Numbers 1:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Analysis

Naphtali's census reflects God's sovereign organization of the final tribe in this enumeration. The tribe's placement in far northern Galilee would later prove significant when this region, called 'Galilee of the Gentiles' (Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:15), became central to Jesus's ministry. What seemed like a distant border region in Moses's day became the epicenter of divine revelation when the Word became flesh. This demonstrates that God's purposes transcend human understanding of significance and centrality.

Historical Context

Naphtali received mountainous territory in northern Galilee, bordering the Sea of Galilee. Jacob blessed Naphtali as 'a hind let loose' who 'gives beautiful words' (Genesis 49:21), prophecies whose fulfillment is debated but may relate to the region's later connection to Jesus's teaching ministry.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Naphtali's transformation from border tribe to center of Jesus's ministry demonstrate God's ability to reverse human notions of centrality and importance?
2. What does this teach us about trusting God's purposes even when our circumstances seem marginal or peripheral?

Interlinear Text

לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָ ם	תּוֹלְדֹתָ ם	נַפְתָּל י	מִבְּ ן
after their families	throughout their generations	of Naphtali	Of the children
H4940	H8435	H5321	H1121

מִבְּ ן	שֵׁמ ת	בְּמִסְפַּ ר	אֲבֹתָ ם	לְבֵ ית
Of the children	of the names	according to the number	of their fathers	by the house
H1121	H8034	H4557	H1	H1004

צָבָא:	יֹצֵ א	כֹּ ל	וָמַ עְלָה	שָׁנָה	עֶשְׂרִ ים
to war	all that were able to go forth	H3605	and upward	years	from twenty
H6635	H3318		H4605	H8141	H6242

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org