Now, this was not the ark which Bezalel made [for the Tabernacle]. Because they did not occupy themselves in the making of the Tabernacle until after the Day of the Atonement, for it was only when he came down from the mountain that he commanded them concerning the construction of the Tabernacle, and it was Bezalel who made, first the Tabernacle, and afterwards the ark and the vessels. Thus it follows that this ark [mentioned here] was a different one, and it was this [ark] that went forth with them to battle, while the one that Bezalel made did not go forth to battle except in the days of Eli and they were punished for this and it was captured [by the Philistines].

Now one may ask: ‘And after they removed the Tablets from this ark and placed them in the ark which Bezalel made, what happened to this ark? And why did this one go forth with the people to battle [since it was empty, the Tablets having been removed]?’ Some say that the broken Tablets lay in that ark, and so in fact it is found in the Agadah, but these are the words of a single Sage, for thus we learned in tractate Shelach (VI:1): ‘We are taught: Rabbi Yehuda son of Rabbi Ila says: Israel had two arks in the wilderness, one in which the broken Tablets lay etc. But the Rabbinis say: there was only one, and once it went forth to battle in the days of Eli and it was captured [by the Philistines].’ The opinion of our Rabbis throughout the Talmud is also not so [that there were two arks]: but that [both] the whole Tablets and the broken Tablets lay in the [same] ark. Besides, where was this ark containing the first Tablets and the fragments of the tables were deposited in the ark? He learns it from the exposition reported [also] by R. Meir. For R. Joseph learned: Which thou brakest and thou shalt put them: [the juxtaposition of these words] teaches us that by the Name, even the name of the Lord of Hosts that sitteth upon the Cherubim? [The repetition of the word ‘name’] teaches that the tablets and the fragments of the tablets were deposited in the ark. Thus he learns it from the exposition reported [also] by R. Joseph. And whence does R. Meir learn that the fragments of the [first] tablets were deposited in the ark? He learns it from the exposition reported [also] by R. Meir. For R. Joseph learned: Which thou brakest and thou shalt put them: [the juxtaposition of these words] teaches us that both the tablets and the fragments of the tablets were deposited in the ark.

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Shemot Rabbah 31

God replied: 'I will not banish Israel, even if I destroy My world,' as it says, Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured... then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel, etc. (Jer. XXXI, 37); 'But,' said God, 'nevertheless I have made a condition with them that if they sin, the Temple will be sealed in pledge,' for it says, And I will set My tabernacle (mishkani) among you (Lev. XXVI, 11). Do not read: 'mishkani' but mashkuni (My pledge). This is also what Balaam said: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! thy dwellings (mishkenotheka) O Israel! (Num. XXIV, 5). Two dwellings [are referred to]. When they are standing, they are called 'tents', but when they are destroyed, they are referred to as mishkonothea (thy pledges).

Eichah Rabah 4

It is written, A psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance (Ps. LXXIX, 1). The text should have used a phrase like, 'Weeping of Asaph,' ' Lament of Asaph,' ' Dirge of Asaph '; why does it say, 'A psalm of Asaph'? It may be likened to a king who erected a bridal-chamber for his son which he plastered, cemented, and decorated; but his son entered upon an evil course of living. The king forthwith ascended to the chamber, tore the curtains and broke the rods; but [the son's] tutor took a piece of rod which he used as a flute and played upon it. People said to him, 'The king has overthrown his son's chamber but not poured out his anger upon his son.' He replied to them, 'I sing a Psalm because the king overturned his son's chamber but did not pour out his anger upon his son.' Similarly people said to Asaph, ' The Holy One, blessed be He, has caused Temple and Sanctuary to be destroyed, and you sit singing a Psalm!' He replied to them, 'I sing a Psalm because the Holy One, blessed be He, poured out His wrath upon wood and stone and not upon Israel. That is what is written, AND HE HATH KINDLED A FIRE IN ZION, WHICH HATH DEVOUNED THE FOUNDATIONS THEREOF.

Talmud Yoma 23a

Our Rabbis taught: It once happened that two priests were equal as they ran to mount the ramp and when one of them came first within four cubits of the altar, the other took a knife and thrust it into his heart. R. Zadok stood on the steps of the Hall and said: Our brethren of the house of Israel, hear ye! Behold it says: If one be found slain in the land... then thy elders and judges shall come forth . . . On whose behalf shall we offer the heifer whose neck is to be broken, on behalf of the city or on behalf of the Temple Courts? All the people burst out weeping. The father of the young man came and found him still in convulsions. He said: May he be an atonement for you. My son is still in convulsions and the knife has not become unclean.' [His remark] comes to teach you that the cleanness of their vessels was of greater concern to them even than the shedding of blood. Thus is it also said: Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other.