

# Ezra 8:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

## Analysis

**Watch ye, and keep them**—שִׁקְדוּ וּשְׁמְרוּ (shiqdu v'shimru, watch and guard/keep) are urgent imperatives. The שָׁקַד (shaqad, be wakeful, watch) implies vigilant alertness—etymologically related to 'almond tree' which blossoms early, thus 'early watcher.' The שָׁמַר (shamar, keep/guard) appears throughout Scripture for covenant-keeping (Deuteronomy 6:17) and priestly duty (Numbers 3:7-8). Both verbs together intensify the command: stay alert, guard carefully. This isn't passive custody but active vigilant protection.

**Until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD**—עַד־תִּשְׁקְלוּ (ad-tishqelu, until you weigh) specifies terminal point: successful delivery. The לִפְנֵי (lifnei, before) indicates public accounting before שְׂרֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּים (sarei hakohanim v'haLeviyyim, chiefs of the priests and the Levites) and רָאשֵׁי־הָאָבוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל (rashei-ha'avot l'Yisrael, heads of the fathers of Israel)—comprehensive leadership receiving custody. The בְּלִשְׁכוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה (b'lishkot beit-YHWH, in the chambers of the house of the LORD) designates temple treasury rooms as final destination. The entire transaction occurs publicly with multiple witnesses, ensuring perfect accountability.



## Historical Context

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Temple treasury chambers (1 Chronicles 9:26, 28:11-12, Nehemiah 10:37-39, 13:4-13) stored not only precious metals but tithes and offerings. These rooms required Levitical guards (1 Chronicles 9:26) and careful inventory management. Ezra's insistence on public weighing before multiple authorities paralleled ancient Near Eastern commercial contracts requiring witnesses to verify transactions (evidenced in thousands of cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia). This transparency protected both the treasure-bearers from false accusation and the community from embezzlement.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What does the dual command ('watch and keep') teach about the intensity of vigilance required when handling sacred trust?
2. How does public accounting before multiple witnesses demonstrate godly transparency in ministry leadership?
3. In what ways should modern church financial management mirror Ezra's multi-layered accountability?



## Interlinear Text

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וְשָׁקֵד	וְשָׁמַר	עַד	תִּשְׁקָל	לִפְנֵי	וְשָׂרִי
Watch	ye and keep	H5704	them until ye weigh	them before	and chief
H8245	H8104		H8254	H6440	H8269

הַכֹּהֲנִים	וְהַלְוִיִּם	וְשָׂרִי	הָאֲבֹת	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בִּירוּשָׁלַם
of the priests	and the Levites	and chief	of the fathers	of Israel	at Jerusalem
H3548	H3881	H8269	H1	H3478	H3389

הַלְשָׁכָה	בְּיֵת	יְהוָה:
in the chambers	of the house	of the LORD
H3957	H1004	H3068

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