

Ezra 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

Analysis

And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives. This verse begins the detailed inventory of returned temple vessels, emphasizing precision and accountability. The Hebrew word for 'chargers' (agartal) likely refers to large basins or platters used in temple service. The dramatic difference between gold chargers (30) and silver chargers (1,000) reflects both value hierarchy and functional needs in temple ritual.

The mention of 'knives' (machalaph) may refer to sacrificial knives or cultic implements for various temple services. The specific number (29) seems unusual but demonstrates the meticulous nature of the inventory. Every item, regardless of apparent significance, receives careful accounting. This teaches that in God's economy, nothing dedicated to His service is too small for notice or beneath careful stewardship.

The literary function of this detailed inventory serves multiple purposes: (1) documenting divine faithfulness in preserving what seemed lost, (2) establishing continuity between pre-exilic and post-exilic worship, (3) providing accountability for valuable items, and (4) demonstrating that the restoration wasn't haphazard but carefully planned and executed. The precision suggests divine order and intentionality in redemption.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern temple inventories were common administrative documents, often inscribed on clay tablets and stored in temple archives. The biblical record's inclusion of such detailed inventory aligns with broader cultural practices while serving theological purposes unique to Israel's covenant faith.

The large number of vessels (5,400 total per verse 11) indicates the original temple's wealth and the thoroughness of Babylonian looting. These items had been accumulated over approximately 400 years from Solomon's temple construction through various royal donations and dedications. Their preservation intact despite regime changes and potential pressures to melt them down for bullion demonstrates remarkable providence.

The specific categories of vessels mentioned correspond to implements described in the original temple construction accounts (1 Kings 7:40-50), providing tangible link to Solomonic worship. This continuity was crucial for religious legitimacy—the returning exiles weren't establishing novel worship but restoring divinely ordained patterns.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the detailed inventory teach about the relationship between spiritual devotion and practical accountability in church administration?
2. How does God's preservation of specific numbered vessels encourage believers about His attention to details in their lives?
3. What balance should churches maintain between focusing on spiritual matters and attending to practical financial and administrative details?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֶּה	מִסְפָּר	אֲגָרָטִי	זֶה	שְׁלֹשִׁים	אֲגָרָטִי
H428	And this is the number	chargers	of gold	of them thirty	chargers
	H4557	H105	H2091	H7970	H105
כֶּסֶף	אֶלֶף	מַחֲלָףִים	תִּשְׁעָה	וְעֶשְׂרִים:	
of silver	a thousand	knives	nine	and twenty	
H3701	H505	H4252	H8672	H6242	

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org