

Numbers 26:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites.

Analysis

And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites—Bela's two sub-clans receive special mention, emphasizing his prominence as Benjamin's firstborn. Ard (אָרֶד, 'humpbacked/descendant') and Naaman (נָאָמָן, 'pleasant/gracious') contrast physical limitation with beauty—together representing the fullness of human experience under covenant blessing.

Naaman's name will reappear with the Syrian general healed of leprosy (2 Kings 5), creating intertextual resonance: the 'pleasant' clan name anticipates God's grace to a foreign Naaman. The Ardites' 'humpbacked' name suggests even the disabled belonged fully in Israel's inheritance—no eugenics, no merit-based inclusion. The census counts all legitimate descendants regardless of physical capability, anticipating Christ's radical inclusion of the lame and broken (Luke 14:13, 21).

Historical Context

As Bela's sub-clans, the Ardites and Naamites likely held significant territory within Benjamin's allotment. Their preservation through this census ensured continuity despite Benjamin's near-extinction in Judges 20-21, when only 600 men survived. These families may have been among those who helped rebuild the tribe through the wives obtained from Jabesh-gilead and Shiloh.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the Ardites' inclusion (from a name suggesting disability) challenge modern prosperity gospel theology that equates blessing with health and success?
2. What does the juxtaposition of 'Ard' (limitation) and 'Naaman' (grace) teach about God's glory displayed through weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)?
3. How might the name Naaman appearing in both Israel's census and the leprous Syrian general's story illustrate God's intention to extend grace beyond ethnic Israel?

Interlinear Text

מִשְׁפֵּט֙ חַתְּמָת֙	לְנָעָם֙	אֶרְד֙	בְּלָעָם֙	בְּנֵי֙	תְּהִלָּה֙	לְנָעָם֙	אֶרְד֙	בְּלָעָם֙	בְּנֵי֙	תְּהִלָּה֙	
H1961	And the sons	of Bela	were Ard	and Naaman	of Ard the family	H1961	And the sons	of Bela	were Ard	and Naaman	of Ard the family
H1121		H1106	H714	H5283	H4940	H1121		H1106	H714	H5283	H4940
מִשְׁפֵּט֙ חַתְּמָת֙	לְנָעָם֙	אֶרְד֙	בְּלָעָם֙	בְּנֵי֙	תְּהִלָּה֙	מִשְׁפֵּט֙ חַתְּמָת֙	לְנָעָם֙	אֶרְד֙	בְּלָעָם֙	בְּנֵי֙	תְּהִלָּה֙
of the Ardites	and Naaman	of Ard the family	of the Naamites			of the Ardites	and Naaman	of Ard the family	of the Naamites		
H716		H5283	H4940	H5280		H716		H5283	H4940	H5280	

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 8:3 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Bela were, Addar, and Gera, and Abihud,

