

Numbers 7:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Analysis

The Merarites receiving four wagons and eight oxen—double what the Gershonites received—reflects their heavier burden of boards, bars, pillars, and sockets. The bronze and wooden framework was substantially heavier than fabric coverings. This demonstrates that God distributes resources equitably based on need, not equally regardless of circumstances. The Reformed principle that to whom much is given, much is required also applies in reverse—those with greater burdens receive greater provision.

Historical Context

The Merarites carried the entire structural framework of the tabernacle, including heavy bronze sockets that formed the foundation. These components, being solid metal and wood rather than fabric, required more substantial transportation. The eight oxen provided the pulling power necessary for moving such weight repeatedly during Israel's wanderings.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does proportionate resource allocation according to burden teach about God's justice?
2. How should recognizing that harder tasks receive more support encourage those in difficult ministries?
3. In what ways does this principle challenge comparison and envy among different workers in God's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

בֶּן | נָתַן | הַבֶּקָּרָה | שְׁמֹנֶת | וְאֵת | הָעֲגָלֹת | אַרְבַּע | וְאֵת
H853 H853 H1241 H8083 H5699 H702 H853
the son **he gave** **oxen** **and eight** **wagons** **And four**

בֶּן | אִיתָם | רַ | בְּיָד | עַבְדֵי דָתָם | כִּפִּי | מֶרָרִי
H1121 H385 H3027 H5656 H6310 H4847
the son **of Ithamar** **under the hand** **unto their service** **according** **of Merari**

הַכֹּהֵן: | אֶהֱרֹן |
H3548 H175
the priest **of Aaron**