

Numbers 31:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

Analysis

Twelve thousand armed for war (chalutzey tzava, צָלֹעִים צָבָא)—The Hebrew chalutz means equipped, ready, or drawn out for battle. These were not conscripts but delivered (yimmaseru, יִמְסַרּוּ, handed over/dedicated) soldiers, suggesting voluntary or selected warriors rather than forced service.

The number twelve (1,000 from each tribe) carries symbolic weight throughout Scripture—twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve gates of the New Jerusalem. The armed force represents the whole covenant community in sanctified battle. This selectivity foreshadows the New Testament's "good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3), where not all are called to the same role, but all contribute to spiritual warfare.

Historical Context

The term "armed for war" indicates these were trained, battle-ready men, not raw recruits. Israel had gained military experience through conflicts with Amalekites (Exodus 17), Amorites (Numbers 21), and in defending themselves during the wilderness period. This campaign served as final preparation before the Canaan conquest under Joshua.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the concept of being "delivered" or dedicated to spiritual battle inform your understanding of Christian commitment?
2. What does the selective nature of the 12,000 (from 600,000+) teach about God's sovereignty in calling different believers to different roles?
3. In what ways are you "armed for war" in the spiritual battles you face (Ephesians 6:10-18)?

Interlinear Text

וּמָסְרוּ לְפָטָה אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־לְבָנִים
So there were delivered a thousand of Israel a thousand of every tribe twelve
H4560 H505 H3478 H505 H4294 H8147

עַשְׁר אֶל־לְבָנִים כִּלְאֵץ
H6240 H505 H2502 H6635
a thousand armed for war

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