

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	נָשָׁר	בְּלוֹויִם	אֲשֶׁר	נָשָׁר
H3605	All that were numbered	of the Levites	H834	All that were numbered
	H6485	H3881		H6485
מִשְׁנָה	רְאֵבֶן	עַל	וְ	יְהִי
which Moses	and Aaron	H5921	at the commandment	of the LORD
H4872	H175		H6310	H3068
לְמִשְׁפְּחָתָם	כָּל	זִכְרָה	מִתְּבָנָה	עַלְיהָ
throughout their families	H3605	all the males	old	from a month
H4940		H2145	H1121	H2320
אֶלָּף:	וְעָשָׂר	יָמִים	חֹדֶש	וְעַלְיהָ
and two	were twenty	thousand		and upward
H8147	H6242	H505		H4605

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.