

Numbers 7:86

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels.

Analysis

The golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels (כל-זהב הכהנות עשרים ומאה זהב)—The twelve golden spoons total 120 shekels (12×10), combining governmental perfection (twelve) with divine order (ten). Gold signifies deity, purity, and the imperishable; incense represents prayer and worship ascending to God.

The 120 shekels may allude to the 120 years of human longevity before the Flood (Genesis 6:3), or the 120 priests who sounded trumpets at Solomon's temple dedication (2 Chronicles 5:12). In the New Testament, 120 disciples waited in the upper room for Pentecost (Acts 1:15), representing the faithful remnant awaiting the Spirit. The incense-filled spoons prefigure the golden bowls of Revelation 5:8, where the prayers of the saints rise before God's throne.

Historical Context

The incense formula was divinely prescribed (Exodus 30:34-38) and forbidden for personal use. The golden spoons (or ladles) were specifically designed for offering incense on the golden altar before the veil. The total weight of 120 shekels represents substantial value, as gold was the most precious metal.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the connection between incense and prayer (Revelation 5:8) deepen our understanding of intercession as mediated worship?
2. What might the 120 shekels total symbolize, given Scripture's other uses of that number (Genesis 6:3, Acts 1:15)?
3. Why did God require identical incense from every tribe rather than allowing variety in this aspect of worship?

Interlinear Text

קָטָן	נָתָן	מְלָאָת	תְּ	עֲשָׂרָה	שְׁתִים	זֶה	בְּ	הַכְּפָפָה	וְתַ
of the spoons	The golden	H8147	were twelve	full	of incense				
H3709	H2091		H6240	H4392	H7004				
כָּל	כָּלְן	דָּשָׁן	בְּשָׁ	קָלָל					
weighing ten	weighing ten	of the spoons	after the shekel	of the sanctuary					
H6235	H6235	H3709	H8255	H6944	H3605				
וּמִמֶּה:	עָשָׂר יָמִים	הַכְּפָפָה וְתַ							
The golden	of the spoons	and twenty	was an hundred						
H2091	H3709	H6242	H3967						

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