

Numbers 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

Analysis

God's sovereign design for Israel's organization required representative leadership from each tribe, demonstrating the principle of federal headship that would culminate in Christ as the ultimate Head of His people. The tribal representatives served as covenant mediators between God's commands through Moses and their respective tribes, foreshadowing the priesthood of all believers under the New Covenant. This structure reveals God's orderly nature and His insistence on proper representation in covenant administration.

Historical Context

The census occurred in the second year after the Exodus (1446 BC), at Mount Sinai, as Israel prepared for the wilderness journey to Canaan. Each tribe's leader was carefully selected, establishing a chain of command essential for organizing over 600,000 fighting men plus women and children.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's insistence on proper leadership structure reflect His sovereign order in your church and family?
2. In what ways does the tribal representative system point forward to Christ as our ultimate Representative before God?

Interlinear Text

א יש וְהִי וְאַתָּךְ מִ H854 H1961 And with you there shall be a man H376

א יש לאם ה לאם ה א יש
And with you there shall be a man tribe And with you there shall be a man
H376 H4294 H376

ר אָשָׁר	לְבִית	אָבָתִיךְ	הָאָ
head	of the house	of his fathers	H1931
H7218	H1004	H1	

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 1:16 (Parallel theme): These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

Exodus 18:25 (Parallel theme): 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.