

Numbers 7:57

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Analysis

One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering—Gamaliel's olah repeats the threefold pattern: bullock (costly leadership offering), ram (mature substitute), and year-old lamb (Passover redemption). The burnt offering's complete consumption symbolized Israel's total consecration to God. Nothing was held back; the entire animal ascended as smoke to God.

The progression from large to small (bullock → ram → lamb) may reflect degrees of worshiper status (priest, leader, individual), but here all three appear together, suggesting comprehensive atonement. This threefold burnt offering anticipates Christ as Prophet (teaching bullock), Priest (interceding ram), and King (reigning lamb)—the complete mediator consuming God's wrath in our place.

Historical Context

Burnt offerings dated to humanity's earliest worship (Genesis 4:4, 8:20) and continued throughout Israel's history until Jerusalem's destruction (AD 70). The Hebrew olah appears 286 times in Scripture, making it the most frequently mentioned sacrifice. The practice ended when Christ's sacrifice fulfilled and superseded the entire Levitical system (Hebrews 10:1-18).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the burnt offering's complete consumption challenge compartmentalized Christianity that reserves parts of life from God's lordship?
2. What theological significance do you see in the threefold pattern (bullock, ram, lamb) potentially picturing Christ's threefold office as Prophet, Priest, and King?
3. In what ways does understanding burnt offerings as 'that which ascends' shape your view of worship as something offered TO God rather than consumed BY you?

Interlinear Text

פָּר	אֶחָד	בֶּן	בָּקָר	אֶלֶף	אֶחָד	כֶּבֶשׂ	אֶחָד
bullock	One	of the first	young	ram	One	lamb	One
H6499	H259	H1121	H1241	H352	H259	H3532	H259
בֶּן	שָׁנָה	לְעֹלָה:					
of the first	year	for a burnt offering					
H1121	H8141	H5930					