

Numbers 3:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.

Analysis

The 273 firstborn exceeding the number of Levites required redemption at 'five shekels apiece after the shekel of the sanctuary.' This redemption money (1,365 shekels total) went to Aaron and his sons for sanctuary service. The 'shekel of the sanctuary' (about 0.4 ounces of silver) was the standard weight ensuring fair transactions. This redemption price foreshadows Christ's redemption of believers - not with 'corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ' (1 Pet 1:18-19). The five shekels per person represent the costliness of redemption; Christ's blood infinitely exceeds any monetary value.

Historical Context

The practice of firstborn redemption continued throughout Israelite history. Luke 2:22-24 records Joseph and Mary bringing Jesus to the temple for Mary's purification and presumably Jesus' redemption as firstborn (though as God's Son, He needed no redemption). The shekel of the sanctuary provided standardized measurement preventing fraud in religious transactions. Later, the temple tax of half a shekel annually (Ex 30:13, Matt 17:24) supported temple operations. These monetary provisions showed that God's work required material support, while the redemption price emphasized the costliness of deliverance from bondage.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Have you fully appreciated the 'price' of your redemption, or do you take salvation lightly?
2. How does understanding redemption's costliness motivate grateful service and generous giving to God's work?

Interlinear Text

וְנָתַתָּךְ תְּ ־ שְׂכָךְ | לְאַבְרָהָם וְלְבָנָיו
And thou shalt give the money unto Aaron and to his sons
H5414 H3701 H175 H1121

וְפָدָא יְ ־ שְׁנָתְפָךְ בְּ
of them is to be redeemed wherewith the odd number
H6302 H5736 H0

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org