

Numbers 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah.

Analysis

Judah camps 'on the east side toward the rising of the sun' with the standard of the camp of Judah.' The east position was most honored, facing the tabernacle's entrance. Judah's leadership foreshadows Christ from Judah's tribe (Gen 49:10, Heb 7:14). The Hebrew 'qedem' (east) also means 'before/ancient,' suggesting priority and honor. Judah's camp included Issachar and Zebulun, totaling 186,400 men (v.9) - the largest camp. This arrangement anticipated Judah's royal leadership in David's dynasty and ultimately the Lion of Judah, Jesus Christ, who rises like the sun bringing righteousness (Mal 4:2, Luke 1:78).

Historical Context

This placement gave Judah prominent position during both encampment and marching. Numbers 10:14 shows Judah's camp moved first when Israel traveled. This honored position reflected Jacob's blessing (Gen 49:8-10) that 'the scepter shall not depart from Judah.' Throughout Israel's history, Judah produced Israel's greatest kings (David, Solomon, and their line) and ultimately the Messiah. The standard (degel) likely displayed a lion symbol, based on Jacob's blessing calling Judah 'a lion's whelp' (Gen 49:9).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Judah's prominent position prefiguring Christ encourage you that all biblical history points to Jesus?
2. In what ways should Christ have the 'east position' - the place of highest honor and priority - in your life?

Interlinear Text

מִזְבֵּחַ בְּהֵדֶן
pitch And on the east side toward the rising
H2583 H6924 H4217

לְצֹבָאָת מִן־יְהוָה מִן־מִצְבֵּחַ
of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah throughout their armies
H1714 H4264 H3063 H6635

בְּנֵי יְהוָה נַחַשׁ וְנַחֲשָׁן בְּנֵי
shall be captain of the children of Judah and Nahshon of the children
H5387 H1121 H3063 H5177 H1121

עַמִּינָדָב:
of Amminadab
H5992

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 2:10 (Parallel theme): And Ram begat Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah;

Ruth 4:20 (Parallel theme): And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

Numbers 1:7 (Parallel theme): Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

1 Chronicles 5:2 (Parallel theme): For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)

Matthew 1:4 (Parallel theme): And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

Numbers 7:12 (Parallel theme): And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah:

Numbers 7:17 (Parallel theme): And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.