

1 Chronicles 9:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale.

Analysis

And certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels (ומִן־הַמְּלָאָכִים עַל־כָּלֵי)—this describes a specialized Levitical role: inventory control of sacred utensils used in temple ritual. The Hebrew **charge** (על al, 'over' or 'upon') indicates assigned responsibility and accountability. These weren't merely storage clerks but liturgical stewards ensuring ritual purity and proper usage of consecrated objects—bowls, basins, knives, censers, etc., each with specific halakhic requirements.

That they should bring them in and out by tale (פִּי־בְּמִסְפֵּר וּבְיָמָם וּבְמִסְפֵּר יוֹצִיאוּם) the phrase **by tale** (בְּמִסְפֵּר) means they counted vessels in and out, like library checkout systems. This accountability prevented loss, theft, or unauthorized use of holy objects. The meticulous care reflects Uzzah's death for touching the ark improperly (2 Samuel 6:6-7) and Nadab/Abihu's destruction for unauthorized fire (Leviticus 10:1-2)—holy things require holy handling.

This mundane administrative detail—counting dishes—illustrates the sanctification of ordinary tasks when done for God's house. The New Testament parallel appears in Acts 6:1-6, where deacons served tables so apostles could focus on Word and prayer; both roles were vital, requiring Spirit-filled servants. The principle: there are no 'mere' tasks in God's service, only consecrated or profaned ones.

Historical Context

Solomon's temple contained extensive precious metalwork: golden lampstands, tables, bowls, censers, etc. (1 Kings 7:48-50). Babylonian looting (586 BC) took most treasures (2 Kings 25:13-17), but returnees brought back some (Ezra 1:7-11). The Second Temple initially lacked much of the First Temple's grandeur, making careful stewardship of existing vessels crucial. This verse's emphasis on accountability reflects post-exilic economic scarcity—they couldn't afford to lose even one sacred utensil through carelessness.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the 'by tale' accountability system for temple vessels challenge modern casualness about sacred spaces, objects, and responsibilities?
2. What does the dignifying of 'counting dishes' as Spirit-empowered Levitical service teach about the sanctification of mundane church administrative work?

Interlinear Text

וּמְחַ	עַל	כָּל	קָעָבֹד	כִּ
H1992	And certain of them had the charge of	vessels	the ministering	H3588
	H5921	H3627	H5656	
בְּמִסְפֵּ	בֵּין	בְּמִסְפֵּ	וּזְצִיאוֹת	ר
by tale	that they should bring them in	by tale	and out	
H4557	H935	H4557	H3318	

