

Numbers 4:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

Analysis

From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old—The identical age requirement for Gershonites as Kohathites (v. 35) demonstrates God's impartiality in ministry qualifications. Whether carrying the golden ark or woolen curtains, service required the same maturity, strength, and consecration. The New Testament church maintains this principle: qualifications for elders (1 Timothy 3) and deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13) are identical regardless of specific ministry assignment.

For the work in the tabernacle of the congregation (לעַבְדָּה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, la'avodah be'ohel mo'ed)—The 'tent of meeting' (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, ohel mo'ed) appears 146 times in Exodus-Numbers, emphasizing God's appointed place for encountering His people. Every service role, from ark-bearing to curtain-carrying, facilitated this divine-human meeting point.

Historical Context

The twenty-year service window (ages 30-50) persisted throughout Israel's wilderness period but was adjusted when temple worship became permanent in Jerusalem. The tent of meeting remained Israel's worship center for nearly 500 years (from Exodus 40:17, c. 1446 BC, until Solomon's temple, c. 966 BC).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the equal age requirement for 'prestigious' Kohathite and 'mundane' Gershonite service challenge your view of ministry hierarchy?
2. In what ways do you facilitate God's 'meeting' with people through your service role, however seemingly insignificant?

Interlinear Text

בָּנִים	שְׁנַת הַיּוֹם	שְׁנַת הַשְׁלֵשִׁים	וְעַד שְׁנַת הַעֲלֵה	וְעַד שְׁנַת הַיּוֹם	בָּנִים	שְׁנַת הַיּוֹם	שְׁנַת הַשְׁלֵשִׁים	וְעַד שְׁנַת הַעֲלֵה
old	From thirty	years	and upward	H5704	old	even unto fifty	years	
H1121	H7970	H8141	H4605		H1121	H2572		H8141
כָּל	הַבָּא	לְאַבָּא	לְעַבְדֵּךְ	הַבָּא	לְעַבְדֵּךְ	כָּל	הַבָּא	
H3605	every one that entereth	into the service	for the work	in the tabernacle				
	H935	H6635	H5656	H168				

מיעוט of the congregation

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