

THE PRECIOUS VESSELS THAT WERE BROUGHT BACK FROM BABYLON; THEIR NUMBER AND REMARKABLE SIGNIFICANCE. (Ezra 1:7-11)

In the type, the golden vessels of the Temple were carried away and profaned by literal Babylon: in the antitype, the precious, divine (golden) truths, pertaining to the service of the true Temple, the Church ... were far removed from their proper places, perverted and misapplied by mystic Babylon.—S.S. Vol. 2, p. 209

This work of opening up the truth, and examining and appreciating its beauty, is properly due now, and is being accomplished. We thank God for the privilege of being engaged with others in this blessed work of bringing the golden vessels of the Lord's house (precious truths) back from the captivity of (symbolic) Babylon the Great . . . and replacing them in the sanctuary.—S.S. Vol. 3, p. 120

The text of Scripture from the Book of Ezra, properly considered, includes two general groups of vessels or utensils that had belonged to the services of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. The first of these groups may be said to be a list of utensils of several classes,—some of gold, some of silver, and some of materials not stated. The knives mentioned may very likely have had handles of gold with blades of some other metal, as copper or iron. These are understood to have been the slaughter-knives used in the slaying of the sacrificial animals. Probably the materials of which these utensils were composed are not so important as their numbers, for the sum of the utensils composing this list, agrees with the number of years in one of the outstanding prophetic periods of the Bible.

But those of the second group were all alike in composition:— each of them, it seems, was of part gold and part silver, such as a basin which may have had handles of gold with body of silver,—to use a hypothetical example. These vessels were most precious and very beautiful, as are the truths which they represent. Rotherham's translation gives the meaning of Ezra 1:11, as follows: "All the utensils in gold and silver were five thousand and four hundred,—THE WHOLE did Sheshbazzar bring up with the upbringing of the exile, out of Babylon unto Jerusalem."

The translators have had some difficulty with this passage of Scripture, some of whom have supposed that the statement, "This is the number of them," had reference to the first mentioned group only. The statement under consideration seems to be better rendered by Rotherham, "And these were the numbers of them." The true meaning undoubtedly is, that the group of 5,400 vessels is **in addition to** those previously listed.

Among the translators who have erred in this matter are those of the body of scholars who composed the recent Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Because the number of vessels listed in the first group is not 5,400 (verse 11) these have been driven for the sake of consistency with an erroneous theory, to adopt the readings of the apocryphal book of 1 Esdras,* where the numbers are quite different; but do show mathematical consistency with such an interpretation.

* RSV, Ezra 1:9-11

It should be pointed out, however, that the numbers of the vessels given in the apocryphal and spurious book mentioned, contain no symbolic meaning, and are wholly devoid of any message for our encouragement and instruction upon whom the ends of the ages are come; and are quite worthless.

To recapitulate, the numbers of the vessels as shown in the standard Hebrew text of Ezra and as rendered in the King James Bible and in the Revised Version, are correct, and the total number of them is the rather odd and mysterious number, 7,899. (2499 + 5400 = 7899)

In the foregoing paragraph I have indicated that the number of the utensils in the first group, is 2499. The list follows:

Chargers of gold	30
Chargers of silver	1000
Knives	29
Basins of gold	30
Silver basins, second sort	410
Other vessels	<u>1000</u>
	2499

This period of exactly 2499 years is explained and prominently set forth in Scripture Studies Vol. 2, Chapter VI, Earth's Great Jubilee. This is, in fact, the actual number of years from the passing away of the law type of the jubilee, to the introduction of the antitype or substance of the jubilee in autumn 1874 A.D.

It is not generally understood by those who profess to be established in the present truth, that there was, as a matter of history, at that time, a beginning of the primary feature of the jubilee; namely, the sounding of the antitypical trumpet of jubilee, in the going forth for the first time in the history of man, of the trumpet message concerning the object and manner of Christ's return.

As the first feature of the typical year of jubilee consisted of the **announcement** by the jubilee trumpet, of coming restitution or restoration of every family in Israel to its original inheritance in the land,— so the first feature of antitypical jubilee consisted of the **announcement** of coming restitution or restoration of the whole human family to its first inheritance, perfect human life in a perfect paradise home. I here invite attention to S.S. Vol. 2, page 186, where the period of 2499 years (which is the foreknown and predetermined interval between typical and antitypical jubilee) is shown; and to the words on page 187, "So, then, if the great Jubilee were to be only **a year**, like its type, it would have commenced October A.D. 1874, at the end of 2499 years, and would have ended October A.D. 1875. But this is not the type, but the reality: it was not a **Jubilee Year**, but the antitypical **Thousand years of Restitution of all things**, which commenced October A.D. 1874."

Again, attention is invited to page 193 of the same volume where, in an explanation of the jubilee cycles viewed in prophecy, we read: "The first nineteen cycles had Jubilee Years, but the fifty-one since have had none; hence we must reckon fifty-one cycles of forty-nine years each, or 2499 years (49 x 51 = 2499), from the last typical Jubilee observed by Israel to the anti-type."

As a student of the Great Pyramid—fittingly referred to by Pastor Russell as the “Bible in Stone,”—I can say that this stone witness to Jehovah, testifies in no uncertain way to the prophetic jubilee period of 2499 years, which is particularly honored in the Pyramid, as one of three chronological periods pertaining to the first and second advents of the Messiah, which together serve to fix and establish the “standard” values of the dimensions of the King’s Chamber, the Pyramid’s Holy of Holies and the chamber which, in the words of Piazzi Smyth, is the one “to which, and for which, and toward which, the whole edifice was originally built.” It is the chamber which, through its wonderful relationships to all other parts of the Pyramid, dominates and controls their dimensions, including the lengths of its passages,—for human measurements alone are not accurate enough for this purpose.

But the witness of the precious vessels to the truth of the second presence of Christ since autumn 1874 A.D. is not confined to the period of 2499 years, but includes within its scope, the **complete** argument contained in the chapter on “Earth’s Great Jubilee.” Attention is now invited to page 194, at the top, “The full number of Jubilee cycles which God had ordained was seventy, as shown by the plain statements relative to the reason for the **seventy years desolation** of their land. This was to include those that Israel had observed in an unsatisfactory manner, which we have seen were nineteen, as well as all the cycles to follow, up to the antitype. We now reckon all these from their commencement on entering Canaan, and see where they end.

19 Cycles with Jubilees added (50 years each) ..	= 950 years.
51 Cycles without Jubilees (49 years each)	= <u>2499</u> years.
70 Cycles, therefore, cover a period of	3449 years.”

This feature, together with that which next follows, serves to rule out absolutely, any other system of chronology, or any other method by which the date 1874 is obtained for the antitypical jubilee; for neither the total of 3449 years (as shown above) nor that of one year more (as a type of the law) can be obtained by any method of computation other than that which is based upon the true chronology of the Word of God, in which the 70 full years of the desolations of Jerusalem and Judah are accounted for and recognized.—Dan. 9:2

In viewing the jubilee as a type of the law, we now turn again to page 186, where there is a diagram of the jubilee thus considered and where there are shown the two consecutive periods of the jubilee,— first, the 19 jubilee cycles of exactly 50 years each (Lev. 25:8-11); and second, the antitypical cycle of 50 x 50 years, ending with the year which began in autumn 1874, which year then introduced the anti-type of 1000 years of antitypical jubilee and was signaled by the anti-typical trumpet of jubilee.

Typical cycles with jubilees	950 years
One grand cycle, culminating in the antitype	<u>2500</u> years
Total	3450 years

As already mentioned, antitypical jubilee began with the sounding of the antitypical trumpet of jubilee,—the message concerning the object and manner of Christ’s return. This trumpet has been sounding ever since and must continue for some years yet to come. The essence of this trumpet message is expressed in the words, “The year of jubilee is come, returning ransomed sinners home.”

We then have:

The jubilee cycles viewed prophetically	3449 years
The jubilee cycles viewed as a type in the law	3450 years
Earth’s jubilee lasts a thousand years	<u>1000</u> years
Total	7899 years

Returning now to the precious vessels that were brought back from Babylon, we have found their numbers to be:

Vessels of the first group	2499
Vessels of the second group	<u>5400</u>
Total	7899

This total of 7899 years does not stand for the length of any single chronological or prophetic period in the divine plan, but is the sum of several such periods, all of which, by one master stroke of the divine hand as displayed in the inspired Book of Ezra, are verified as correct.

The return of the Lord and the beginning of His invisible presence in 1874, also marked the beginning of the seventh millennium since the fall of man in Eden. This seventh millennium synchronizes with the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. The inspiring truth that we are living in the days of Christ’s **parousia**, and the companion truth that a harvest (with a harvest message) has been in progress since its chronological beginning in 1874, is absolutely fundamental to a proper grasp of the present (dispensational) truth; but it is not all of the present truth. Much more has been added to the harvest message since that date, and more must be added yet before the final consummation of the harvest and the ingathering of all the saints into the heavenly condition. The secret of the Lord is with them that truly reverence him and His word of truth.—Ps. 25:14; Prov. 3:32. The seventh millennium since Eden should not be confused with the thousand year reign of Christ and the Church in power and glory, which has not yet begun.

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