

Numbers 4:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD.

Analysis

Whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD—The repetition of divine authorization (cf. v. 37) for each clan's census underscores that spiritual service organization originates with God, not human preference. The phrase עַל־פִּי יְהוָה (al-pi YHWH, 'by the mouth of the LORD') appears like a refrain, preventing Israel from attributing Levitical structure to Moses's administrative genius.

Of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation—The verb שָׁרַת (sharat, to minister/serve) often denotes priestly service (Exodus 28:35, 43) distinct from general labor. Gershonites didn't merely work; they ministered, transforming manual labor into sacred worship. This sanctification of 'secular' work anticipates Colossians 3:23: 'Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord.'

Historical Context

Aaron's involvement in numbering the Gershonites—his own extended family—ensured priestly oversight of Levitical organization. As high priest, Aaron understood the sacred nature of even fabric-related tabernacle service, having witnessed God's glory fill the completed structure (Exodus 40:34-35).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the recurring emphasis on divine commandment ('al-pi YHWH') challenge pragmatic, efficiency-driven approaches to church structure?
2. What would it look like to view your daily work—even mundane tasks—through the lens of sharat (priestly ministry)?

Interlinear Text

אֵלֶּה	פָּקָד	מִשְׁפָּחֹת	בָּנִים	גֶּרֶשׁ וּ
H428	These are they that were numbered	H4940	of the families	of the sons
	H6485		H1121	H1648
כָּל	בְּעֵבֶד	בְּאָדָל	מֹעֵד	אָשָׁר
H3605	of all that might do service	H168	in the tabernacle	of the congregation
	H5647		H4150	H834
פָּקָד	מִשְׁה	וְאַבְרָהָם	עַל	
These are they that were numbered	whom Moses	and Aaron	H5921	
H6485	H4872	H175		
כִּי	יְהִי			
according to the commandment	of the LORD			
H6310	H3068			

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