

Numbers 5:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:

Analysis

The uncovering of the woman's head and the placing of the memorial offering in her hands creates a posture of vulnerability and exposure before God. The uncovered head removes customary coverings that provide dignity and privacy, symbolizing that nothing can be hidden from God's sight. The memorial offering in her hands constantly reminds her that this is a sacred matter, not merely a civil procedure. She must physically hold the evidence of the accusation while standing before the Lord.

Historical Context

Women in ancient Israel typically covered their heads, especially in public and certainly in sacred contexts. The removal of this covering marked the gravity of the situation and the woman's exposed position before divine judgment. The memorial offering, made of barley meal without oil or frankincense, was austere compared to typical grain offerings.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the removal of customary coverings teach about standing naked before God in judgment?
2. How should the inevitability of exposure before God affect our response to accusation?
3. In what ways does holding the memorial offering symbolize bearing responsibility for our actions?

Interlinear Text

וְהָעֵמָּ יָד	הַכֹּהֵן	אֶת	הָאִשָּׁה	לִפְנֵי י	יְהוָה	וּפָרַע
shall set	And the priest	H853	the woman	before	the LORD	and uncover
H5975	H3548		H802	H6440	H3068	H6544
אֶת	הָאִשָּׁה	וְנָתַן	עַל	בְּכַף יָדָהּ	אֶת	מִנְחַת
H853	head	the woman	and put	H5921	in her hands	H853
	H7218	H802	H5414	H3709		H4503
הַזֵּכֶר וְ	מִנְחַת	קִנְיָאֵת	וְ	וְ	וְ	וְ
of memorial	offering	which is the jealousy				
H2146	H4503	H7068		H1931		H3027
הַכֹּהֵן	יְהוָה	מֵי	הַמַּר	יֵם	הַמְּאָכְרִים:	
And the priest	H1961	water	the bitter	that causeth the curse		
H3548		H4325	H4751	H779		