

Ezekiel 40:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the chambers and the entries thereof were by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering.

Analysis

The chambers for washing burnt offerings reveal the seriousness of approaching God through sacrifice. The Hebrew רָחַץ (rachats, 'washed') emphasizes ritual cleansing—blood and impurity must be removed before offerings could be presented. This wasn't merely hygienic but theological: sin's consequences require thorough cleansing. The burnt offering (עֹלָה, olah) signified complete consecration to God—the entire animal consumed, representing total surrender. The location 'by the posts of the gates' indicates preparation occurred before approaching the altar, teaching that worship requires careful, reverent preparation. Reformed theology sees these sacrifices as types of Christ's perfect offering (Hebrews 10:1-18). Where Levitical priests washed animal sacrifices repeatedly, Christ offered Himself once for all. The chambers teach that approach to God demands both Christ's cleansing blood and our sanctified lives (Romans 12:1-2).

Historical Context

Levitical law prescribed detailed procedures for burnt offerings (Leviticus 1, 6:8-13). Priests washed internal organs and legs before burning (Leviticus 1:9, 13). Solomon's temple had the Bronze Sea and ten lavers for washing (1 Kings 7:23-39). Archaeological excavations of Israelite high places reveal stone basins and drainage channels for ritual washing. The burnt offering was the most frequent sacrifice—offered morning and evening daily (Exodus 29:38-42), on Sabbaths (Numbers 28:9-10), and at festivals. For the exiles, who couldn't offer sacrifices in Babylon, this vision promised restored worship. The chambers'

placement at gate posts meant worshipers would see sacrificial preparation—visual reminder that access to God costs blood. This foreshadowed the ultimate cost: God's own Son (Isaiah 53:10, John 1:29).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How seriously do you 'wash' your life before approaching God in worship—or do you come casually, unprepared?
2. What does the burnt offering's total consumption teach about wholehearted devotion versus partial commitment?
3. How does Christ's once-for-all sacrifice change your understanding of preparation for worship?

Interlinear Text

וְלִשְׁכָּה	וּפְתָחַהּ	בְּאֵילֵי יָם	הַשְּׁעָרִים	שָׁם
And the chambers	and the entries	thereof were by the posts	of the gates	
H3957	H6607	H352	H8179	H8033
יְדֵי יָחוּ	אֶת	הַעֲלָה:		
where they washed		the burnt offering		
H1740	H853	H5930		

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 4:6 (Sacrifice): He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

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