

Ezekiel 40:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering.

Analysis

And within were hooks, an hand broad, fastened round about: and upon the tables was the flesh of the offering. The Hebrew shephattayim (שְׁפַתַּיִם, "hooks") were metal implements "a hand broad" (approximately four inches), fastened around the walls or tables to hang carcasses during flaying and butchering. This gruesome detail—hooks holding flesh—confronts us with the visceral reality of atonement. Sin is not merely a legal problem requiring paperwork; it demands blood, death, and the violent end of life.

The phrase "**upon the tables was the flesh of the offering**" emphasizes that this is consecrated meat, not common food. The Hebrew korban (קָרְבָּן, "offering") means "that which is brought near"—sacrifice brings the worshiper near to God. Yet this nearness requires the substitute's death. The hooks and tables, the blood and flesh, all declare that sin creates a chasm bridgeable only by sacrifice. Christians see here the supreme irony: the one truly innocent victim, Jesus Christ, was hung not on hooks but on a cross, His flesh torn so ours could be spared.

Historical Context

The practical details of sacrifice are often overlooked, but they reveal the temple as both sacred space and functioning abattoir. Priests worked as butchers, their garments bloodstained (though they changed into clean linen for public ministry). Leviticus 1-7 provides detailed instructions for various offerings, all requiring skilled handling of animals. The hooks mentioned here made the work more

efficient and maintained separation between clean and unclean. For exiles longing for restored worship, these details assured them that God had not forgotten the practicalities of temple service.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the graphic imagery of hooks and flesh prevent us from sanitizing the costliness of atonement?
2. In what ways does modern Christianity risk losing the biblical emphasis on substitutionary sacrifice by focusing only on God's love without His justice?

Interlinear Text

וְהַיְתָה	בְּבֵית	סְבִיבָה	מִזְכָּן	יָמָן	אֶת	טַפְחָה	וְפָשָׁפֶת	בְּ	אֵת
were hooks	hand	an	broad fastened	And within	round about				
H8240	H2948	H259	H3559	H1004	H5439				
רֵאשִׁית	בְּשָׁרֶם	בְּשָׁרֶם	וְתַחַת	וְתַחַת	בְּשָׁרֶם	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ
round about	H413	and upon the tables		was the flesh	of the offering				
H5439		H7979		H1320	H7133				

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