

Numbers 1:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

Analysis

Issachar's 54,400 fighting men positioned the tribe in the middle range of military strength, neither the largest nor smallest. This middling position did not prevent the tribe from later being noted for wisdom—men of Issachar 'had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do' (1 Chronicles 12:32). This demonstrates that spiritual insight and usefulness to God's kingdom do not depend on numerical strength or worldly prominence but on divine gift and faithful stewardship.

Historical Context

Despite average military size, Issachar's strategic territory and later reputation for wisdom gave the tribe influence beyond its numbers. This pattern recurs in Scripture, where God often uses the less prominent to accomplish significant purposes.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Issachar's combination of average size with exceptional wisdom challenge assumptions about the relationship between prominence and spiritual value?
2. What does this teach us about seeking wisdom and discernment rather than worldly measures of success?

Interlinear Text

פְּקֻדֵּיהֶם	לְמַטֵּה	יִשָּׁשכָר	וְאַרְבַּע
Those that were numbered	of them even of the tribe	of Issachar	and four
H6485	H4294	H3485	H702
מֵאֹת:	וְאַרְבַּע	אֶלֶף	וְחֲמִשָּׁים
hundred	and four	thousand	were fifty
H3967	H702	H505	H2572

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 26:25 (Parallel theme): These are the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.