

Numbers 31:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and twelve.

Analysis

And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and twelve—The Hebrew baqar (בָּקָר, 'cattle/oxen') represented substantial wealth in ancient agrarian economies. The 72 cattle given to the Levitical priesthood (0.2% of 36,000) provided both sustenance and sacrificial animals for tabernacle service. This systematic allocation ensured those who served God's sanctuary received material support from spoils gained through God's power.

The principle that 'the laborer deserves his wages' (Luke 10:7, 1 Timothy 5:18) finds early expression here. God ordained that spiritual leaders receive tangible provision from the community they serve.

Historical Context

Cattle in the Ancient Near East served multiple functions: agricultural labor, dairy production, leather, and sacrificial offerings. The substantial number (36,000) indicates Midian's considerable pastoral wealth. Eleazar the priest (Aaron's son) administered these resources for tabernacle operations.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How faithfully do you support those who minister to you spiritually with tangible resources?
2. Does your giving reflect gratitude for victories God has granted, or merely obligation?
3. What does it mean that God cares about the practical support of those who serve Him full-time?

Interlinear Text

וְיָהִי הַמִּכְסָם אֶלָּא שְׁשָׁה וְשָׁלֹשׁ יָמִים וְבָקָר וְבָקָר	of which the LORD'S tribute was thirty thousand and six and the beees were thirty thousand and six and the beees	לִיהְיוּ הַמִּכְסָם אֶלָּא שְׁשָׁה וְשָׁלֹשׁ יָמִים וְבָקָר וְבָקָר
And the beees were thirty thousand and six and the beees H1241	and six were thirty thousand H8337	thirty thousand tribute of which the LORD'S H7970 H505 H4371 H3068

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