

Numbers 4:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

Analysis

Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites—The census (טָדַד, paqad) served dual purposes: military registration and sacred service allocation. The Kohathites, descended from Levi's second son, bore the most holy objects of the tabernacle (ark, table, lampstand, altars) but could not look upon them unpacked (4:20) on pain of death.

After their families, and after the house of their fathers—Hebrew tribal structure (מִשְׁפָּחָה, mishpachot) ensured hereditary service roles. This census wasn't about ability but divine appointment through bloodline, anticipating Christ's qualification as High Priest through Judah's genealogy yet fulfilling Melchizedek's eternal priesthood (Hebrews 7).

Historical Context

Conducted at Sinai during Israel's second year after the Exodus (1445 BC traditional dating). The Kohathites' census occurred after instructions for their service (4:1-20) but before their actual duties commenced. Moses and Aaron, both Kohathites themselves, supervised the count under God's direct command.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of hereditary service roles challenge modern meritocracy while still affirming that spiritual service requires divine calling?
2. What does the Kohathites' privilege (carrying holy objects) paired with restriction (not viewing them) teach about holy reverence in ministry?

Interlinear Text

וּפָקְדָה	מֹשֶׁה	וְאַהֲרֹן	וְנָשִׂיא	הַעֵדָה	אֶת
numbered	And Moses	and Aaron	and the chief	of the congregation	H853
H6485	H4872	H175	H5387	H5712	
בְּנֵי	הַקֹּהֲתִים	לְמִשְׁפַּחֹתָם	וְלִבְיֹתָם	אֲבֹתָם:	
the sons	of the Kohathites	after their families	and after the house	of their fathers	
H1121	H6956	H4940	H1004	H1	