

Ezra 8:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.

Analysis

Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams—אֶגְרָטַיִן (agartalin, bowls/basins) were liturgical vessels for temple service, likely for sprinkling blood or holding incense. The אֲדָרְכֹנִים (adarkonim, darics/drams) were Persian gold coins weighing about 8.4 grams, named after Darius I. Thus 1,000 darics equal approximately 18.5 pounds (8.4 kg) of gold. The כֶּתֶם (kotem, fine gold) indicates high purity. Twenty such vessels represented both functional liturgical tools and portable treasury reserve.

And two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold—כֵּלֵי נְחֹשֶׁת (kelei nechoshet, vessels of copper/bronze) are described as מְצַהֵב (mutzhav, gleaming/polished) and כְּמוֹדֵת קָזָהָב (chamudot kazahav, precious/desirable as gold). This unusual description suggests either exceptionally crafted bronze (perhaps Corinthian bronze, a rare alloy prized in antiquity) or copper vessels overlaid with gold. Including these among the precious metal inventory indicates their significant value—perhaps heirloom vessels from the first temple or specially commissioned liturgical pieces. The variety of materials (gold, silver, bronze) ensured temple had complete furnishings for all worship functions.

Historical Context

Liturgical vessels served specific functions in temple sacrifice and worship: basins for blood sprinkling (Leviticus 8:15), bowls for incense (Numbers 7:14), and various implements for offerings. The detailed inventory parallels Numbers 7's

account of tribal leaders' gifts at tabernacle dedication. By cataloging these items, Ezra documented that the second temple, though less glorious than Solomon's (Ezra 3:12), possessed legitimate liturgical furnishings enabling proper covenant worship according to Mosaic law.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the inclusion of bronze vessels 'precious as gold' teach about diverse forms of valuable service to God?
2. How does the detailed inventory of liturgical vessels demonstrate care for proper worship forms versus casual pragmatism?
3. In what ways should modern worship balance functional necessity with beauty and excellence in sacred implements?

Interlinear Text

וְכַפֵּי י	כֶּזָבִיב:	עֶשְׂרֵי יָם	לְאַדְרָכָנִי יָם	אֶלֶף לָף	וְכֵלֵי י	נְחֹשֶׁת
basons	as gold	Also twenty	drams	of a thousand	vessels	copper
H3713	H2091	H6242	H150	H505	H3627	H5178
מִצֵּה ב	טוֹבָה	שְׁנֵי יָם	חֲמוּדֵי ת	כֶּזָבִיב:		
H6668	of fine	and two	precious	as gold		
	H2896	H8147	H2532	H2091		