

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—שְׁקֹדוּ וְשִׁמְרֻוּ (shiqdu v'shimru, watch and guard/keep) are urgent imperatives. The שָׁקָד (shaqad, be wakeful, watch) implies vigilant alertness—etymologically related to 'almond tree' which blossoms early, thus 'early watcher.' The שִׁמְרָה (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—the עד-תשקלו (ad-tishqelu, until you weigh) specifies terminal point: successful delivery. The לפני (lifnei, before) indicates public accounting before השׁנִים (shenim, the second year) (sarei hakohanim v'haLeviyyim, chiefs of the priests and the Levites) and (ראשי-האבות ל'ישראל) (rashei-ha'avot l'Yisrael, heads of the fathers of Israel)—comprehensive leadership receiving custody. The בְּלִשְׁקוֹת בֵּית־יהָה (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

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

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

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

וְשָׁמַר וְעַד תְּשִׁקַּל וְלִפְנֵי וְשָׁרֵי שָׁקָד 1
Watch ye and keep H5704 them until ye weigh them before and chief
H8245 H8104 H8254 H6440 H8269

בְּרֹשֶׁל מִלְשְׁרָא לְקֹבֵן יִם וְפָרָשָׁה וְשָׁרִי וְפָלָיִם וְפָרָשָׁה וְקֹבֵן יִם of the priests and the Levites and chief of the fathers of Israel at Jerusalem H3548 H3881 H8269 H1 H3478 H3389

בְּ יַת יְהוָה
בְּ לֶשֶׁךְ וְת
in the chambers of the house of the LORD
H3957 H1004 H3068

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