

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

וְהַבָּקָר	וְשֵׁשׁ	וְשָׁלֹשׁ	אֶלְפֵי	וּמִכָּסֶּם	לִיהוָה
And the beeves	and six	were thirty	thousand	tribute	of which the LORD'S
H1241	H8337	H7970	H505	H4371	H3068
שָׁנַיִם	וְשִׁבְעִים:				
H8147	was threescore and twelve				
	H7657				

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