

Exodus 38:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men.

Analysis

The precise calculation—'a bekah for every man' (תְּלִיָּלָהּ נַכְּכָּ, beka la-gulgoleth, 'half-shekel per head')—demonstrates exact accountability. The phrase 'from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men' provides census total: 603,550 men of military age. This specific number multiplied by half-shekel equals the silver total (v. 25), demonstrating mathematical precision in the accounting. The exactness teaches that God's redemption is comprehensive—every person counted, every ransom recorded, every contribution applied to the foundation.

Historical Context

The census number (603,550) matches the Exodus population count (Exodus 12:37, Numbers 1:46), confirming consistent biblical record. The bekah (half-shekel) per man over twenty years old established that adults bore responsibility for their own atonement, while heads of households likely paid for dependents. This tax funded the tabernacle foundation—making every Israelite literally foundational to God's dwelling.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does the exact correspondence between counted men and collected silver teach about God's comprehensive, precise redemption?
2. How does every Israelite contributing to the foundation illustrate that every believer's redemption supports the whole church structure?

Interlinear Text

לֶכֶּל	הַקֹּדֶשׁ	בֶּשֶׁקֶל	בֶּשֶׁקֶל	מִחֹצֵי יֵת	לְגִלְגָּל לֵת	בֶּקֶע
	of the sanctuary	a shekel	a shekel	that is half	for every man	A bekah
H3605	H6944	H8255	H8255	H4276	H1538	H1235
שָׁנָה	עֶשְׂרִים	מִבָּן	הַפְּקֻדִים	עַל	הָעֶבֶר	
years	from twenty	old	to be numbered	for every one that went		
H8141	H6242	H1121	H6485	H5921	H5674	
וְחֵמֶשׁ	אַלְפֵי יָם	וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת	אַלְפֵי יָם	מֵאָה	לְשֵׁשׁ	וְעַד עֲלֹה
and five	thousand	and three	thousand	hundred	for six	and upward
H2568	H505	H7969	H505	H3967	H8337	H4605
וְחֵמֶשֶׁשׁ	מֵאָה					
hundred	and fifty					
H3967	H2572					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 1:46 (Parallel theme): Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

Exodus 30:13 (Temple): This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.

Exodus 12:37 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children.

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