

Numbers 3:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand.

Analysis

The total of 22,000 Levites (though the individual family totals sum to 22,300, likely due to rounding or textual issues) demonstrates God's provision of adequate ministers for tabernacle service. This number was significant as it closely matched the 22,000 firstborn males of Israel (verse 43), showing God's gracious substitution. The Levites served as representatives replacing all Israel's firstborn, illustrating the principle of substitutionary representation fulfilled ultimately in Christ, who represents all believers before God.

Historical Context

The census counted males one month old and above, unlike Israel's military census which counted those twenty years and above. This included infants and children, showing that consecration to God began from birth for the Levitical families. The slight numerical discrepancy between Levites and firstborn (verse 43 shows 22,273 firstborn) required redemption payment for the excess 273 (verses 46-47).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the Levitical substitution for Israel's firstborn illustrate Christ's substitutionary work for believers?
2. What does God's provision of exactly the right number of ministers teach about His sovereignty in calling workers for His kingdom?

Interlinear Text

כָּל H3605	פָּקַד H6485	הַלְוִיִּם H3881	אֲשֶׁר H834	פָּקַד H6485
All that were numbered of the Levites All that were numbered				
מֹשֶׁה H4872	וְאַהֲרֹן H175	עַל H5921	פִּי H6310	יְהוָה H3068
which Moses and Aaron at the commandment of the LORD				
לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם H4940	כָּל H3605	זָכָר H2145	מִבֶּן H1121	חֵדֶשׁ H2320
throughout their families all the males old from a month and upward				
וּשְׁנַיִם H8147	וְעֶשְׂרִים H6242	אַלְפֵי H505		
and two were twenty thousand				

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 26:62 (Parallel theme): And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.