

Exodus 38:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.

Analysis

The altar's hollow construction with boards (נְבֻעַת לְחֹתֶן, *nevuv luchot*) demonstrates that God's design combines strength with lightness—massive appearance, practical portability. This hollow center may picture that sacrificial system, though solid in appearance, contained emptiness requiring fulfillment. The altar's impressive exterior concealed internal void, just as animal sacrifices, though genuinely commanded, couldn't ultimately take away sins (Hebrews 10:4)—they pointed to Christ, the solid sacrifice filling every void. The phrase 'as it was shewed thee in the mount' emphasizes exact correspondence to heavenly pattern (Hebrews 8:5).

Historical Context

The hollow construction with bronze-overlaid boards created a strong yet portable structure. When filled with earth or stones during use (Exodus 20:24-25), the altar became solid, but could be emptied for transport. This engineering balanced theological symbolism with practical necessity for a traveling sanctuary.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What might the hollow construction teach about the sacrificial system's genuine yet incomplete nature?
2. How does requiring exact correspondence to the heavenly pattern emphasize the importance of following God's prescribed worship?

Interlinear Text

וְיָצַב כָּל צָלָע תְּבִלָּת עַל בְּטֻבָּע תְּבִלָּת יְמִינְךָ אַתָּה יְגַדֵּךְ	
And he put	H853
H935	the staves
H905	into the rings
H2885	H5921
	on the sides
	H6763
	H4196
לְשֵׁת אַתָּה עַש הַלְּבָנָה בְּבִרְכָּת נְבָב וְבָב	
to bear	H853
H5375	the altar hollow
H0	with boards
H5014	it withal he made
H3871	H853
H6213	

Additional Cross-References

Acts 9:15 (Parallel theme): But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

1 Corinthians 2:2 (Parallel theme): For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:24 (Parallel theme): But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org