

Numbers

Chapters 2 & 3

- I. Introduction
 - a. In our previous lesson, we introduced this book with the numbering of the Israelites 20 years old and upward
 - i. Remember, the Levites were not numbered as they were not required to serve in the Israeli army
 - b. Today's lesson continues some of the groundwork of this book before actually getting into some of the historical accounts we are looking forward to
- II. Commentary
 - a. **Chapter 2**
 - i. **Verses 1-9**
 1. God is a God of order
 - a. Though not everything in church is spelled out specifically, we are told, "*But all things should be done decently and in order*" (**1 Corinthians 14:40**)
 - b. We see this order here as this chapter spells out the way Israel was to camp
 2. Each camp will camp under a standard, or flag
 - a. Keil and Delitzsch say, "Neither the Mosaic law, nor the Old Testament generally gives us any intimation as to the form or character of the standard (*deqhel*). According to rabbinical tradition, the standard of Judah bore the figure of a lion, that of Reuben the likeness of a man, or of a man's head, that of Ephraim the figure of an ox, and that of Dan the figure of an eagle; so that the four living creatures united in the cherubic forms described by Ezekiel were represented upon these four standards."
 3. This passage names who is to camp on the east side
 - a. These tribes were camped under the standard of Judah
 - i. Judah, totaling 74,600 fighting men
 - ii. Issachar, totaling 54,400 fighting men
 - iii. Zebulun, totaling 57,400 fighting men
 - b. There were 186,400 fighting men camped on the east side
 - c. When marching, these tribes set out first
 - ii. **Verses 10-16**
 1. This passage names who is to camp on the south side
 - a. These tribes were camped under the standard of Reuben
 - i. Reuben, totaling 46,500 fighting men
 - ii. Simeon, totaling 59,300 fighting men

- iii. Gad, totaling 45,650 fighting men
 - b. There were 151,450 fighting men camped on the south side
 - c. When marching, these tribes set out second
 - iii. **Verse 17**
 - 1. When marching, the Levites went after those tribes that marched under the standard of Reuben
 - a. This put the tent of meeting and all of its utensils in the middle of the camp as they marched
 - iv. **Verses 18-24**
 - 1. This passage names who is to camp on the west side
 - a. These tribes were camped under the standard of Ephraim
 - i. Ephraim, totaling 40,500 fighting men
 - ii. Manasseh, totaling 32,200 fighting men
 - iii. Benjamin, totaling 35,400 fighting men
 - b. There were 108,100 fighting men camped on the west side
 - c. When marching, these tribes set out after the Levites carrying the tabernacle and its utensils
 - v. **Verses 25-31**
 - 1. This passage names who is to camp on the north side
 - a. These tribes were camped under the standard of Dan
 - i. Dan, totaling 62,700 fighting men
 - ii. Asher, totaling 41,500 fighting men
 - iii. Naphtali, totaling 53,400 fighting men
 - b. There were 157,600 fighting men camped on the north side of the camp
 - c. When marching, these tribes set out last
 - vi. **Verses 32-34**
 - 1. As we saw in the previous chapter, the total number of fighting men was 603,550 (**1:46**)
 - 2. We are also reminded that the Levites were not listed among the people of Israel
 - 3. The people of Israel did all that Moses commanded concerning where they were to camp
- b. **Chapter 3**
 - i. **Verses 1-4**
 - 1. The sons of Aaron are listed
 - a. Nadab and Abihu died for offering fire which was only to be offered by the High Priest (**Leviticus 10:1-2**)
 - b. Eleazor and Ithamar “*served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father*”
 - ii. **Verses 5-13**
 - 1. The Levites were given to Aaron to help him
 - 2. Any non-priest that tried to do the duty of a priest was to die

3. The firstborn of Israel were the Lord's because He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt when He rescued Israel from slavery (**vs. 13**)

a. The Levites actually became the Lord's in place of the firstborn from each family

iii. **Verses 14-39**

1. The Levites and priests were to camp around the tent of meeting

a. The Gershonites camped on the west

i. They numbered 7500 males

ii. They were responsible for the coverings of the tabernacle

b. The Kohathites camped on the south of the tabernacle

i. They numbered 8600 males according to the Hebrew Masoretic text

1. However, the Septuagint gives this number as 8300

a. This is probably the preferred reading as the numbers necessitate it

ii. They were responsible for the holy objects of the tabernacle

c. The Mararites camped on the north of the tabernacle

i. They numbered 6200 males

ii. They were responsible for the wooden framework of the tabernacle

d. Moses, Aaron and his sons were to camp on the east

i. It is repeated that any unauthorized person that came near the tabernacle was to be put to death

2. The total number of Levites were 22,000

iv. **Verses 40-51**

1. Moses was to number the firstborn males of all Israel

a. Then, the Levites were to be substituted in the place of the firstborn

b. The firstborn males numbered 22,273

i. This was 273 more than the 22,000 Levites

1. These were redeemed at 5 shekels per head (**vs. 47**)

a. This money was given to Aaron and his sons

i. This totaled 1365 shekels