

Numbers 1:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

Analysis

Simeon's census figure (59,300) made them one of the larger tribes initially, yet by the second census (Numbers 26:14), they had dropped to 22,200, the smallest tribe—a devastating 62% loss. This dramatic decline, likely due to the Baal-Peor incident where Simeonites featured prominently (Numbers 25:6-15), demonstrates that size and initial prominence mean nothing without faithfulness. God's justice will not overlook persistent rebellion, even within the covenant community.

Historical Context

Simeon's territory was eventually embedded within Judah's inheritance (Joshua 19:1-9), fulfilling Jacob's prophecy that Simeon would be 'divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel' (Genesis 49:7). The tribe largely disappeared from biblical narrative after the period of the judges.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Simeon's dramatic population decline warn against presuming on God's grace based on covenant status alone?
2. What does this teach us about the principle that 'to whom much is given, much will be required' (Luke 12:48)?

Interlinear Text

פְּקֻדֵּיהֶם	לְמִטֵּה	שִׁמְעֹן	וְתִשְׁעֵה
Those that were numbered	of them even of the tribe	of Simeon	and nine
H6485	H4294	H8095	H8672
וְחִמְשָׁאֵלֶּף	וּשְׁלֹשׁ	מֵאוֹת:	
were fifty	thousand	and three	hundred
H2572	H505	H7969	H3967

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 26:14 (Parallel theme): These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.