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## RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK OF THE COVENANT

By Mark A. Fox

### Introduction:

In 1981 there was an American action-adventure film directed by Steven Spielberg, starring Harrison Ford.

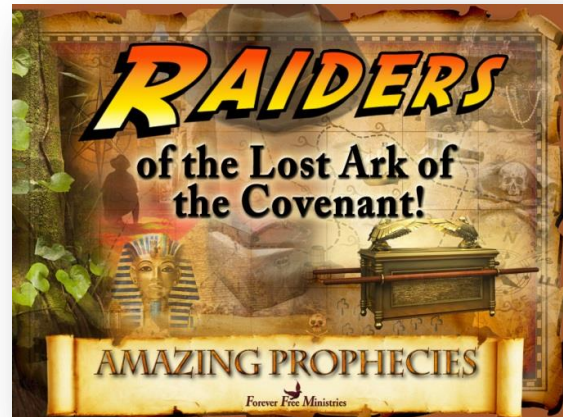
The Plot: In 1936 there was treasure hunter/archaeologist named Indiana Jones...Indiana deduces that the Nazis are searching for the Ark of the Covenant, the biblical chest built by the Israelites to contain the fragments of the Ten Commandments. The Nazi's were desperately wanting the Ark to make their armies invincible! Indiana Jones was determined to find the Ark of the Covenant before the Nazi could discover it! So the focus of the movie was the prized Ark of the Covenant! It remains one of the highest-grossing films ever made.

### THE ARK OF THE COVENANT:

The Ark of the Covenant was extremely sacred!

It is one of the most prized hidden treasures...

- A mysterious presence...
- A priceless ancient artifact...
- An object so sacred that those who touched it died instantly!
- For centuries this sacred treasure has been missing.
- Nobody knows where it is.
- Some predict that it will be found.
- Today some are still looking for it.
- It's treasure is more precious than...
- it's writings are also etched in stone .
- They are timeless!
- They are profound!
- It is beyond any wonder of the world...
- The Ark of the Covenant was the central piece of furniture both in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple of Solomon.



### Where was the Ark of the Covenant placed?

"And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, "about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel." Exodus 25:22

### What else do we know about the Ark of the Covenant?

- Wooden chest overlaid with gold.
- Size of an office desk.
- Lid was solid gold and known as the Mercy Seat.
- Ten Commandments inside.
- Aaron's budded rod.
- Pot of manna.
- The High Priest only stood before it for one day alone – the last day of the Biblical calendar!
- Priest sprinkled blood 7 times on the Day of Atonement.

### What miracle did God work at the Jordan River as the children of Israel entered the Promised Land? Joshua 3:15-17

- The Ark was carried into Canaan when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, and it was instrumental in their victory over Jericho (Joshua 6). When the Israelites, led by Joshua toward the Promised Land, arrived at the banks of the River Jordan, the Ark was carried in the lead preceding the people and was the signal for their advance (Joshua 3:3, 6). During the crossing, the river grew dry as soon as the feet of the priests carrying the Ark touched its waters, and remained so until the priests—with the Ark—left the river after the people had

passed over (Josh. 3:15-17; 4:10, 11, 18). As memorials, twelve stones were taken from the Jordan at the place where the priests had stood (Josh. 4:1-9).

**What was a primary lesson that God was teaching the children of Israel when He had them take the Ark of the Covenant in front of them at the Jordan River?** TRUST & OBEY

**What were the disruptive problems that the Ancient Philistines encountered since they captured the Ark?**

- Land teeming with rodents.
- Strange painful plague.
- Ark in the temple of the fish god, Dagon in the city of Ashdod.
- Unseen hands had pushed the statue of Dagon over on its face in front of the Ark.
- Next morning, statue lying on the threshold of the temple, head and hands broken off.
- Problem spread from the temple of Dagon to the rest of the land.
- A strange plague of painful tumors swept the country.
- Ark was moved from city to city.
- Finally rested in Ekron.

**How did King David respond when the Ark of the Covenant was returned to Jerusalem?** He Celebrated!

**Is there a mysterious magical power to the Ark of the Covenant?** No secret power with the Ark of the Covenant.

**What are some of the hidden secrets of the Ark of the Covenant for the last days?**

- The original is in heaven. – Rev. 11:19
- Jesus stands in front of it. – Heb. 4:14-16
- The top of it is called the “Mercy Seat”

**WHERE IS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT?**

- Movie explanation: Carried off by the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak when he plundered the “treasures” of the Temple in 925 B.C.
- In the 1980's, reports circulated that an American group had actually discovered the real Ark of the Covenant on Mount Nebo in Jordan.
- The Chapel of the Tablet at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion in Axum allegedly houses the original Ark of the Covenant.

**What are the two primary views in Rabbinic Literature?**

- A. Carried off to Babylon
- B. Hidden to prevent it from being carried off into Babylon and then never brought back.

**What is the most important thing to remember about the present location of the Ark of the Covenant on earth?**

- The problem is that the Bible is silent about what happened to it before or after the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.

**WHERE IS THE ULTIMATE PRIZED ARK OF THE COVENANT?**

- Where is Jesus now? Revelation 11:18,19. “Temple of God was opened in heaven.”
- Jesus stands at His mercy seat to intercede for us.
- Jesus stands by His Ten Commandments.

**Who is attacking the Ten Commandments and those who want to keep them?** The Dragon, the devil. Revelation 12:17

**What is the most influential religious system in the world and where is it exalting itself?**

- 2 Thess. 2:3,4.- Called “Man of Sin” because it changed God’s Law and teaches countless false doctrines.
- It operates “in the temple of God” which is the Christian church. See 1 Cor. 6:19,20; 3:16,17.

**Who has changed the Ten Commandments?**

- The Roman Papal Power has revised, altered, changed the Ten Commandments.
- Daniel 7:25. “Think to change times and laws” of the “Most High” = Ten Commandments of God.
- Revelation 13:3. The whole world is influenced by the Roman Papal Power and its teachings.
- Deleted the second commandment! In which God prohibits making images and bowing down to them. See Exodus 20:4,5
- Divided the tenth commandment! They split into two the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment in which God forbids coveting.

**According to the book of Revelation what is the primary focus of the great controversy between Christ and Satan?**

- Revelation 22:14; 14:12. -Obedience to the Ten Commandments.
- Jesus leads us to obey them and the enemy leads the wicked to knowingly disobey them.

**So who are the real RAIDERS of the Ark of the Covenant in the last days?**

- This wicked, perverse, degraded generation is trashing, trampling and twisting the Ten Commandments of God by their wicked deeds. Paul lists 19 prevailing sins that would dominate the world in the last days. He says with the exception of a small minority, that there would be a “form of godliness” but no power of a changed life. 2 Timothy 3:1-5

**Is the United States of America following in the downward steps that led to the fall of Rome?** When Rome fell, it was –

1. Filled with luxury and wealth.
2. A pleasure-mad amusement-centered culture.
3. Immersed in sports and entertainment.
4. An immoral, sex-centered society.
5. A violent, brutal society.
6. Over-extended militarily.
7. Over-extended financially.

**Do most Americans even know all the Ten Commandments?**

- A new survey shows more Americans can name the seven ingredients in a McDonald's Big Mac hamburger than the Ten Commandments.

**What is going on in the Social World as Jesus is standing by His Ten Commandments?**

- THERE WAS A SUDDEN CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN AMERICA IN THE 1960'S!
- While we celebrated the amazing scientific and technological accomplishment of landing on the moon...
- While we were going higher than ever before.
- The generation of youth were plunging into the deep abyss of sin.
- The young people were getting high and having sex outside of marriage with no shame.
- The innocence of youth was gone overnight.
- While we were losing the war away from home in Vietnam
- We were losing the war with evil at home
- While we were saying peace and love
- We were losing true peace and true love
- This horrible trend continues unabated.
- The relentless pull of sin has taken control of our young people today.
- Most youth are totally turned off by religion.
- Most youth today are not interested in church.

**CONSIDER THE COUNTERCULTURE OF THE 1960'S**

**Has the Sexual Revolution forever changed our culture and society?**

- Unbridled Sex is everywhere! / Our society is obsessed with sex!/ Sex sells!
- It permeates the movies and the television programs we watch, the music we hear, the magazines and books we read, the talk shows we listen to.
- The sexual revolution has been with us for three decades. Newsweek magazine documented the sweeping change that began as far back as 1967: "The old taboos are dying. A new, more permissive society is taking shape . . . And, behind this expanding permissiveness is . . . a society that has lost its consensus on such crucial issues as premarital sex, . . . marriage, birth control and sex education . . ." (November 13, 1967, p. 74).

**The Sixties ushered in a Social Revolution or counterculture that has affected almost every aspect of American life today.**

- The 1960s was a watershed decade in modern American history. The United States that emerged in its aftermath was very different from the country that existed before. Examining the 1960s in great depth likewise allows us a deeper understanding of post-World War II American history, revealing the roots of many contemporary issues and conflicts. BROWN UNIVERSITY
- The 1960's was an extremely changing times for the United States! This decade has shaped America and made it how it is today.

**ROCK & ROLL Revolution:**

- The Beatles: The Single: "I Want to Hold Your Hand" (1963) cemented the band's international success when it achieved enormous US popularity a few weeks before their debut in the country
- On February 7, 1964, Beatle mania hit America full force! The Fab Four arrived at Kennedy Airport in New York City – Thousands of screaming fans were waiting for them! They were an overnight sensation!
- Newspapers called it: The BRITISH INVASION
- Sang 5 songs on the Ed Sullivan Show watched by 73 million.
- In sixty days in 1964, the Beatles played 53 concerts across the United States.
- A wild excited crowd jammed Shea Stadium in New York City
- "If there hadn't been an Elvis, there wouldn't have been the Beatles." — John Lennon
- "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue with that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first - rock and roll or Christianity." John Lennon

**What were the most glaring social characteristics of the 1960's?**

- Social revolution! / Sexual revolution! / Drugs revolution!/ Rock & Roll revolution!

**WOODSTOCK – August, 1969**

- 500,000 gathered for this music and art festival in upstate New York.

- A dairy farmer offered his hay field to be used for this Art and Musical Festival.
- Woodstock – the Movie from Warner Bros.
- The chief characteristics were: Peace, Free Love and Rock & Roll
- It is estimated that 90% of the half million who gathered were attended Woodstock smoked marijuana.
- There was no violence but there was sexual immorality and getting high on drugs.
- **Now it is Woodstock all the time!** Drugs & Alcohol \* Rock & Roll \* Sexual immorality

**What did one of the most popular Rock & Roll singers of all time sing that encapsulates the fruit of this kind of sinful lifestyle?**

- “I can’t get no satisfaction!” Mick Jagger sang in a top 40 song.

**What is a shocking example of a kind of “Woodstock” during the days of Moses? Exodus 32:1-28**

- After 40 days alone at Mt. Sinai, Moses came down with the Ten Commandments.
- While Moses was getting closer to God than ever before and shining brighter than ever before and received the Ten Commandments....
- This was WoodStock at the golden calf!
- There was sexual immorality. There was immoral dancing. There was misuse of music. This was Woodstock at the base of Mt. Sinai
- This was rebellion. This was breaking of God’s Ten Commandments
- These were God’s people. This was the church
- These were the people that had been set free from abject slavery!
- These were the people that had been miraculously delivered through the Red Sea!
- These were the favored people that were on their way to the Promised Land!

**THIS WAS AN EXPRESSION OF REBELLION!**

- Sexual Immorality \* Misuse of Music \* Drinking \* immoral dancing \* Sinful Idolatry
- “do not be conformed to this world” Romans 12:2
- AMERICA HAS HER GOLDEN CALVES!

**What is the new covenant? Hebrews 8:10**

- Do not limit what Jesus can do for you and me.
- He keeps His covenant.
- He says He will help us to be in harmony with Him and His character of love.
- We are living in a covenant relationship with Jesus.

**What is the greatest miracle? Ezekiel 36:26,27**

- Jesus worked many mighty miracles.
- Jesus gave sight to the blind.
- Jesus cleansed the lepers.
- Jesus restored the paralytics and crippled.
- Jesus raised the dead.
- Man excuses, justifies and minimizes sin.
- God magnifies and saves us from sin.

**After God gave the Ten Commandments where were they placed?** In the Most Holy Place. - JESUS LIVING IN US GIVES US POWER TO OBEY GOD’S WORD & WILL!

**What does the Bible call worship to God when it lacks the power of a changed life?** “A form of godliness but denying the power thereof.” 2 Timothy 3:5

**How does Jesus describe the Spiritual condition of professed Christians in the last days?**

- The Lukewarm Church Revelation 3:14-21 - Wretched, Miserable, Poor, Blind, Naked,
- The church is asleep while the clear signs of the times are blasting their trumpet warnings to wake up before it is forever too late

**Jesus tells Laodicea two things:** You need Me more than you realize. I can do more for you than you realize. Jesus shows us our need of His grace more every day.

**What did Jesus life, teachings and death reveal about His Ten Commandments?** He taught us to obey God’s Law of Love.

**Did Jesus keep the Ten Commandments?** John 15:10

**Jesus wants our love and is able to help us to love Him with all of our hearts.** Matthew 22:37-40 This life is all about learning to love God and man.

**Did Jesus Christ change the Ten Commandments?** Matthew 5:17-19 -

- After 40 days alone at the wilderness, Jesus came down with teachings about the Ten Commandments

**What will be a major surprise on judgment day?** Matthew 7:21-23

**GOD WILL TEST OUR LOVE FOR HIM. - Who were two men who were wealthy that needed to make a dramatic change in their life. To turn away from selfishness and covetousness to unselfishness and love to others?**

- Zacchaeus. – Luke 10 & Rich Young Ruler. – Matthew 19

**What did Jesus say about true love to Him?** John 14:15 “If you love Me keep My commandments.”

**What should lead us to want to obey all of the Ten Commandments?** Love to God. John 14:15; 1 John 2:3,4; Exodus 20:4,5

**What did the death of Christ reveal on the Cross?** The cross reveals: God cannot change His Law of Love but He can forgive those who have broken it.

**Jesus shows us our need of His grace more every day. – John 15:5 “Without Me you can do nothing.”**

- Power to obey the Law of God.
- Power to endure trials of our faith.
- Power to witness for Christ.
- Power to reflect the character of Christ.
- Power to reveal the fruits of the Spirit.
- Power and grace to overcome sin.
- Power and grace to pass the judgment.
- Paul desired to experience the resurrecting power of Jesus every day: “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection” Phil. 3:10

**What did the Apostle Paul teach about the Ten Commandments and the grace of God?** He spoke a lot about the Ten Commandments.

**What does the Apostle Paul say about genuine faith?** Romans 3:31. Faith upholds the Law of God.

**What does the Apostle Paul say about the purpose of God’s grace?** Romans 6:14,15. To give us power over sin.

- We are under grace meaning that we can by the grace of God uplift or obey the Law of God and not live in sin or transgression to that beautiful code of love.

**What did James say about the Ten Commandments?** James 1:23-25; 2:8-12. If we break one of them we are guilty of breaking all of them.

**What did John say about the Ten Commandments?** 1 John 2:3,4; 3:4; 5:2,3. The definition of sin is breaking God’s Law.

**What does the book of Revelation say about the Ten Commandments?** Revelation 12:17; Revelation 22:14. God’s saints are identified as uplifting and preaching all of the Ten Commandments.

**What is Jesus doing now?** Hebrews 9:24; 8:1,2; 1 Tim. 2:5; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1,2. Jesus is our Mediator, our Intercessor, our Great High Priest, our Advocate with the Father.

**Do we earn Salvation by our obedience?** Salvation is a gift of grace to be received by faith in Jesus. Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 6:23; John 6:37

**What are the two primary laws in the Bible?** Deuteronomy 31:24-26; Colossians 2:14-17 –

- Moses ceremonial law done away with at the cross.
- Ten Commandments of God. – Exodus 20

**What is the whole duty of man?** Eccl. 12:13,14. Keep the commandments of God.

**What does the book of Revelation call us to do in the last days?** “Fear God” Rev. 14:6,7

## **Genuine Faith Always leads to loving obedience to God.**

**“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary we establish the law.”  
Romans 3:31**

- The law and faith go together.
- True faith uplifts the law of God.
- Genuine faith in Jesus enables us to keep the law of God.
- Through faith the Holy Spirit establishes the law of God in our heart.

- Although we all fall short at times we cannot excuse knowingly go against God's Law.



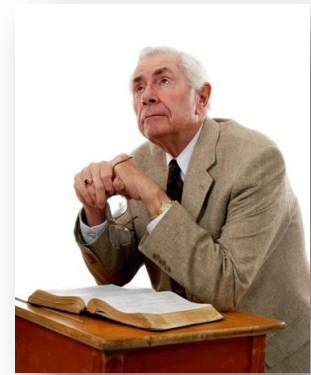
## How does the Bible define sin?

**"Sin is the transgression of the law of God." 1 John 3:4**

Some believe that the law of God has been done away with.

Let us think prayerfully...

- If there is no law there is no such thing as sin.
- If there is no such thing as sin there is no need of grace.
- If God could have done away with His law, Jesus would not have to have died.
- Jesus died because He could not do away with His law.
- The cross uplifts the Law of God.



**Appeal: Repent of all sin, of any known transgression of the Law of love, the Ten Commandments.**

## What is the purpose of the Law of God?

**"By the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20; 7:7**

- The law of God is like a mirror, it points out sin.
- The law of God cannot save us.
- The law of God helps us realize our need and leads us to Jesus Christ.
- The law of God is summed up by the word love. Therefore, whatever is unloving is a sin.

**Appeal: Allow the Holy Spirit to point out any sin in your life.**