

Beauties of the Truth

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The Twenty-Four Elders
Two Kings
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Two Treatises Available

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The Twenty-Four Elders

“Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders.” (Revelation 4:4, NIV).

Various thoughts have been expressed about the meaning of these twenty-four elders. At first sight, we may believe that the elders represent the Church of Christ, because they were sitting on thrones and had crowns of gold on their heads. Moreover, this concept seems to be supported by Revelation 5:9, 10: “The four and twenty elders ... sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us** to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made **us** unto our God kings and priests: and **we** shall reign on the earth” (Authorized version).

The revised version and several contemporary versions render these verses differently. We quote the revised version: “The four and twenty elders ... sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood **men** of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest **them** to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and **they** reign upon the earth.”

In the notes of Prof. C. Tischendorf we learn that the word **us** in the ninth verse is omitted by the Alexandrian manuscript, whereas the words **us** and **we** in the tenth verse are omitted by the Sinaitic

manuscript and should be replaced by **them** and **they** (*Spurious Passages of the New Testament*, page 12).

We must not forget that the vision of John is symbolical. There are not elders with beards in heaven; the elders personify something. Likewise the thrones and the crowns are symbolical and represent something. The old age of these personages seems also to stand for something.

In the case of the elders, they are not the portrayal of anything which pertains to the time of the Lord's second presence, because they are present when the Lamb takes the scroll from the right hand of God.

In our opinion, the elders do not represent the Church of Christ; they do not symbolize her for several reasons. (1) In Revelation 5:5 one of the elders said to John: "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven Seals." At that time, the Church was not yet either in heaven or on earth. The Church of Christ, as new creatures, came into existence at Pentecost, when the holy Spirit came upon the disciples, ten days after the Lord's ascension, after the Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

(2) From verse 8 of the same chapter, we learn that when the Lamb had taken the scroll the twenty-four elders fell down before Him. We believe that the Lord took the scroll from the right hand of his Father after his resurrection, and specially after presenting the merit of his sacrifice to the Father. The Church could not then exist.

(3) Besides, the Church is not raised up before the second coming of our Master, as it is written: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). The Church could not be in heaven beforehand.

(4) In Revelation 14:4, John writes that he saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the elders. The members of the Church are represented by the 144,000 singing a new song. They were singing before the elders. It follows that the elders do not typify the Church.

Someone might say that these twenty-four elders, on account of their old age, represent the Prophets of the Old Testament, the ancient worthies. According to this statement, their resurrection should have taken place before the ascension of our Lord, before the presentation of the ransom price to Divine Justice. We know that Christ had first to enter heaven to appear for us in God's presence. He was to come a second time to bring salvation to the Church, the ancient worthies and the world of mankind (Hebrews 9:24, 28; Revelation 11:18). Therefore, the elders do not represent the Prophets.

The elders cannot symbolize angels either, for in that case they would not be symbolical and they would represent nothing. Yet we know that the vision is symbolic.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

In the present light of the Truth, we perceive that the elders are the personification of some of God's teachings, predictions or prophecies of the Old Testament, as the two Witnesses, mentioned in the eleventh chapter, are the personification of the Word of God, of the Old and the New Testaments. In both cases the Word of God is illustrated by living beings. The two Witnesses stand before the Lord of the earth, they have mouths and prophesy, they give a testimony, they have feet and are exalted to heaven. The fact that the elders were well on in years denotes the ancientness of the prophecies which they personify. Their old age gives us to understand that these prophecies were written long ago, before the Lamb had triumphed. (Revelation 5:4, 5)

If the elders personify some predictions or prophecies emanated from God in the Old Testament, their utterances should be found more or less distinctly in the Law and the Prophets.

The first utterances of the elders is: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (4:11). This is the first teaching of the Old Testament: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created" (Genesis 2:4). This first utterance of the elders is found in the Old Testament in many places, under different forms. David said: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture" (Psalm 100:1-3). Isaiah, reminding the Israelites of the power of God, said to them, among other things: "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name" (40:25, 26). "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (40:28).

Then one of the elders said to John: "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals" (Revelation 5:5). The elder undoubtedly quoted words of the Old Testament, when he spoke of the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David. In the prophecy of Jacob we read: "You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness-who dares to rouse him? The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and the obedience of the nations is his" (Genesis 49:9, 10). This prophecy already predicts the triumph of Shiloh, of the Messiah, because all nations will obey Him. The elder, who spoke to John, also mentioned this prophecy of Isaiah, when he called the Lamb a Root of David: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (11:1). And concerning the opening of the scroll, David said: "The secret of the Lord have they who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant" (Psalm 25:14, Amplified Bible). There are other similar testimonies in the Old Testament, but we only quote these ones.

In Revelation 5:9, 10, we learn that the twenty-four elders, along with the four living creatures, fell down before the Lamb and sang a new song. They said: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to

serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” The elders were visibly singing the song of Moses. In the Old Testament we find plenty of statements, types, figurations, images fortelling what the elders said, singing.

We will mention only a few excerpts: “But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end” (Daniel 12:4, 9). “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him” (Daniel 7:13,14). “Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days ... by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many”(Isaiah 53:10, 11). “I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth” (Psalm 89:27). “You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). The elders revealed to John what the Old Testament shows in shadows (Hebrews 10:1).

Further on, in the seventh chapter, we still read: “Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes -who are they, and where did they come from?' I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes' “ (Revelation 7:13-17).

We do not intend to explain each verse of this Scriptural passage, but we only want to call attention to the fact that in each utterance of the elders we find references to the Old Testament. In verse 14, the elder is teaching John, who particularly represents the last members of the Body of Christ. The elder refers to a class who came out of tribulation, out of pains, as Isaiah said: “Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children” (66:8). Then he mentioned the words of Daniel who predicted the great tribulation: “There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then” (12:1). Afterwards he spoke of a washing of robes in the blood and might refer to this prophecy of Jacob: “He will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes”(Genesis 49:11). Indirectly he hinted to the Levites, who typify the Great Multitude after the Gospel age, and who did not serve in the Tabernacle, but before the Tabernacle, that is in the Court (Hebrews 9:6, Numbers 3:6, 7). Verse 16 may concern the prophecy of Isaiah, where it is written: “They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water” (49:10). Verse 17 contains words similar to those of the prophet Jeremiah, when he said that the spring of living water was the Lord. “They have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water” (2:13, 17:13).

One more utterance is found in Revelation 11:17, 18. On this occasion, all the elders are speaking. In verse 18 we find the evidence that the elders represent neither any servants of God, nor the prophets of the Old Testament, nor the saints of this Gospel age, nor any class of persons fearing God's name, because they do not identify themselves with them. We quote the whole utterance:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great -and for destroying those who destroy the earth.” “We see here the portrayal of the time of the Lord's second presence and the work of the entire Millennial age. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as a representative of His Father, who gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth and all judgment (Matthew 28:18; John 5:22), will accomplish this work. Indeed, He has already begun it, inasmuch as, being present a second time, He is rewarding His saints (1 Thess. 4:16).

The elders' utterance, aforementioned, is connected with Peter's proclamation to the Jews: “When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21, KJV). Which texts of the Old Testament did the elders use in their utterance now under consideration? We think that the elders often summarized the statements or predictions of the prophets. Consequently, we cannot always expect to find texts which would be word for word parallel to the utterances of the elders. Nevertheless, we can always find similar texts. We will quote some of them briefly: “He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him.”(Daniel 7:14). “The Lord reigns; He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is robed, He has girded Himself with strength and power” (Psalm 93:1, Ampl. Bible). “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ... The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill” (Psalm 2:1, 4-6). “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens” (Daniel 12:2,3). “He will bless those who fear the Lord-small and great alike” (Psalm 115:13). “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evil-doer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire. Not a root or a branch will be left to them” (Malachi 4:1).

FOUR LIVING CREATURES

It is interesting to notice that the elders, in many places, and even almost everywhere, are mentioned in the book of Revelation in conjunction with the four living creatures who symbolize the four attributes of God, Justice, Power, Love and Wisdom. The Scriptural passages where we can notice this close connection between the ones and the others are these: Rev. 4:9, 10; 5:6, 8, 11, 14; 7:11; 14:3; 19:4.

We see two reasons why the elders and the living creatures are often mentioned together. The first reason is that all the teachings of God as well as all the prophetic testimonies are in accordance or in harmony with God's attributes and they reflect God's character. The second reason is that if the living creatures, who are living beings, symbolize not God, but His attributes, then the elders, who are also living beings, symbolize not the Prophets, but their predictions or utterances, that is to say the teachings or oracles of God.

- Antoine Papajak, France

*(The following comments, extracted from the book **The Keys of Revelation**, are harmonious with and supplementary to the above. Please see the article **Two Treatises Available**, later in this issue, for details regarding this book.)*

In preparation for the Solomonic Temple services, David established twenty-four courses or time periods throughout the ecclesiastical year, in which portions of the priesthood would take turns at full-time employment in Temple work. This plan ingeniously afforded an opportunity for all the priestly family, which had grown to considerable numbers since the initial establishment of the priesthood five centuries earlier, to actively participate in the Temple ceremonies. It also helped to minimize jealousy, partiality, and contention within the priestly family itself.

Since the twenty-four thrones do call to mind this former priestly arrangement of the courses, it is natural to infer that the twenty-four elders of Revelation are somehow associated with the priesthood and that, therefore, they actually represent the Church or priesthood of the Gospel Age. However, this conclusion is inaccurate and fails to satisfy all the requirements everywhere the expression “four and twenty elders” is found in the Apocalypse.

It is important to reiterate that Revelation is a book of symbols, replete with imaginative language; sometimes the descriptions employed are seemingly of personalities or beings, whereas the internal theme of the vision indicates otherwise. Thus, correctly reasoned, the twenty-four elders personify the canon of Scripture. More specifically, the number “twenty-four” indicates the *twenty-four* books of the Hebrew Testament. The term “elders” is associated not with the prophets but with the *prophecies* or books of the Old Testament; the “white raiment” alludes to the *Holy Scriptures*; the “golden crowns” point to the *divine authority* of the Word of God; and the “thrones” provide assurance of infallibility or *surety of fulfillment*.

However, it is important to state that a deliberate association is intended between the twenty-four elders of Revelation and the twenty-four courses of David. The lesson is that the Word of God itself performs a priestly function in connection with the Temple, that is, on behalf of the true Church or Temple class.

The twenty-four elders are personified abstractions of the Word of God in their component parts in the books of the Old Testament. The accepted Jewish canon is divided into three parts comprising the following books: (a) *five* in the Pentateuch, (b) *eight* in the Prophets, and (c) *eleven* in the Holy Writings. Thus the sacred canon consists of twenty four rolls in all. The following title page is submitted as substantive evidence:

TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES
Carefully translated after the best
Jewish authorities
By
Isaac Leeser
Hebrew Publishing Company
50-52 Eldridge St., New York
1923

Since at the First Advent there was no New Testament, the twenty-four elders were emblematic of the *whole Word of God*. The prophetic utterances of the Bible concerning the Kingdom, particularly those of the Old Testament, which contains the bulk of prophetic testimony, will culminate and/or be fulfilled at the time the kingdoms of the world become those of Jehovah and His Anointed. It is then, when these prophecies are fulfilled, that the twenty four elders will bow down and give homage to their Author and Sponsor, the Lord God Almighty.

Two Kings

“Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table,- but it shall not prosper.-for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.”
Daniel 11:26, 27

In Volume 3 of *Scripture Studies*, verse 26 is applied to the Roman emperor Aurelian and verse 27 to the rise of clerical, or papal, power. “Verse 27 applies not to Rome and Egypt, but to two kings or powers in the Roman empire the Imperial power gradually dying, and the Clerical power slowly coming to life and ambition. Each sought to use the other for its own selfish ends, while denying such designs.” (C34)

Inasmuch as there is no suggestion in verse 27 of a time jump from verse 26, and since there was no clerical temporal power in the days of Aurelian (270-275 AD), the question arises: what basis is there for this interpretation? The purpose of this article is to resolve this question.

Further complicating this issue is the fact that verse 28 refers back again to Aurelian, his return from defeating Queen Zenobia at Palmyra in Syria with great spoil, and his subsequent turn to violent opposition and oppression of Christianity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The period from 235 to 285 AD saw a marked decline in the government of Rome. Twenty-four different emperors reigned during this period. The growing size of the empire and dissensions between the Senate and the Emperor made the task of ruling Rome almost impossible.

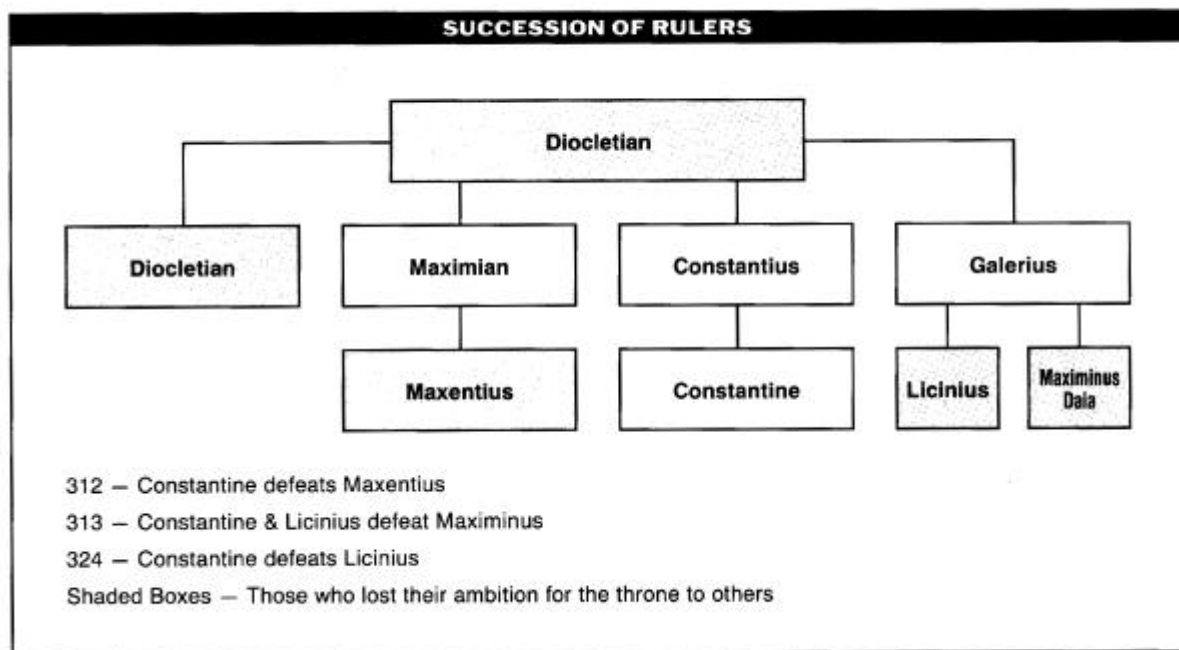
After 285, strong empirical powers were given to the Emperor and Rome entered a totalitarian state of government. One of the strongest of these rulers was Diocletian. Realizing the size of his task, Diocletian divided the empire into four administrative districts, called tetrarchs, and shared power with Maximian, Galerius and Constantius I.

When Diocletian and Maximian retired, Galerius became the chief ruler in the East. Just before his death he issued an edict of toleration granting freedom of worship and paving the way for the legalization of Christianity by Constantine I.

Galerius then named Licinius emperor in the West, which was beset by civil war. Licinius joined ranks with the son of Constantius, Constantine, who defeated Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge near Rome in 312 and Maximinus Daia in 313.

Constantine's tilt toward Christianity brought him into conflict with the pagan Licinius. In 324 Constantine defeated Licinius at Adrianople and Chrysopolis, thus becoming the chief ruler in the West.

The death of Galerius and the defeat of his successor Maximinus Daia left Constantine in charge of the entire empire. His conversion to Christianity and the calling of the Council of Nicea in 325 gave rise to the beginnings of a clerical hierarchy with high governmental connections.



THE TWO KINGS

The above history suggests that there were two literal kings, Galerius and Maximian, who fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 11:27 in the time shortly following that of the preceding verse, applying to Aurelian in 275. The mischief and lies relate to the power struggle involved in the division between east and west declared by Diocletian, and the continuing civil war in the west.

The results of these disputes, however, was to place Constantine in firm power as the reorganizer of the Roman empire. This, in turn, produced the two lines of powers, kings, which are referenced in Volume 3 -the clerical and the civil.

Note the following from Grolier's Encyclopedia concerning the relative achievements of Constantine in both the civil and religious spheres:

“More important to the pagan majority in the empire, whose beliefs Constantine had rejected but continued to tolerate, were the secular problems that required new and vigorous solutions. Meeting the invasions of the Goths and other tribal groups along the western frontiers; the attempt to secure the provinces by dividing the army, increasingly recruited from the barbarian population of the empire, into stationary frontier units and a more mobile reserve; the reform of the coinage to prevent further inflation; the expansion of the bureaucracy to meet the real or imagined needs of an increasingly centralized government -in his own day Constantine's reputation rested more on his handling of these issues than on his arbitration of Christian disputes. In historical terms, though, these actions were less influential than his unexpected, and largely unexplainable, adoption of Christianity. Even the founding in 324 of Constantinople (modern Istanbul), the “new Rome” that survived the collapse of the Western empire, was a less important innovation. Embellished with monuments pirated from pagan sanctuaries, Constantinople itself was not only the new capital of the empire but the symbol of the Christian triumph.

“The civil war following Constantine's death on May 22, 337, did not destroy the new order he had created. The victor in the struggle, his son Constantius II, was an Arian, but he was no less committed to the Christianization of the empire than his father. Paganism survived, but only during the short reign (360-63) of Julian the Apostate was it again represented on the imperial throne.”

RECAP

In short, then, the period from Aurelian's conquest of Palmyra, 270 AD (Daniel 11:26) to the establishment of Christianity in power by Constantine, ca. 330 AD (Daniel 11:27), may be looked upon as a continuing process producing one consequence.

Aurelian gave credit for his victory over Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, his reclaiming several western provinces from the Gauls, and the rebuilding of the walls around Rome to the Syrian sun god, Sol Invictus. This brought him into head to head conflict with Christianity, which he violently suppressed.

This oppression saw its heights in the early days of Diocletian, 303-313 (see Rev. 2:10). Diocletian then divided the empire into the tetrarchy from which he maintained maximum power in the east while Maximian (later Constantine) reigned in the west. These two kings (Diocletian and his successors and Maximian and his successors) “sit down at one table” to settle their disputes.

Out of these negotiations and subsequent battles, Constantine gains the upper hand and first legalizes, then exalts, Christianity to a position of power. By the end of the period we see two new sets of kings-civil and clerical scheming for control of the empire.

THE TELESCOPIC VIEW

Scanning quickly down the years we see Christianity passing three critical milestones to complete temporal power. At the council of Nicea in 325 AD they became officially recognized in the corridors of power. In 539 AD, after the edict of Justinian and as a result of the victory of

Belisarius at Ravenna, they became equal partners in government. In 799 AD, with the crowning of Charlemagne, they assumed full power and the title of "Pontifex Maximus," supreme ruler. As an interesting sidelight, the Pope most responsible for the assumption of temporal power was Gregory 1, elected Pope in 590 AD. This was exactly 265 years after Constantine called the Council of Nicea. The same number of days, 265, is the approximate time of human gestation. This provides an interesting parallel with the birth of the man child in Revelation 12:5.

- Carl Hagensick

Locating the Jubilees

According to Leviticus 25, the Sabbath and Jubilee year system of counting toward years of rest and restoration began upon entering the land after the exodus from Egypt and the wilderness wandering for forty years. Simply stated, Israel was to engage in cultivating the land for six years and allow it to rest in the seventh. After a cycle of seven of these Sabbath years they were instructed to keep a Jubilee on the fiftieth year, after the forty-ninth. This fiftieth year included an extension of rest for the land and expanded human liberties and restoration of land rights as originally allocated to the tribes.

Though it is not within the scope of this article to establish the precedent for the month which began these cycles, we believe it was Tishri. The Jewish system embraced two calendar beginnings. We believe Nisan in the Spring pertained to Priests, Levites and the religious festivals. Tishri in the fall pertained to civil and land issues. Even though Israel crossed Jordan in the Spring, this marked the year 1575 BC as a banner year upon which Israel entered the promised land. We understand this year 1575 was the first of the Sabbath cycle of seven. It would have counted from the previous Fall to the next Fall as with all subsequent Sabbath cycles and Jubilee years. It is likely that the events of Deut. 2:5, 24-25 took place in the Fall prior to crossing Jordan. However, this understanding is not essential to our subject, except to identify the correct year that began the Sabbath/Jubilee system.

Precious little is written about any attempts to keep the Jubilee year rights. In fact it is likely that it was mitigated or neglected almost entirely. Nevertheless this was God's program given to Israel through Moses. Only God has the right to end or replace ordinances He has given. The fact that man imperfectly keeps these ordinances has nothing to do with the fact that God counts time under His own rules.

We know of one time for sure that Israel was not given the opportunity to keep the Jubilee. This was during the captivity in Babylon after the fall of Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem. Certainly a Jubilee would have been scheduled during 70 years of captivity. But it was God's own providence that imposed this chastisement. Therefore Pastor Russell makes the point in Scripture Studies, Volume Two, that after the last Jubilee for which God allowed Israel to be in the land, He must have begun a larger and grander cycle to replace the type. This grander cycle leads to the grand Jubilee under the administration of Messiah. This grander cycle as projected from the Law and Prophets is detailed in Volume Two, *The Time is at Hand*, so we will not further elaborate here.

An interesting paragraph appears on page 183, where Pastor Russell says “In every captivity previous to that one, God evidently delivered them from their enemies in time to get back into their own land to celebrate the Jubilee Year.” This says that we assume Israel always had the opportunity to keep the Jubilees even if they set aside the practice. If God allowed them to be in bondage or captivity during any Jubilee, it would indicate His setting aside of the program.

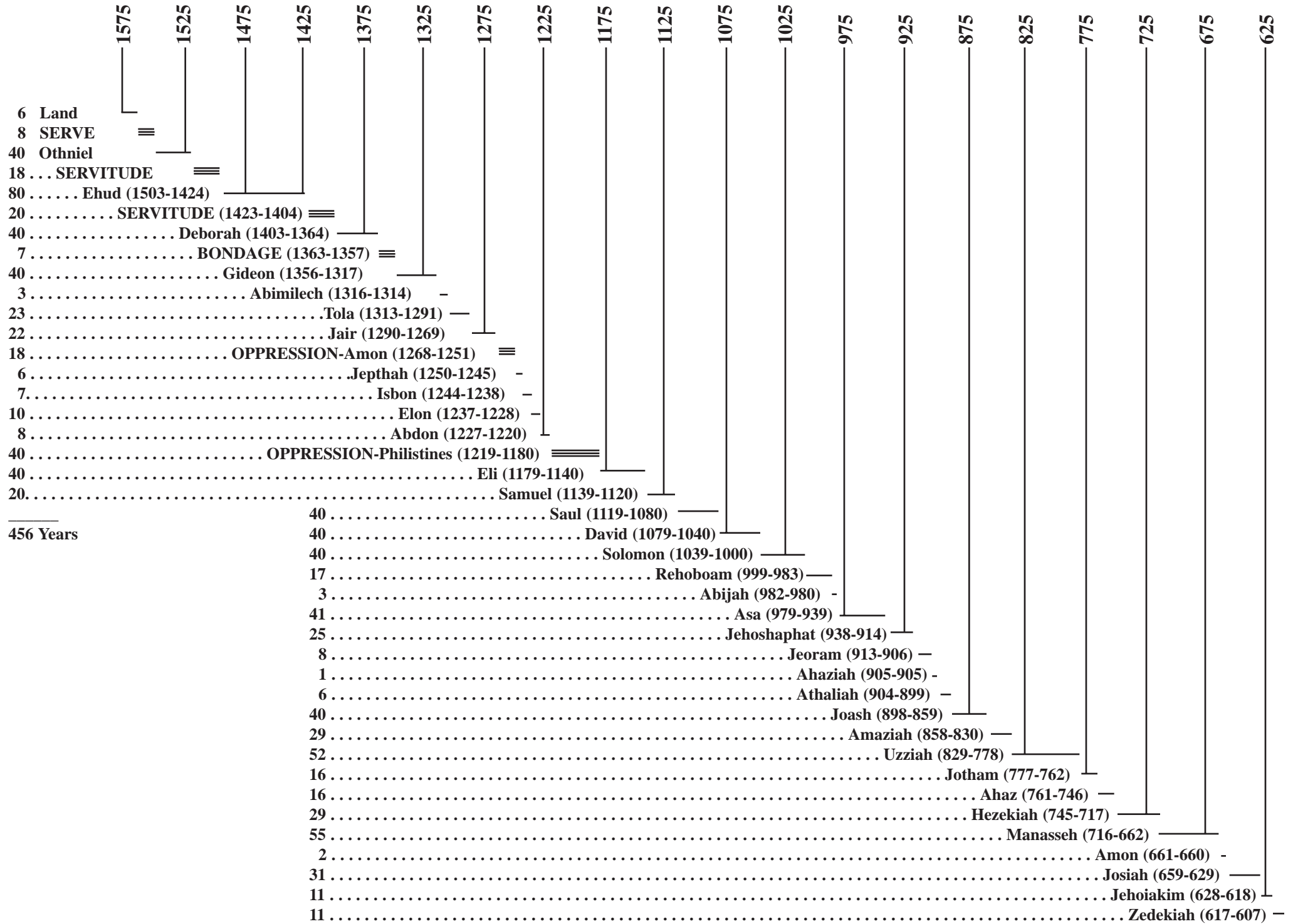
During the period of the Judges there are six known periods of bondage. These likely included major portions of the twelve tribes dwelling in the land. In the period of the Kings, the northern ten tribe kingdom split away and maintained a separate capitol in Samaria. In the reign of Hoshea they went into captivity, while Judah and Benjamin remained independent and Jerusalem was free. When Jerusalem was destroyed and Judah went into captivity, the cycles were broken. In this way God terminated His own program.

But was there any earlier period when Israel was in bondage during a scheduled Jubilee year? We used the time periods listed for the judges by Brother Edgar in the Volume 4, Number 3 issue of *Beauties of the Truth*. This produced the accompanying chart, with periods of bondage shown in thick lines. No Jubilee year occurred during these periods. We know of no way to precisely place each judgeship to an exact year. We also acknowledge there may have been some farming or harvest during bondage periods under the administration of the oppressor, or even some covert threshing in confined places as in the case of Gideon in Judges 6:1, 7, 11. However, note this case of Gideon did not occur during a Jubilee according to the projection. We know the periods during the Judges may not be entirely consecutive and some events may have overlapped and unaccounted periods may occur. However, no great periods of time could be shifted without intruding on the Jubilee years. In some cases the Jubilee occurred just before a period of captivity as in the case of Ehud, and in other cases it came just after a captivity as during Eli's judgeship. It is interesting to note in this projection that in the period of the Judges bondage or oppression always followed shortly after a term designated a Jubilee. Oppression never followed a non-occurring jubilee term. This would seem to speak for this being a discipline for Israel's lax attention to the spirit of the Jubilee ordinance.

My conclusion is that Pastor Russell's deduction was correct, that the first time God interrupted the Jubilee system was with the captivity in Babylon. This could still allow for some small compensating overlaps and gaps in the period of the Judges, yet still yield the 450 year figure given in Acts 13:20.

Isaiah 37:30 may refer to a Jubilee in the reign of Hezekiah. This is not peculiar as a Jubilee year was due during his reign. However, there is a curious account in Jeremiah 34:8-9. Though a Jubilee is not mentioned, it is apparent that the Sabbath system and Jubilee year is the focus of attention in the next several verses. The proclamation went beyond the provision of Dent. 15:1-2, 9, 12. This was in the reign of Zedekiah, but a Jubilee was not scheduled during his reign. However, he seems keenly aware of Israel's neglect of this plan by God. He appears to declare a pseudo Jubilee in an effort to appease God and forestall the inevitable siege. But while God acknowledged the endeavor, He condemned the spirit in which it had been compromised and did not accept this appeasement. This is apparent from the NIV translation of Jeremiah 34:15-17, 21-22.

Locating the Jubilees



513 Years

“Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to his countrymen. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again. Therefore, this is what the LORD says: *You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom for your fellow countrymen. So I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declared the LORD - 'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth ... I will hand Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials over to their enemies who seek their lives, to the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you. I am going to give the order, declares the LORD, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, take it and burn it down. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there.*”

This emphasizes that the predicted captivity was in respect to the historical neglect of the Jubilees. Ezekiel's prophecy in 7:12 also seems to relate the captivity to Israel's misuse of the Sabbath/jubilee system. This adds to the evidence that in setting aside this type, God was about to replace it with the greater cycle which He would keep Himself. Yet this new keeping would entail burdens for His people.

The beauty of this truth is that when God gives an injunction He also gives the opportunity to obey. For whatever God asks of us, He will also provide the means. Israel did not keep the jubilees properly because of selfishness, not because God made it too hard for them. Israel did not reap the rewards because they did not keep the program. Ezekiel 18:29, “Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?”

We also exult in the vantage point of now standing at the beginning of the antitypical jubilee. Soon Israel and all humanity will realize freedom from the bondage of the past 6000 years of laboring under sin and death.

- Jerry Leslie

Two Treatises Available

Two extensive Bible Student treatises have recently come to our attention that deal with history and prophecy. For our readers who want to explore these subjects further, these books can be obtained by writing to the authors.

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satisfy the truth seeker who... is ... concerned with receiving an explanation of the vision in all its minutiae”

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The following is from the author's foreword. “The main thrust of this study is as the title indicates - a look at the Jewish exile and desolation periods, taking us back more than 2,500 years. A number of Scriptures deal both directly and indirectly with this area and it is our intention to examine each one thoroughly. Such a subject may seem rather remote to many in this modern era, yet a bit of reflection shows that much more than mere academic interest is involved. This inquiry has become very vital to the Bible Student cognizant of the end times in which we live, for, as it turns out, a preponderance of the chronological and prophetic calculations associated with the Gospel Harvest period are inexorably dependent upon it”

Charles Redeker

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