

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

Psalms 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

וְיָהִי H854	וְיָהִי H1961	אֶתְּךָ H376	אֶתְּךָ H376
And with you there shall be a man			
אֶתְּךָ H376	לְמִטָּה H4294	אֶתְּךָ H376	אֶתְּךָ H376
And with you there shall be a man tribe And with you there shall be a man			
רֹאשׁ H7218	לְבַיִת H1004	אֲבוֹתָיו H1	הוא H1931
head of the house of his fathers			

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.