

Numbers 1:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Naphtali's 53,400 fighting men gave it average military strength among the tribes. The tribe's contribution to Israel's defense was solid if unspectacular, yet this average service was no less crucial to God's purposes than the contributions of larger or more prominent tribes. The kingdom of God advances through the faithful service of many 'average' believers more than through spectacular individual achievements. This democratic principle encourages all Christians to faithful stewardship regardless of perceived significance.

Historical Context

Naphtali proved faithful in Israel's struggles, joining Barak and Deborah against Sisera (Judges 4:6, 10) and contributing forces to David's coronation (1 Chronicles 12:34). The tribe's consistent, unspectacular faithfulness exemplifies sustainable kingdom service.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Naphtali's steady, average service challenge the modern emphasis on exceptional achievement and significance?
2. What does this teach us about the importance of the many faithful believers whose service never garners recognition?

Interlinear Text

פָּקְדִים	לְמִתְהָרָךְ	שְׁלַשׁ	נְפָתַל
Those that were numbered	of them even of the tribe	of Naphtali	and three
H6485	H4294	H5321	H7969
מֵאֹתָה	אֶרְבָּעָה	אֶלָּא	יְמִינָשׁ
were fifty	thousand	and four	hundred
H2572	H505	H702	H3967

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 26:50 (Parallel theme): These are the families of Naphtali according to their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred.

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