

Numbers 4:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore.

Analysis

Eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore (8,580)—This precise total for Merarite men aged 30-50 concludes the Levitical census that began in Numbers 4:34. The specificity reveals God's attention to detail: Kohathites numbered 2,750 (4:36), Gershonites 2,630 (4:40), and Merarites 3,200 (4:44). Total: 8,580 Levites in their prime.

The Hebrew emphasizes exactitude: shmonah alafim vachamesh me'ot ushmonim. This wasn't approximate headcount but careful registration. Compare this working-age census to the broader Levitical count from age one month upward (22,000 in 3:39). Only 39% of male Levites were in their service prime, underscoring the demanding physical nature of tabernacle transport.

Historical Context

This census occurred in the second year after the Exodus (Numbers 1:1), probably 1444 BC in the Sinai wilderness. The 8,580 figure represents the workforce that transported the tabernacle for 38 years until entering Canaan. These men formed a sacred moving company, ensuring God's dwelling traveled safely with Israel.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does God's precise numbering of each Levite tribe (down to the individual) reveal about His knowledge and care for each person's service?
2. How might understanding that only 39% of Levites qualified for service reshape your perspective on spiritual readiness and preparation?
3. In what ways does the meticulous record-keeping in Numbers 4 challenge modern tendencies toward informality or casualness in sacred service?

Interlinear Text

וְיַהֲיֵה	אַלְפִים	שָׁמֵן	תְּשִׁבְדֵּה	מִ
H1961	Even those that were numbered	of them were eight	H8083	thousand
	H6485			H505
				and five
H2568				
וְשָׁמְנִים	מֵא	וְתָ		
hundred	and fourscore			
H3967	H8084			

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 3:39 (Parallel theme): All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand.