

1 Samuel 11:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

Analysis

And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

The mustering at Bezek, strategically positioned for the Jordan crossing to reach Jabesh-gilead, demonstrates effective military organization. The separate numbering of Israel (300,000) and Judah (30,000) foreshadows the eventual division of the kingdom. This distinction, maintained throughout the narrative, suggests tribal tensions that Solomon's son Rehoboam would fatally exacerbate. The large numbers, while possibly representative or using different counting methods, emphasize the complete reversal from despair to overwhelming force.

Historical Context

Bezek was located approximately 15 miles from the Jordan River, providing an assembly point for forces from across Israel. The ten-to-one ratio between northern and southern tribes roughly corresponds to their relative populations, though the specific numbers may reflect military-unit terminology rather than exact headcounts.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond when God turns situations from hopeless to hopeful?
2. What early signs of division in a community should prompt attention and prayer?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּסְמְנוּ	בְּבֶזֶק	וְהֵי	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	שָׁלֹשׁ
And when he numbered	them in Bezek	H1961	the children	of Israel	were three
H6485	H966		H1121	H3478	H7969
מֵאָה	אֶלֶף	וְאֵשׁ	יְהוּדָה	שְׁלֹשִׁים	אֶלֶף
hundred	thousand	and the men	of Judah	thirty	thousand
H3967	H505	H376	H3063	H7970	H505

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 24:9 (References Israel): And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.