

No One Must Know

2 Maccabees 2:1-11

(Richard Elliott Friedman, Who Wrote the Bible?, chapter 10, "The Sacred Tent")

by Don Falkos

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God gave Moses instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle, a tent that would be the Lord's dwelling place. God also provided plans for the sacrificial altar, the lampstand, the altar of incense, and all the other accoutrements of purification. But most important of all, God instructed Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was to reside in the Most Holy Place, the Holy of Holies, inside the Tabernacle.

Several hundred years later, King Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem. In the Temple's Holy of Holies were two massive Cherubim. The Tabernacle of old was set up under the wings of the Cherubim. The Ark of the Covenant now resided in the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies inside the Temple's Holy of Holies.

Three hundred fifty years later, Jerusalem was under dire threat from Babylon. Following God's instructions, the prophet Jeremiah secretly took the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Altar of Incense to Mount Nebo, where Moses had gone long before to look at the Promised Land before he died. On the mountain Jeremiah found a large cave, where he hid these priceless, sacred objects. Then he blocked up the entrance to the cave.

He proclaimed to the people of Judah, "You are about to be carried off into exile. No one must know where these objects are hidden until the Lord brings us together again as a nation. At that time, a pillar of cloud will settle on the hiding place, blazing with God's own dazzling light."