

Numbers 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

Analysis

These tribal princes were 'renowned' not by worldly standards but by divine appointment and covenant status. Their renown came from being chosen by God to represent their tribes, not from personal achievement or inherited nobility. This principle of derived honor, where worth comes from relationship to God rather than innate qualities, prefigures the Christian's standing in Christ, where believers are 'chosen,' 'royal,' and 'holy' (1 Peter 2:9) by grace rather than merit.

Historical Context

The Hebrew term for 'renowned' (qara') indicates those 'called' or 'summoned,' emphasizing their appointed rather than self-assumed status. These leaders formed the core of Israel's administrative structure during the wilderness period and the conquest.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the principle that these leaders' renown came from divine appointment rather than personal merit challenge worldly notions of fame and significance?
2. What does this teach us about the source of a Christian's identity and worth?

Interlinear Text

אֵלֶּה	קָרְיָא י	הָעֵד ה	נְשִׂיא י	מִטּוֹת	אֲבוֹתָם
H428	These were	of the congregation	princes	of the tribes	of their fathers
	H7148	H5712	H5387	H4294	H1
רָאשֵׁי	אֲלָפִי	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	הֵם:		
heads	of thousands	Israel	in		
H7218	H505	H3478	H1992		

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 18:25 (References Israel): And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Exodus 18:21 (Parallel theme): Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

Numbers 7:2 (References Israel): That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered:

Numbers 26:9 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD:

Numbers 1:4 (Parallel theme): And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

Numbers 16:2 (References Israel): And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

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