

Numbers 31:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thirty and six thousand beeves,

Analysis

And thirty and six thousand beeves—The Hebrew בָּקָר (baqar, "cattle/oxen") refers to large livestock essential for agriculture, transportation, and sacrifice. The congregation's half was 36,000 head (from 72,000 total), representing enormous wealth and productive capacity for the settlement ahead.

Unlike sheep, cattle required significant pastureland and provided draft power for plowing—critical for transforming Canaan from conquest to cultivation. That God allotted cattle to the entire congregation (not just warriors) shows His provision included the means of production for future generations, not merely consumable goods.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern economies depended on cattle for agriculture. A single ox could plow enough land to feed multiple families. The 36,000 cattle distributed to Israel's 600,000+ population ensured adequate plowing capacity for Canaan's hill country agriculture. This occurred just before Joshua's conquest, equipping Israel economically for sedentary life.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's provision of productive assets (cattle) rather than just consumables reflect His long-term care?
2. What does this distribution teach about equipping God's people not just for survival but for fruitful labor?
3. In what ways should ministry provide people with tools for productivity, not just immediate relief?

Interlinear Text

אֶלֶף: וְשָׁלַשׁ יָמִים שְׁשָׁה הַזְּבָבָר
beeves and six And thirty thousand
H1241 H8337 H7970 H505

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