

Numbers 7:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Analysis

One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense (כַּף אַחַת אֲסָרָה זָהָב מְלֵא'ה קֶטֶרֶת) (kaf achat asarah zahav male'ah qetoret)—The golden spoon/ladle (kaf, literally 'palm/hand') held incense for the altar, symbolizing prayer ascending to God. Gold represented purity and divine glory. At ten shekels (about 115 grams), this was substantial precious metal, though lighter than the silver vessels.

Full of incense (qetoret) connects to the daily incense offering (Exodus 30:7-8) and appears in Revelation as the prayers of saints (Revelation 5:8). The specific weight prevented arbitrary amounts—worship required prescribed proportions, not creative innovation. Each tribe's identical golden spoon demonstrated prayer's equal access: no tribe prayed with more or less divine favor.

Historical Context

Incense in ancient Israel was compounded from specific spices: stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense (Exodus 30:34-38). Creating or using unauthorized incense meant death (Exodus 30:38). The golden censers from the tabernacle were later beaten into bronze altar covering after Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16:36-40), warning against presumptuous worship.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the incense offering as a symbol of prayer (Revelation 5:8) inform your understanding of intercessory worship?
2. What does the severe penalty for unauthorized incense (Exodus 30:38) teach about approaching God on His terms rather than ours?
3. In what ways does the golden spoon's specific weight (ten shekels) challenge tendencies toward either ritualistic formalism or chaotic spontaneity in worship?

Interlinear Text

פַּ	אֶחָד	הַ	זָהָב	הַ	מִלֵּא	קִטְרֶת:
spoon	One	of ten	golden	shekels full	of incense	
H3709	H259	H6235	H2091	H4392	H7004	

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