

Numbers 31:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And threescore and twelve thousand beeves,

Analysis

And threescore and twelve thousand beeves—72,000 cattle (baqar) represented enormous wealth. Cattle provided labor (plowing), dairy, leather, and meat. With sheep (675,000), donkeys (61,000), this livestock transformed Israel from survival wanderers into economically viable nation ready for Canaan settlement.

The distribution gave soldiers 36,000 cattle, congregation 36,000 cattle. From soldiers' portion: 72 to Eleazar as tribute (1/500). From congregation's: 720 to Levites (1/50). God's math ensures fairness: those who fought receive equal per-capita share as those who stayed, after proportional sacred tribute. This reflects both justice (risk rewarded) and equity (community shares).

Historical Context

Cattle were valuable capital in ancient agrarian economy. Israel had maintained flocks in Goshen (Egypt) and throughout wilderness, but these Midianite herds dramatically increased national wealth. The timing—just before Conquest—positioned Israel to settle Canaan with agricultural resources.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's provision of practical resources (livestock) alongside spiritual guidance show His care for whole-life needs?
2. What does the equal per-capita distribution teach about preventing economic inequality in covenant communities?

Interlinear Text

וּבָקָר	שְׁנַיִם	וְשָׁבַע	אֶלֶף:
beeves	H8147	And threescore and twelve	thousand
H1241		H7657	H505

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