

Numbers 4:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty.

Analysis

Two thousand and six hundred and thirty—The Gershonites numbered 2,630 qualified servants from a total clan of 7,500 males (3:22), yielding a 35% service ratio, slightly higher than Kohathites (32%). Despite being Levi's firstborn line, Gershonites had the smallest serving workforce among the three Levitical clans, yet their role was indispensable—without curtains and coverings, the holy objects would be exposed to profanation.

The precise enumeration (not 'about 2,600') reflects God's comprehensive knowledge of His servants. Jesus later affirmed this principle: 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matthew 10:30). Divine omniscience extends beyond crowd counts to individual accountability, a truth both comforting (God knows me) and sobering (God will judge me).

Historical Context

The Gershonites transported their fabric loads on two wagons pulled by four oxen (7:7), while Kohathites carried sacred objects on their shoulders without wagons (7:9). This distinction honored the sanctity of holy objects while acknowledging practical needs for fabric transport.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the indispensability of 'lesser' Gershonite service (curtains) illustrate Paul's body-of-Christ metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12:21-25?
2. What comfort and challenge do you find in God's precise knowledge of your service contributions?

Interlinear Text

וְהֵיוּ

H1961

פְּקֵי דִידָם

Even those that were numbered

H6485

לְמִשְׁפַּחַתָּם

of them throughout their families

H4940

לְבֵית

by the house

H1004

אֲבוֹתָם

of their fathers

H1

אַלְפֵי

were two thousand

H505

וְשֵׁשׁ

and six

H8337

מֵאוֹת

hundred

H3967

וְשָׁלֹשִׁים:

and thirty

H7970