

Numbers 4:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred.

Analysis

Three thousand and two hundred—The Merarites numbered 3,200 qualified servants from a total clan of 6,200 males (3:34), yielding a 52% service ratio—significantly higher than Kohathites (32%) or Gershonites (35%). This suggests Merarite work was the most physically demanding, requiring maximum available manpower. Heavy structural components (boards, pillars, bronze sockets) demanded robust labor forces.

Combined, the three Levitical clans provided 8,580 servants (2,750 + 2,630 + 3,200) for tabernacle transport and ministry. This workforce-to-congregation ratio (8,580 servants for ~600,000 men, or ~1.4% of the population) parallels New Testament teaching that not all are called to vocational ministry (1 Corinthians 12:29-30), yet all serve in diverse capacities.

Historical Context

The census totals for each Levitical clan differ from their earlier counts (chapter 3), as chapter 3 enumerated all males from one month old upward, while chapter 4 counts only those ages 30-50 qualified for active service. This distinction clarifies that not all Levites served simultaneously—a principle applicable to church ministry staffing.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the Merarites' disproportionate service burden (52% of their males in active duty) illustrate the principle of bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)?
2. What does the relatively small percentage of vocational servants (1.4%) suggest about God's design for lay ministry and priesthood of all believers?

Interlinear Text

תְּבוּ	אַתָּה	מִלְמְדִים	לְמִשְׁפְּחָת	שֶׁל	שְׁתַ
H1961	Even those that were numbered	H6485	of them after their families	H4940	were three
H505	thousand	H3967		H7969	

אַלְפִים	וּמְאַתִּים
thousand	and two hundred

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