

Numbers 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Analysis

Levites served 'from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle.' The Hebrew 'tsaba' (host/service) uses military terminology, showing sacred service as spiritual warfare. The thirty-year minimum ensured physical strength and spiritual maturity for demanding work. Christ began His public ministry at about thirty (Luke 3:23), fulfilling this pattern. The fifty-year retirement age (changed later to twenty-five for beginning, Num 8:24) recognized physical limitations while maintaining service quality. This teaches that spiritual ministry requires preparation, maturity, and recognition of human limitations.

Historical Context

The age requirements ensured Levites could handle physically demanding work - carrying the tabernacle's heavy components during wilderness travels. The twenty-year span (ages 30-50) provided experienced workers while allowing for training younger Levites and utilizing retired elders as mentors. After fifty, Levites could 'minister with their brethren... to keep the charge' (Num 8:26) - supervisory roles using accumulated wisdom. This system balanced vigor with experience, similar to church leadership's need for both mature wisdom and physical/mental capability.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Are you preparing yourself spiritually for greater service, recognizing that God often requires seasons of maturation before larger responsibilities?
2. Do you honor both the vigor of younger servants and the wisdom of older saints in the church?

Interlinear Text

בָּן	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה	שָׁנָה
old	From thirty	years	and upward	H5704	old	even until fifty	years	
H1121	H7970	H8141	H4605		H1121	H2572	H8141	

כָּל	בָּא	בָּא	לַעַשׂ	וֹתָר	לְאַבָּא	מְלָאָכָה	בְּאַתָּה	בְּאַתָּה
H3605	all that enter	into the host	H6635		H6213	to do	H4399	the work
	H935					H168		in the tabernacle

מִזְעָד:
of the congregation
H4150

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 4:23 (Temple): From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.