

Numbers 3:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

Analysis

The specification 'for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel' emphasizes that redemption addresses specific individuals, not abstract groups. God redeemed exactly 273 people, knowing each one. The Hebrew *piduyim* (those to be redeemed) stresses that these were actual persons requiring ransom. This precision refutes universalism—redemption is particular, not universal. Christ died for 'His people' (Matthew 1:21), the specific number the Father gave Him (John 6:37-39). Election is not arbitrary but personal—God knows whom He saves.

Historical Context

The 273 redeemed firstborn were likely distributed across all twelve tribes proportionally. Each family with excess firstborn paid five shekels redemption price (verse 47). This created equality—whether from large or small tribes, the redemption price remained constant. This pictures that salvation costs the same infinite price for all—rich and poor, educated and ignorant—all need Christ's blood equally.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does particular redemption (specific numbered individuals) shape our understanding of election?
2. What comfort comes from knowing Christ's redemption is personal, not generic?
3. How does the equal redemption price for all challenge human hierarchies of spiritual worth?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת

H853

פְּדוּיֵי י'

H6302

הַשְּׁלֹשׁ ה'

H7969

And for those that are to be redeemed

וְהַשְּׁבַע יִם

and threescore and thirteen

H7657

וְהַמֵּאתָ יִם

of the two hundred

H3967

הָעֶדְפִים

which are more

H5736

עַל

than

H5921

הַלְוִיִּם

the Levites

H3881

מִבְּכֹר

of the firstborn

H1060

בְּנֵי י'

of the children

H1121

יִשְׂרָאֵל:

of Israel

H3478

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 13:13 (Redemption): And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.