



Rice Memorial MBC

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Gifts for the Temple

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **July 28, 2013**

Worship with us at **3201 Mary St** until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas

Ezra 8:24-30

Introduction: In each of Nebuchadnezzar's **three invasions** of Israel, his **army** had looted the temple (2 Kings 24:13; 25:15; 2 Chronicles 36:7, 18). The building was stripped of all its gold and silver articles before it was destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar had placed the golden and silver vessels in the treasure house of his god (Dan. 1:2), and later Belshazzar desecrated some by using them as common drinking cups (Dan 5:2-4). But Jeremiah had foretold that these precious articles would be returned (Jer. 27:19-22).

Jeremiah 27:21-22, Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem; They shall be carried to **Babylon**, and there shall they be until the day that **I visit them**, saith the LORD; then will I bring them up, and **restore them to this place**.

When Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jews to return, he provided precious materials for rebuilding the temple. These included the very vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken away (Ezra 1:7-11). When that **first migration** under Zerubbabel reached Jerusalem, some of the prominent Jews also contributed sizable amounts of gold and silver to begin work on the project (Ezra 2:69-69). Thus, considerable wealth was available when the new temple was dedicated.

When Ezra led a **second group** of exiles back to their homeland, Artaxerxes provided even more wealth to be used in temple worship (Ezra 7:15-20). This included silver and gold from the king, his counselors, and other sources in the province of Babylon, along with freewill gifts from the Jews themselves. This wealth was to be used not only to decorate the temple, but also to purchase supplies needed for ongoing worship.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator*, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series)

Ezra 8:24-27, Then I separated **twelve** of the **chief** of the **priests**, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and **TEN** of their brethren with them, And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered:

I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of **silver**, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of **gold** an hundred talents; Also twenty basons of **gold**, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious **as gold**.

NOTE: "The value of these gifts was well over a **million** pounds; but this is by no means inconceivable in view of the immense wealth of the Persian kings." Responsibility for transporting this vast sum of money, "Was vested in **twelve priests** and **twelve Levites**

especially chosen for the task. This was in accordance with the Pentateuchal care and movement of the tabernacle furnishings (Num. 3; Num. 4)." (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

NOTE: two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold--Almost all commentators agree in maintaining that the vessels referred to were not made of copper, but of an **alloy** capable of taking on a bright polish, which we think highly probable, as copper was then in common use among the Babylonians, and would not be as precious as gold. This alloy, much esteemed among the Jews, was composed of **gold** and **other metals**, which took on a high polish and was not subject to tarnish [NOYES].
(Source: *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary* classic.studylight.org/com/jfb/)

Ezra 8:28-30, And I said unto them, Ye are **HOLY** unto the LORD; the vessels are **HOLY** also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.

Holy defined 6944, a **consecrated** (devoted or dedicated to the service and worship of God) **thing**.

Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord. So took the priests and the **Levites** the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the **house (temple)** of our God.

NOTE: In all trust, but especially sacred ones, we ought to be **punctual**, and preserve a right understanding on both sides. In Zerubbabel's time the vessels were delivered by **number**, here by **weight**, that all might be forth-coming and it might easily appear if any were missing, to intimate that such as are entrusted with holy things (as all the **stewards** of the **mysteries** of God are) are concerned to remember, both in receiving their trust and in discharging it, that they must shortly give a very particular **account of it**, that they may be **faithful** to it and so give up their account with **joy**. (3.) The charge he gave them with these treasures (Ezra 8:29): "Watch you, and keep them, that they be not lost, nor embezzled, nor mingled with the other articles. Keep them together; keep them by themselves; keep them safely, **till you weigh them** in the temple, before the great men there," hereby intimating how much it was their concern to be careful and faithful and how much it would be their honour to be found so. Thus when Paul charges Timothy with the **gospel treasure** he bids him keep it until the appearing of Jesus Christ, and his appearing before him to give account of his trust, when his fidelity would be his crown.
(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible* classic.studylight.org/com/mhc/)

NOTE: ...godly leaders must also have godly and loyal **followers**. Ezra's mission succeeded because the chosen priests and Levites carried out his instructions. They shared his zeal and **submitted** to HIS **authority**. They displayed **integrity** and **honesty**. They were courageous in protecting what was under their charge. And they recognized, above all, that both they and the riches they guarded were holy, belonging exclusively to God. That kind of **dedication** is still needed to further the work of Jesus Christ's church today.
(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Let a man so account (think) of us, as of the **ministers (servant [helper])** of Christ, and **stewards (house-distributor, manager, or overseer)** of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found **faithful (trustworthy [reliable, DEPENDABLE])**.

Hebrews 13:17, Obey them that have the **rule (command with official authority)** over you, and **submit yourselves (yield)**: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may DO it with **joy**, and not with **grief**: for that is unprofitable for **you**.