

Numbers 7:68

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Analysis

This verse describes part of the offering from **one of the twelve tribal leaders** during the dedication of the tabernacle altar. The golden spoon (kaf in Hebrew, literally "palm" or "hollow of the hand") held exactly ten shekels of incense, demonstrating **precise obedience and equality among the tribes**. Each leader brought identical offerings over twelve days, showing that before God, no tribe held greater honor.

The incense represents **prayer ascending to God** (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8). Gold, the most precious metal, held the prayers of God's people, while the exact weight of ten shekels suggests the **completeness and perfection** of worship offered according to divine standards. This wasn't casual or improvised worship, but carefully prescribed devotion.

The repetition of this offering twelve times (once per tribe) teaches that **God delights in the individual attention of each group** of His people. Though the gifts were identical, each presentation was recorded separately in Scripture, showing that God values both unity and individuality in worship.

Historical Context

Numbers 7 records the longest single chapter in the Pentateuch, detailing twelve nearly identical offerings. Ancient Near Eastern dedication ceremonies typically involved elaborate rituals, but Israel's pattern was unique in its emphasis on equality among tribes. Archaeological discoveries of golden censers and incense

altars from this period confirm the historical accuracy of these descriptions.

Incense in the ancient world was extremely valuable, often worth more than gold by weight. The ingredients for sacred incense were specified in Exodus 30:34-38 and included frankincense, stacte, onycha, and galbanum. This mixture was exclusively reserved for tabernacle use, with death prescribed for unauthorized replication. The ten-shekel weight (approximately 4 ounces) represented a significant offering, demonstrating the tribes' commitment to honoring God with their finest resources.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the identical nature of each tribal offering teach us about God's view of equality and unity among His people?
2. How does the symbolism of incense as prayer influence your understanding of the importance and value of prayer?
3. In what ways can we offer 'golden' vessels of worship to God in our contemporary context?
4. What might it mean to bring 'precisely measured' worship rather than casual or careless devotion?
5. How does God's recording of each individual tribe's offering encourage you in your personal walk with Him?

Interlinear Text

לְבָרְתָּה: מְלָא הַיּוּ בְּעֵשֶׂב הַאֲמָתְּכָה

spoon One of ten golden shekels full of incense

H3709

H259

H6235

H2091

H4392

H7004

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