. He concludes that our archetypal image of the Ark as a golden sheathed box crowned with cherubs is inaccurate.

More specifically, Parfitt explores the migration of a Jewish tribe from Israel to Africa and the idea that the Ark could have travelled with them to protect it from the enemies of Israel. He examined linguistic and cultural similarities and once the technology became available, used DNA testing to prove that these African people claiming Jewish decent did in fact share a common ancestor with a line of Jewish priests. He also chased some dead ends in Papua New Guinea and some misguided folklore in other parts of Africa and the Middle East, but I must admit there were some pretty amazing connections to be more than just pure coincidence.

The writing itself was decent, and I could appreciate Parfitt's penchant for adventure, scholarship and drinking, but it often got bogged down with some esoteric concepts. The end of his search for this profound religious artifact was somewhat anticlimactic, though it did illustrate how what he uncovered could represent what the Ark initially symbolized thousands of years ago and how that idea evolved in different parts of the world.

Jenny says

Truly remarkable and fascinating storytelling! This book of historical quality could have been told in a stuffy and dull fashion, particularly because of the content, but the author is truly the adventurer and brings this to life in his written words (and the people he has met along this foggy path). Open this book and from start to finish, he includes you in his adventure of seeking the truth about just what the Ark of the Covenant is, what it represents to humankind.

Anyone who is more interested in reading fiction will find this book a good transition into non-fiction, as it is penned in much the same way as the former, though it is a tome that is decorated with many-a knowledgeable fact (and how much more fascinating an artifact could he write about).

It's not really about science; it's more about philosophy, which is the foundation of the authors quest in finding this [fabled] artifact. Is the Ark a utensil, a person, or an idea? If found, what would that mean to every religion touched by and involved in its history? Will it help a person answer the questions Who am I and Why am I here? The Ark is like Christmas, the amount of time leading up to the specified element is the most exciting, but at the exact moment that particular element is unfolded before one's eyes it becomes a muted interest (and the days following seem underwhelming because what you've experienced has already happened and there's nothing to which to look forward).

Marie says

The author is quite the scholar--a Welshman who specializes in the lost tribes of Israel (and learned Hebrew and gads of other languages along the way) and becomes obsessed with figuring out what the Ark of the Covenant actually was and where it might be today. His inquiry takes him to Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Papua New Guinea among other locations. We get to know several fascinating characters also interested in the Ark, and Parfitt's droll descriptions are sometimes quite funny. Wonderful descriptions of territory and groups of black people who believe that they are descended from the Israelites. Great DNA detective work establishes that the priests of one of the tribes of South Africa have Cohen (rabbinical) genes. Facts are really hard to come by, but his obsession takes us on many fascinating adventures and I learned a lot. I listened to the book on CDs--it might be a bit more tedious in the reading, but definitely worth the effort!

Adam Hummel says

Slow at times, this book probably could have started from about half way through. Took a long time to get started on the actual subject-matter of the book, and it seemed like the author put in a lot of pages just to beef up the size of the book. In any event, the second half of the book was fantastic. I couldn't put it down and just wanted to know how it ended. Thought it was not what I expected, and still don't know how I feel about the ending, I definitely learned a lot, and thoroughly enjoyed the way the (second half of the) book was written. Definitely recommended for fans of archaeology, Jewish history, African history, Biblical history.

Fiona Ingram says

Tudor Parfitt's epic twenty-year quest for the lost Ark of the Covenant is a real page-turner! According to the Bible, the Ark contained the Ten Commandments given to Moses and possessed a divine, awesome power. It was used by the ancient Israelites in battle and, by Bible accounts, had the devastating powers of a modern-day weapon of mass destruction. Regarded as the holiest object in the world by the Jewish and Islamic faiths, the Ark suddenly disappeared from Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem over 2,500 years ago and was, apparently, lost forever. The author embarked on a long, arduous, and often dangerous journey in what became an obsessive quest to track down the truth behind this fabled artefact and discover its whereabouts today. I read Graham Hancock's *The Sign and the Seal: The Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant*, which claimed to have located the Ark in Ethiopia, it having been taken there by Menelik, the son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. So, it was with renewed interest that I tackled Mr. Parfitt's account of the link between the holy drum, or ngoma, of the Lemba tribe in Zimbabwe and the Ark. Tudor Parfitt's journey takes him on a trail of ancient documents and codes from Oxford, to Jerusalem, to Africa, and even to Papua, New Guinea. It encompasses not only his obsession with the Ark, but also the dreams and ambitions of friends, helpers, and other interested parties. The author also takes the reader on some astonishing side paths - the discovery that the DNA of the Lemba, an African tribe, links them directly to the Jews of the Middle East and specifically to the priestly tribe that would have been the guardians of the Ark; the vision that they have of their lost city Senna, and their wish to be recognized. In addition, the strange link that the Gogodala tribesmen of Papua, New Guinea have with Judaism and Israel is also fascinating and makes for one of the funniest travel accounts I have ever read, putting me in mind of Gerald Durrell. That section alone is well worth the book because one feels 'in the author's shoes' (covered with Shoosnake) so to

speak! I enjoyed the author's theory that there were multiple arks, for multiple reasons. Dealing with ancient, biblical, and tribal history is difficult. Oral traditions become twisted as ancient authors sought to portray their particular traditions or holy objects in the best possible light. One only has to read medieval and older accounts of historical figures and events to realize just how much 'tampering' went on, and that history is surely written by the victors. The book left me with unanswered questions: what happened to the Lemba after their DNA links to Israel were confirmed, and what were the results of the DNA testing on the eager Gogodala who, by all accounts, appear to be more Jewish than the Jews? In dealing with research in Africa, I, as someone living in South Africa, have a special appreciation of what Mr. Parfitt has endured in his search. Africa is a tragic story: a continent riven by corruption, nepotism, wholesale destruction of historical assets, criminality, lawlessness, and tribalism. It's a miracle he managed to find anything in Zimbabwe, given the present state of that country. In all, a fascinating read. With the plethora of investigations into ancient history and secrets, I think readers should enjoy what riveting nuggets authors such as Mr. Parfitt have uncovered.

Julian Walker says

A travelogue. An adventure story. And a real life adventurer.

A cracking read from many perspectives and even if he pays scant regard for religions and beliefs, and manages to effect some amazing coincidences in his quest, this is unquestionably a book for you if you want an exciting Indiana Jones type of escapism, only to realise that this is fact not fiction.

Well written, pacey and enjoyable – this is a book to be savoured.

Dean says

It was mildly interesting. I try to keep an open mind about people's claims that they did wondrous things, such as finding the Ark of the Covenant in this case. But it didn't convince me. Is it true? Maybe.

The book gives a fair amount of history of the Ark.

However, there was way, way, way too many self-glorifying pages of how well-traveled the author was, how he ate the best meals, drank the best wines, stayed at the best hotels with the best views in the world, etc., etc. I picked up the book to read history, not to read someone stroke their own ego.

If the author stuck to the history of the ark and his search of it, the book would have been about half as thick.

Peter says

For an academic, Parfitt spins a pretty good yarn. In fact with a few minor changes it'd make a decent novel; with a few more changes I think it'd make a fun film script.

It's difficult to take Parfitt to task with his knowledge of Jewish studies - after all he *is* a professor of Jewish studies at London's School of Oriental and African Studies as well as a fellow of the Oxford Centre of Hebrew and Jewish studies. Yet, even to my much less-than comprehensive knowledge, I spotted one 'howler'.

Nevertheless it's an intriguing tale of travel and speculation.

John says

I had a choice - this later one on audio, or the earlier *Journey to the Vanished City* in print. Although this one contains (somewhat) "spoilers" for that one, Graeme Malcolm as a narrator did such a good job that I'm looking forward to reading the other. The physical search doesn't really begin until the second half though - there's a lot of talking and planning to get through first, but it's worth the wait - there's an ending straight out of Hollywood!

Parfitt is actually pretty funny for an academic, and the secondary characters (Rueven, Daoud, etc.) prove good foils (for lack of a better term) in his his efforts to find The Ark.

Ray Stanley says

Interesting in parts, such as finding people in distant lands with a strong Semitic/Jewish connection via DNA sampling that were previously not known. Laborious in others as the author chronicles nights in bars, strange conversations with hopelessly romantic wanderers, and the disaster that is his dating life. Also, he repeatedly seems aloof that the Ark was God's presence amongst His people and that God's power to do anything he wanted was channeled through it. The author's speculation about gunpowder, explosives, or other man-made explanations for the destructive power of the Ark marked a stubborn refusal to have any curiosity about God and biblical accounts of His power.

Owlseyes says

Parfitt searches in several nations (Zimbabwe*, Israel, Ethiopia...) the Ark of the Covenant. He makes also some allusions on the genetic relationship between the Ethiopian Falasha people and the Jews; and the Jews and the Lemba people: the "black Jews" of Southern Africa.

Still looking for.
-Carry on Parfitt.

*"700 year old bowl in Harare museum sparks war of words with Jewish historian"

*<http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot...>

UPDATE:

New excavation by a Christian team uncovers intriguing finds at the site where Bible says the tabernacle and Ark rested for almost 400 years BY AMANDA BORSCHER-DAN July 17, 2017.
in: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/with-bib...>
