

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

NUMBERS

By

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PREFACE

None of the sagas of men nor the chronicles of nations can compare with the true story of the people of Israel as recorded in the Word of God. Everything one might seek in such an account is readily found here: all the intrigues of men's schemes, all the sins of men's corruptness, all the glories of men's triumphs, all the sorrows of common life, all the ordeals of suppression and slavery—this and much, much more is faithfully recorded in a compact set of books we call the Holy Bible.

There is one supreme factor present in this Record, however, which no other history can claim. The account is not the product of mere human memory and compilation, nor is it based upon the fantasies and legends of a forgotten past. The very hand of God may be seen on every page, in every line. No one has recorded the manner by which the human authors were utilized in the compilation of the record quite as well as one who had known the experience himself, and Peter describes the process: "... men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God," (II Peter 1:21, NASB).

It is one thing to read history; it is quite another to read history from the viewpoint of the Creator. He has taken great care to preserve His words and His will in Scripture in order that we may find the answers to life's greatest questions: What is man? From whence came man? What is man's purpose on earth? What is man's ultimate destiny? These and many more pertinent questions are fully answered only in the Word of God. We are introduced to the background materials in that portion of The Book known as the Old Testament; we are given the full answer in God's definitive revelation through His Son, Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 1:1-4). With Jesus Christ as the focal point of all history and the climax of all revelation, all which has been written by revelation of God inevitably directs our most careful attention unto the Nazarene. Whether reading in Genesis or Revelation, anyone who studies the Bible is pointed unto Him. Indeed, John named this fact as the primary reason for his writing, (John 20:31).

PREFACE

In a real sense, then, the same purpose undergirds every book in the Book: that all men may be directed to the Son of God, from Whom they receive life in abundance here and life unending hereafter.

Where does the book of *Numbers* fit into God's majestic scheme? As an indispensable link in the history of those people He had selected as His own—those through which the Son should come. *Numbers* finds Israel encamped at Sinai, having but recently left their enslavement in Egypt, and brings them to the verge of Jordan where, following the death of Moses, they crossed into the Land of Promise. Within the book is a vast stock of treasures, gathered from Historical events and circumstances, from rich symbolisms, from the revelation of divine Law and its enforcement, from an intense study of a people living under stress as well as under promise, from magnificent and detailed prophecies exactly fulfilled. Towering high over all others in the book is God's man, Moses; but we are given beautiful insights into the heroic characters of Joshua and Caleb; we see Miriam and Aaron under the damning power of jealousy; we learn of rebellious priests delivered to death for their effrontery of God, and of the frequent sufferings of a grouching people whose own whinings ban them from Canaan. Collectively, the picture is that of ordinary people under circumstances both ordinary and rare, with their conduct fully open to a complete scrutiny. The wise reader will find in the account quite enough to inspire, inform and admonish him in discovering and following the instructions of God or to suffer the consequences of his wrong choice.

Read the book for exactly what it is: the record of a just and merciful God and His relationship with a people who were so much like ourselves that such an identification is not only possible, it is essential.

Brant Lee Doty

DEDICATION

*To my dear wife, our five wonderful children,
and a growing list of offspring, for all of whom I
have but the warmest affections.*

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INTRODUCTION

The book we now call *Numbers* was known from antiquity as *Bemidhbar*, "in the wilderness," (from 1:5), by the Hebrews, who also frequently referred to it as the "fourth book of Moses." The early name derives from the locale in which the events unfold, the desert area of Sinai. Alone of the books of the Pentateuch, it has a name currently which is of Latin rather than Greek origin. The Septuagint used the term *Arithmoi*, Tertullian referred to it as *Arithmi*, and Jerome introduced the name with which we are now familiar, *Numerii*, in the Vulgate. This name reflects the two censuses of Israel (Chapters 1–4; 26). Separated as they were by nearly forty years of time, the first census was ordered during the encampment at Sinai; the second briefly preceded Moses' death in the land of Moab.

Being essentially an historic record, *Numbers* bridges that gap between the giving of the Law to Moses and the death of the great prophet. Some time is devoted to the final preparations before leaving Sinai; the closing actions described occurred during the fortieth year following the Exodus. Hence, the total time involved in the book is slightly in excess of thirty-eight years. Specifically, the period of preparation at Sinai was 19 days; traveling from Sinai to Kadesh required 10 days; the wanderings filled somewhat more than 37 years; the final departure from Kadesh to the arrival in northern Moab was a ten-month journey, from which point we are prepared for Moses' farewell messages of Deuteronomy, and the beginning of Joshua's leadership. Throughout, the book interweaves Law and history, showing how the one gives meaningful direction to the other.

Numbers is a necessary and vital link to the developing history of a young nation, as well as the initial record of their life under the theocratic design of God. The *Pulpit Commentary* (*Numbers*, "Introduction," xvi), correctly shows that the book is "so inseparably united to the books which precede it that no scholar would make it the subject of a separate work." In isolation, its value is minimal; without its contributions,

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Israelite history would suffer a severe void.

AUTHORSHIP

John Marsh, in his introduction to *Numbers* in *The Interpreter's Bible*, simply says, "Although Numbers is one of the five books of Moses, it cannot be held to have been written by him," (p. 137). Summarized, his arguments are that Moses is always referred to in the third person; that he would not have spoken of himself as the meekest man in all the world (12:3); that 33:2 implies the hand of another writer or of an editor; and that critical or literary analysis discloses the presence of the same sources as are found in the rest of the Pentateuch: J, E, D, P and (possibly) H.

Typical of those who defend the essential Mosaic authorship is Whitelaw, *The Pulpit Commentary*, whose essay on the authenticity and authorship wrestles with some of the obvious difficulties one encounters in treating the chronological, statistical and physical factors. While acknowledging they are sources of some problems, he nevertheless concludes that "if no valid argument can be adduced for impugning the veracity of its contents, the inference is irresistible that it can only have proceeded from the pen of Moses," p. xvi. The conclusion is not merely affirmed; it is the result of reasoned confrontation with the commonly posed objections of Marsh and others.

The conclusion is based upon four converging evidences: 1. Numerous sections of the book must have been from the hand of Moses, or at least from his age, because of (a.) the camping stations (now largely unidentifiable); (b.) the songs in chapter 21 are certainly from the age, if not the actual pen of Moses; (c.) the legislation of chapter 19, plainly intended for people dwelling in camps and tents; (d.) instructions relating to the silver trumpets (10:1-10), and the arrangement of the camps shows a clear relationship to the desert; (e.) the priestly benediction and the military order of march are of "the age and spirit of Moses." 2. The book shows much evidence of having been composed in the desert by an eyewitness and participant in the events recorded. 3. The book shows an intimate and

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accurate familiarity with Egyptian customs and manners. 4. There is testimony from incidental and undersigned items which would point to Mosaic composition. His final words are that the book, "when fairly and dispassionately interrogated, not only does not support the modern hypothesis of its being a late compilation from pre-existing documents . . . but abundantly warrants the still popular belief that, while there is every probability that, like the rest of the Pentateuchal writings, it has been subjected to one or more revisions, and may even have suffered interpolation in unimportant passages . . . yet in the main, and substantially as we still possess it, it proceeded as an original composition from the hand of Moses," (pp. i-xxii).

To these arguments may be added those of William Jones, that "the intermixture in this book of narrative and legislative matter is one of its characteristic features. This feature is exactly one which belongs to the work of a contemporary annalist." He adds, "The various communications purporting to be from God to Moses are so worded and often of such a nature (cf. e. g. xiv. 11-26), that unless we go the length of denying their historical character altogether, we must admit them to have been recorded by the very person who received them," (see *The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary*, pp. 1, 2). The consummate argument follows, then, in the statement that "No other person than Moses has been or can be named with anything like probability, or even plausibility, as the author," (*Ibid*).

CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK

We are given some points of reference by which to establish at least a general chronology of the book of Numbers. All but one of these occur within the second year after the departure from Egypt. Immediately upon the opening of his account, Moses specifies that the divine instructions for taking the census were given on "the first day of the second month in the second year after they came out of the land of Egypt," (1:1). In the same month, two additional events are identified by the calendar; the supplemental passover was observed on the

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fourteenth day (9:11), and the troupe departed for Canaan (10:11). These occurrences are identified with the month of Zif. Previously, in the same year, in the month Abib, the second Passover had been observed (10:5), and the dedication of the Tabernacle occurred (10:15). These two events, however, are not properly included in the time sequence of Numbers; they are more appropriate to *Exodus* where they had already been noted; their citation here is but a point of reference.

The final time-reference in the book (33:38), sets the date of the death of Aaron: the first day of Ab in the fortieth year. The period of Israel's habitation in the wilderness had been announced in 14:33. It is obvious as the book closes that the exile is terminated, with the tribes prepared to cross the Jordan into the Land of Promise.

Collating all details, then, we arrive at the following analysis: the opening chapters (1:1–10:10), cover a time of one month and twenty days. The second section (10:11–14:45), filled a period of two to four months. The third, (15:1–20:28), fills approximately thirty-eight years; the final, (21:1–36:13), nearly two years. This last period poses some problems in fitting the numerous events into a brief time schedule; but the problems are not insoluble.

There is little doubt that the order of events as they actually occurred and as they are related in Numbers cannot be paralleled at all times. If the problems were unique to this book it might be cause for great concern. Whether we understand the purpose for this disorder or not is not vital to our understanding the author's work. Disparate elements appear with astonishing frequency in the Scriptures—a logical offense to our chronologically oriented minds, but a common practice among ancient writers who, we say, lack "historical objectivity."

In making such a judgment here, we are guilty of an error in reason: we apply a twentieth-century western philosophy of history to a record which is thirty-four hundred years old, and of oriental origin. If our modern sense of orderliness must be satisfied, it is no great difficulty to establish the actual sequence

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of events in Numbers, as well as many other books of the Bible. All we need to know of Israel, from Egypt to Canaan, is to be found in Scripture. If the sequence is not always clear in every detail, it in no way nullifies the impact of the lessons to be learned from this vital link.

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The first and most obvious objective of the book of Numbers is to give an accurate tribe-by-tribe count of those who had left Egypt, and, later, comparative figures as Israel prepared to enter the land of Canaan. The Levites were tallied separately, since they were not involved in military service. In contrast to the great population multiplication which had occurred during their slavery years in Egypt, the Israelites scarcely maintained their total during the hardships of life in the wilderness; their number actually decreased slightly, from 603,550 (1:46) to 601,730 (26:51), of those counted.

When we also consider the calamities visited upon the people by war, rebellion, the poisonous serpents, and the plague, as well as the fact that death visited every member of the nation beyond the age of twenty, with the exceptions of Joshua and Caleb, we are astounded that the numbered reduction was so small.

Numbers is the first record of the life of this new nation under their newly-instituted theocracy. Egypt and its gruelling enslavement is past. Jehovah has consistently and marvelously demonstrated His power to deliver, save, lead and provide for His people. From Sinai forward they will learn directly the rewards of faithful obedience or the hazards and punishments of disobedience; and the lessons will touch every member of their society, including Moses himself. At the introduction of the Law, the Lord had clearly spelled out the certain results of their cooperative lives (Ex. 23:22-33), while the dire consequences of failure are paired with the blessings of faithfulness in the great declamation of Moses in Moab, Deut. 28:1-26. Time and again in our book, both extremes are seen when Israel alternated between these attitudes.

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Of equal or even greater importance is the fact that Numbers forms an indispensable link in the historical account of a nascent nation. The events between Sinai and preparations for crossing the Jordan would be all but totally unknown without it. As in the other segments of the history, Numbers is without unnecessary detail, presenting essential facts briefly and without undue stress. We cannot but marvel at the succinctness of the account—that the inspired author discriminates consistently between the important and the irrelevant and relates the former with admirably brief accuracy and thoroughness, while avoiding the pitfalls of the latter.

We may fairly say, then, that the controlling purpose of the book is to record, for our profit and example, the succession of historical events showing the certainty of God's promises and threats to His children: His careful instruction and swift, prudent discipline; His daily providential care for their necessities; His jealous concern for their sole affection and undivided worship; His equity of judgment upon all.

There are also to be found certain enlargements upon the Law, as in the assignments to the three priestly families in moving the Tabernacle, or the order of encampment and marching, and miscellaneous provisions for the general welfare. Life in the wilderness could not have been comfortable, under the most ideal circumstances. Living was in tightly knit quarters, on a highly restricted diet, and under a new code of conduct made for hard days. Not all of the people possessed any great portion of the faith and devotion of Moses, and their persistent murmurings reflected their widespread discontent. Constant adjustments and interpretations of the Law were required to maintain the best possible order in their social behavior.

Yet we cannot help making a comparison of these circumstances with those they had left behind. Aside from certain dietary deprivations—the leeks, onions, garlic, melons and fish they had enjoyed formerly (11:5), there were few other features of the previous life they might have missed seriously. Certainly they must have been relieved at the end of

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the conditions of their total enslavement and the consequent freedom now afforded them. Nor would they soon have forgotten the bitterness of their tasks, and the cruelty of their taskmasters, as well as the slaughter of their infant sons. But it is human nature to forget the severity of previous trials when we are relieved of them, and lose their perspective in new problems which may often be of little comparative consequence; so it was with Israel in the desert. Neither can we forget that there were among the Israelites those who composed a "mixed multitude", by which we understand a number of households formed by the intermarriage of Jew with Egyptian, (Ex. 12:38, see Num. 11:4). The NAS surely captures the primary characteristic of such a group in calling it a "rabble". It may well be that these malcontents were the common source of complaints and grumblings; they were almost certainly the instigators of the greedy response to God's provision of the quail (11:32-34); they may well have spearheaded the request earlier for Aaron to make them a god at Sinai while Moses delayed his return (Ex. 32:1ff.), with the consequent orgy and its punishment. Such actions would hardly be surprising, since they were from a background in which polytheistic immorality was not only permitted, it was encouraged.

So Numbers is also God's search for a pure, reliable people. Israel is put through a crucible of testing, and the dross is constantly being skimmed away, leaving what should be a more acceptable residue through whom Jehovah may work His marvelous plan.

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Part One: The Census, and Final Days at Sinai (1:1–10:10)

I. INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS (1:1–4)

A. SETTING OF THE EVENT v. 1

TEXT

Chapter 1:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:1. And the Lord told Moses, in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after Israel had left the land of Egypt,

COMMENTARY

With his usual brevity, Moses wastes no words in acquainting us with the background facts of *who*, *when* and *where*, or *how*: the text following will answer *what* and *why*. God Himself is the speaker, and Moses the audience. The message for the moment comes at Sinai, in the Tabernacle, soon after the beginning of the second year after coming from Egypt.

Moses had been and will continue to be dependent upon such direct messages. He will face decisions calling for wisdom far above his own, and he is both unwilling to make such decisions alone, and fully aware of the imminent counsel of God. When the Lord's words come to him, he is responsible for seeing that they are brought to the people and, as far as he is able, that they are carried out. The commission for the mustering of Israel is of divine origin.

The term "wilderness" refers to any area which is uninhabited, and is not necessarily represented by our word "desert". *PHC*, p. 4, suggests that the wilderness would connote

Privation, Peril, and Perplexity; the Tent of Meeting would bring Provision, Protection, and Direction. The area of wandering was barren, pathless and perilous. But Israel had the constant promise of God's leading via the cloud and the pillar. The time spent in these dire circumstances would become a time of stern discipline: adhering to the Law would bring its reward, while hating the commands of God would bring just retribution.

The "wilderness of Sinai" may include a district as large as the entire Sinaitic Peninsula; ordinarily, however, it is limited to the southern portion of the peninsula. It is primarily mountainous, with valleys interlaced at various angles. Extremely dry and barren today, there is much evidence that it was less so in the day of Moses, since the Midianites, Amalekites and others grazed their flocks here. However, there has never been a population of any size, with the exception of the incident we are considering.

The Tabernacle, prescribed and constructed in Exodus 25ff., served as the central point of the nation's worship. Here, too, Moses often received God's instructions for his people. It had been erected on the first day of the first month (Ex. 40:2); hence, its use was yet quite new among the people. They were now just one year and two weeks out of Egypt, and would soon move toward Canaan. Numbers will cover the final nineteen days at Mount Sinai. The major event during this time will be the census.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

1. How does the book of Numbers follow, logically and chronologically, the previous book of history (Exodus)?
2. How much time has elapsed between the two books?
3. How long had the Israelites been at Sinai as the book of Numbers opens?
4. Identify the "Tent of Meeting" of v. 1, and describe it.
5. Explain how Moses was properly permitted to enter and serve in the Tent of Meeting, since only priests qualified for such activities.

6. Locate the Sinaitic Peninsula, the Wilderness of Sinai, the Wilderness of Sin, and Jebel Musa on a map. Find the approximate location of the encampment of the people while they were in the area.
7. Compile a chronological list of events which occurred while Israel tented at Sinai, in order to introduce the events of the book of Numbers.
8. How long did the tribes remain here after the Tent of Meeting was erected?
9. Discuss how life in the wilderness would prepare Israel for life in their new home, Canaan.
10. How had their bondage and slavery in Egypt readied the people for a rugged period of travel, tenting, and rigid diet?

B. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS ON THE CENSUS vv. 2-4

TEXT

Chapter 1:2. Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; 3. From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. 4. And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:2. "Take a head count of all the congregation of the children of Israel by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names; each male, head by head; 3. from twenty years of age and up, whoever is able to go to war in Israel; you and Aaron shall count them according to their armies. 4. Furthermore, there shall be a man of each tribe with you, each one the head of his father's household.

COMMENTARY

The purpose for this census is simply stated by the fact that

it is to include all 20-year old males and up, who are able to go to war. Therefore we may accept the term "muster" which is often used to describe the census. In Exodus 14:14 Jehovah had pledged to fight for Israel. The promise was repeated several times, as in Deut. 1:30; 3:22.

Why, then, is an army necessary at all? It is to be clear again and again that the people of God will be asked to assemble an army when under threat or specific martial instructions of God; it is no less clear that victory would come by the varied devices and power of God. Intervening clouds, locked chariot wheels and the release of divinely walled waters in the Red Sea had disposed of the Egyptian army (Ex. 14). The Amalekites were dealt a defeat at Rephidim, but only while Moses' arms were supported and substained by Aaron and Hur. The army engaged the enemy in typical conflict, and God gave the victory (Ex. 17:8-13). We have only to mention Jericho, Aijalon, and Gideon to be reminded of a few of the numerous unusual means God has employed to make his people triumphant.

Each victory is thus seen as a cooperative act: the people, when they obey the detailed words of God, will see their faith justified when God discomfits the enemy. He did not do for them what they were able to accomplish alone, but supplemented their deeds by His own devices. Failure to comply with divine orders, specifically given or logically inferred, brought reverses and retribution, as when Achan's sin prevented the capture of Ai (Joshua 7:1-26), and Saul's non-compliance in eliminating the Amalekites resulted in his losing the throne (I Sam. 15:1-28).

Responsibility for the counting of Israel is primarily given to Moses and Aaron. The work is to be further subdivided into tribal sections, and into families within the tribes. With such an organized scheme the total might be taken in a minimum of time, and without inconvenience.

Exempted from the first counting were all females, as well as all males below the age of twenty, all Levites, and other males who might be maimed, ill, aged or infirm. Only the most

fit were suitable for military service. The nations they must face in the future are formidable, as reported by the spies later (13:28, 29), and there is no place for the man, how willing, who is not physically able to endure the demands of a rigorous military exploit. God has never been pleased with less than our very best for His service. No man could bring Him a crippled or diseased animal in sacrifice; no handicapped Levite could perform priestly services before Him. Even the slightest defect eliminated either: but we should remember that we speak of physical service only. Our worship is quite another matter, for here God looks only at the heart, which is in no way whatever related to or affected by the physical body. David was selected rather than the other, older sons of Jesse not because of age or stature or countenance—factors which men consider important—but because God had looked upon his heart (see I Sam. 16:4-13); into this man God sent forth His Spirit mightily.

Counting the men by families probably indicated that they would also be organized in such units while serving in the army. The natural bond of blood should contribute to the general *esprit de corps*. Each man might well conceive of his service as a protection of his own home and loved ones. Nehemiah utilized such a plan with brilliant effectiveness in leading the Jews to rebuild the city walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 4:13, 14ff.). Like some other people, the Israelites would also attach great importance to their genealogical records, which were carefully memorized and recited commonly by the children and old men alike.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

11. For what special purpose was the number of this congregation to be taken? What other uses might be made of the census?
12. How can the census be called accurate or complete with so many of the people excluded?
13. Can we establish a formula for estimating the total number of the Israelites, since only males are counted, and with the exclusions based upon age and tribe?

14. If God had pledged to fight their battles for the Israelites, why did the instructions state that those to be counted should be "able to go to forth to war"?
15. Suggest some methods by which Moses and Aaron might implement their task of tallying the "head count".
16. Can you think of any reason that the census did not specify an age beyond which the men were not to be counted?

II. THE GENERAL CENSUS (1:5-46)

A. TRIBAL HEADS SELECTED vv. 5-16

TEXT

Chapter 1:5. And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. 6. Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 7. Of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 8. Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar. 9. Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. 10. Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 11. Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni. 12. Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 13. Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. 14. Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. 15. Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. 16. These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:5. And these are the names of the men who shall stand with you: from the tribe of Reuben, Elizur, son of Shedeur; 6. from Simeon, Shelumiel, son of Zurishaddai; [from here through verse 15, the text differs little enough from the previously-printed *KJV* that such redundancy does not warrant repetition] 16. These were the distinguished men of the assembly, princes of their fathers' tribes, and heads of the thousands of Israel.

COMMENTARY

Names were always rich and meaningful to the Hebrews. Of the 24 given in this list, exactly half invoke some form of reference to God (El-,el, shad-, shed-). The names often inspired their possessors to expend every effort to be worthy of bearing them. Thus Elizur, or "My God is a rock"; and Shedeur, "The Lord is a light"; Shelumile, "My friend is God";—in each case the bearer was inspired constantly to be and do his very best.

Although the men here listed are but names for us, each man was one of esteem among his people; each was the first-born of his household. One on the list had derived his name from the Egyptian god Ra (Ahira, v. 15); and we might marvel at the small proportion of such an influence after the centuries of enslavement. Only two of the names (Nahshon, an ancestor in the lineage of Jesus Christ, and Amminadab, father of Nahshon) appear again in the Bible; they are named in Ruth 4:20, as well as in Matthew 1:4 and Luke 3:32, 33. These are the men who will be consulted on important decisions to be made in tribal and national affairs. They head the *alaphim*, or large units (sometimes translated 'thousands').

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

17. Of how much influence is a man's name upon his character and conduct? Can you cite any examples from Scripture?
18. Why would any of the Israelites have been given Egyptian names? Is this a really significant matter?
19. Review the several names of the tribal princes, noting the variety of meanings. (See Glossary.)
20. Note the relationship of Nahshon and Amminadab to David, in the lineage of the Messiah.
21. How many responsibilities did the tribal princes have, in addition to their help with the census?

B. THE COUNTING, TRIBE BY TRIBE vv. 17-43

TEXT

Chapter 1:17. And Moses and Aaron took these men which

are expressed by their names: 18. And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls. 19. As the Lord commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai. 20. And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 21. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Reuben were forty and six thousand and five hundred.

22. Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered of them, according to the number of their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 23. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

24. Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 25. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Gad, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.

26. Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 27. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Judah, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

28. Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 29. Those that were

numbered of them, even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

30. Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 31. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

32. Of the children of Joseph, namely, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 33. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred.

34. Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 35. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

36. Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 37. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

38. Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 39. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Dan, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

40. Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 41. Those that were

numbered of them, even of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.

42. Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 43. Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:17. And Moses and Aaron took these men who have been named. 18. They gathered the entire congregation of people in one place, on the first day of the second month. Then they registered themselves by families, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years of age and over, head by head, 19. As the Lord had commanded Moses. So they were counted in the wilderness of Sinai:

20. The children of Reuben, firstborn son of Israel, their generations, according to their families by their fathers' houses, by the number of names, head by head, every male twenty years old and over, all who were able to go to war— 21. the total for the tribe of Reuben was 46,500. [Again, the formula for the text may be applied, tribe by tribe, through v. 43, refer to the *KJV* already given.]

COMMENTARY

Apparently the census is completed in one day, which would require fine preparation in advance. We had been given an approximation of the figure in Exodus 12:37, and an exact number in Exodus 38:26. However, the figures might have been supplied by Moses after the date of reference, in a later composition of the book; or, the first and earlier reference may have been a well-calculated estimate. We are not to suppose that the named princes made their counts alone; this would have been an impossible chore. The totals no doubt resulted when the numbers of individual families were simply added together and combined at graduating levels within the tribes, until a final

sum might be reckoned as the composite of all smaller subgroups.

The impressive totals listed for each tribe, as well as that for the nation as a whole, have been subjected to harsh critical comments. Butzer, *IB*, simply affirms that "No fertile land, let alone a desert, could have provided sufficient nourishment for such a mobile population, nor indeed could it have journeyed as ch. 33 relates The artificiality of the numbers here is evidenced by the fact that half the tribes are below, and half above, the fifty-thousand mark." His conclusion had been previously stated: "The result is quite unhistorical." (pp. 145, 146).

In response, we must notice that the text nowhere affirms that the people lived upon the products of the land through which they moved, and in which they were to live for forty years. Apparently he is unwilling to allow the record to speak for itself: that God miraculously provided a great quantity of manna and meat as necessary to the host. Discount this provision, and his argument becomes plausible; but so it is with every critical argument calling God's powers into question. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Israelites did not live on manna alone; doubtless they ate of their sizeable herds and flocks, and gained some sustenance, however limited, from the land.

With reference to the thought that the numbers divide equally above and below the fifty-thousand mark, we may ask why the arbitrary figure is chosen at all. It has absolutely no significance in itself, and sounds more like the contrived argument of one who has already made up his mind than that of one who is attempting objectivity.

Gray had posed the problem of sustenance in the desert (*ICC*, p. 12), based upon a quotation from Robinson that "a body of two millions of men could not subsist there a week without drawing their supplies of water, as well as of provisions, from a great distance." To Robinson's words Gray adds, "By a miracle, no doubt, this multitude might have been sustained;

but it ought to be observed that the miracles actually *recorded* are not on an adequate scale (to care for such needs)," (*Ibid*). The presumptions of such a conclusion are clear: that we are told of every occasion which God provided essential food and water for the people; that we are aware of every source of water then available; and that their actual requirements are now to be compared to the contemporary extravagances with which we are familiar. We are speaking of a slave people who are quite accustomed to subsisting on a bare minimum of necessities. They are now relatively inactive, further reducing the necessary input of food and water.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

22. Why is the tribe of Joseph divided into two: Manasseh and Ephraim?
23. Find a reasonable formula for computing an estimate of the total population of Israel, based upon the known factors here.
24. Arrange the tribes in order of their numerical count, from the largest to the least. Can you establish any relationship between this head count and the area or location each tribe was given in the Promised Land in Joshua 13-19?
25. What value is there in repeating the exact formula for each tribe in the census?
26. Suggest some plans Moses, Aaron and the tribal heads might have used to organize the people for the census.

C. TOTAL OF THE MARTIAL CENSUS vv. 44-46

TEXT

Chapter 1:44. These are those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers. 45. So were all those that were numbered, of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel; 46. Even all they

that were numbered were six hundred and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:44. These are the ones who were counted, whom Moses and Aaron numbered with the assistance of the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each representing his father's house. 45. So the entire number of the children of Israel, according to their father's houses, from twenty years of age and up, every able man who could go forth to war in Israel, 46. the total number was 603,550.

COMMENTARY

When Gray (*ICC*, p. 13) dismisses the census total as unrealistic he cites the number of firstborn at 22,273 (3:43). From this he concludes that the total firstborn, male and female, would be double this figure, or 44,546; the total number of Israelites he then places between 2,000,000 and 2,500,000, and concludes that the average family must have had 50 children! Again, his preconceived conclusion (that the figures are unreliable) has blinded his reason to some important facts: we have no idea whatever how many firstborn males there might have been who were unfit for war; his words make no provision for the Levites, separately counted; and, as Keil proposes, the number may represent only those firstborn sons who were born after the exodus. Michaelis has proposed that the practice of polygamy was widespread among the Israelites, and only the firstborn of the fathers were counted. Baumgarten suggests that all firstborn male children under six years of age were counted, whereas those above that age were not, since they had already been redeemed by partaking of the passover in Egypt. Kurtz mentions other relevant factors: the remarkable fruitfulness of the Hebrew mothers; the exclusion of firstborn sons of the mother who were not also the firstborn of the father; and, like Michaelis, the possibility of polygamy among the Hebrews. Any and each of these may help explain an otherwise difficult question. (See *PC* xi, xii.)

Three important facts might be pointed out regarding this army: it was made up of Israelites only, and included none of the "mixed multitude" who would offer severe problems later; it was made up of the able-bodied only; and, all able-bodied men were included. There is much to be learned from each of them.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

27. Compute the increase of the Israelites, tribe by tribe, since their ancestors first went to Egypt (See Gen. 46:5-27).
28. Why would this census not include any of the "mixed multitude" among the children of Israel?
29. How could such a multitude find sustenance in a wilderness?
30. Why would the Lord not want the Levites to be included in the army?

III. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LEVITES (1:47-54)

TEXT

Chapter 1:47. But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them. 48. For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, 49. Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel: 50. But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. 51. And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. 52. And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. 53. But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of

the tabernacle of testimony. 54. And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they.

PARAPHRASE

47. However, the Levites were not numbered among them after the tribes of their fathers, 48. for the Lord had spoken to Moses, saying, 49. "Only the tribe of Levi is not to be counted; you shall not take their census among the children of Israel. 50. But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furniture and over all things which belong to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furniture, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle. 51. Therefore, when the tabernacle is to move forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the Tabernacle camps, the Levites shall erect it. But the common man who approaches too near will be put to death. 52. And the children of Israel shall camp, each man in his own camp, and each by his own standard, throughout their groups. 53. But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel. In this way the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony."

54. And the children of Israel did so; according to everything the Lord had commanded Moses, that is what they did.

COMMENTARY

The specialized work of the Levites required specific instructions, which begin here, and are dispersed throughout the book. They are to camp beside the Tabernacle, serve in it, dismantle, move, and erect it, and guard it against intrusion by any unauthorized individuals. First among their concerns, however, were the spiritual requirements of the tribes. The Levites were servants in behalf of the people and Jehovah; they were to be zealous in His behalf. Such a zeal they had shown when Moses' wrath was stirred up against the makers of the golden calf at Sinai: the Levites had slain the worshipers of the calf, and their appointment may have stemmed in part from this

deed (Ex. 32:26-29).

Care should be exercised to distinguish between the Levites and the priests, who were descendants of Aaron and his sons. Any priest was necessarily a Levite; but by no means were all Levites priests. The difference helps us remember the distinction between the tribe and the family. To further remember the distinctions, we should note that the priests were consecrated (Ex. 29:1-37); the Levites were purified (8:5-22). The Levites were considered a gift unto Aaron and his sons (3:5-13; 8:19; 18:1-7). Only the priests had the privilege of ministering at the altar and entering into the holy place, or the most holy place (Ex. 28:1; 29:9; Num. 3:10, 38; 4:15ff; 18:1-7; 25:10-13). Aaron had been chosen for his position by the sign of the budding almond rod (Num. 17:1-11). Korah, of the family of Kohath, accentuated the distinction between the priest and the Levite when, rebelling against Aaron, he was quickly subdued and punished (Num. 16).

The organization prescribed for each tribe's location while encamped is to be given in chapter 2. Reasons for such a plan are logical: it makes for orderliness in camping, and for ease of marching: it preserved their tribal identity, while retaining their place in the unity of the people as a whole; it facilitated the matter of keeping genealogical details in mind.

Tribal standards, which will be discussed later, doubtless aided the multitude in locating their relative positions quickly and inerrantly. Erected high on poles, they might be seen at some distance. When the positions of encampment were given to the tribes, they formed a tight square about the Tent; the Levites were within this square as if to symbolize their central duties. There was a further practical consideration—such a position gave the Levites immediate access to their stations of labor. Also, this tightly knit method of surrounding the Tabernacle would make it all but impossible for a stranger to approach the sacred area accidentally. There was every precaution to preserve the sanctity of this symbol of divine presence.

ARRANGEMENTS OF TRIBES FOR CAMPING, MARCHING 2:1-34

Failure to follow the exactly detailed instructions in setting up camp would bring about the wrath of God, as would deviations in serving the Tabernacle. It was a grave matter to adhere to the clear, often rigid assignments of God. On this occasion, the nation responded exactly as God had commanded.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

31. Were the Levites always numbered separately, from the other tribes? Explain and justify your answer.
32. How does the camping assignment of the Levites harmonize with the assignments given all others?
33. Describe the duties of the Levites.
34. How are the priests distinguished from the Levites? What did they have in common?
35. Who were the "strangers" to be kept from the Tabernacle?
36. What purposes did the tribal standards serve?
37. Why would the entire congregation of Israel be punished if the Levites failed to camp near the Tabernacle?
38. Is there a reason that no other tribes might assist in erecting, transporting or taking down the Tent of Meeting?
39. Why should death come upon any "stranger" who drew near the Tent?

IV. ARRANGEMENTS OF TRIBES FOR CAMPING, MARCHING (2:1-34)

TEXT

Chapter 2:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 2. Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch. 3. And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children

of Judah. 4. And his host, and those that were numbered of them were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 5. And those that do pitch next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar. 6. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 7. Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun. 8. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 9. All that were numbered in the camp of Judah were a hundred thousand and four score thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies: these shall first set forth.

10. On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur. 11. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred. 12. And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 13. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 14. Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel. 15. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 16. And that were numbered in the camp of Reuben were a hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies: and they shall set forth in the second rank.

17. Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.

18. On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud. 19. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty

thousand and five hundred. 20. And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 21. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 22. Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni. 23. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 24. All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were a hundred thousand and eight thousand and a hundred, throughout their armies: and they shall go forward in the third rank.

25. The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 27. And those that encamp by him shall be the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ocran. 28. And his host; and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.

29. Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan. 30. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were be Ahira the son of Enan. 30. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 31. All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan were a hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred: they shall go hindmost with their standards.

32. These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel: as the Lord commanded Moses. 34. And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every

one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 2:1. The Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, 2. "The people of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' houses; they shall encamp facing the Tent of Meeting on all sides. 3. Those who shall encamp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be under the standard of the camp of Judah by their armies, with Nahshon, son of Amminadab, captain of the army of the children of Judah. 4. And his host, and those who were numbered, were 74,600. 5. Those who encamp beside him shall be the tribe of Issachar, whose leader shall be Nethanel the son of Zuar of the tribe of Issachar; 6. his host is numbered at 54,400. 7. Next is the tribe of Zebulun, whose leader shall be Eliab, the son of Helon, of the tribe of Zebulun; 8. his host is numbered at 57,400. 9. The total number of the camp of Judah, by their armies, is 186,400. They shall lead out on the march.

10. On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their armies, whose leader shall be Elizur, the son of Shedeur, of the tribe of Reuben; 11. his host is numbered at 46,500. 12. And those who are to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, with Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the people of Simeon; 13. his host as numbered is 59,300. 14. Then Gad's tribe, with Eliasaph, the son of Reuel, the leader of the tribe of Gad; 15. his host as numbered was 45,650. 16. The entire number of the camp of Reuben by their armies is 151,450. They shall move out second.

17. "Then the Tent of Meeting shall move out, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they encamp, so shall they move out, each in place, standard by standard.

18. "On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their armies, with Elishama, the son of Ammihud, the leader of the tribe of Ephraim; 19. his host as numbered was 32,200. 20. And next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh, with Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the people of

ARRANGEMENTS OF TRIBES FOR CAMPING, MARCHING 2:1-34

Manasseh; 21. his host as numbered was 32,200. 22. Then the tribe of Benjamin, with Abidan, the son of Gideoni, leader of the tribe of Benjamin; 23. his host as numbered was 35,400. 24. The entire number of the camp of Ephraim by their armies is 108,100. They shall move out third on the march.

25. "On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their armies, with Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai, leader of the tribe of Dan: 26. his host as numbered was 62,700. 27. And those who are to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, with Pagiel, the son of Ochran, leader of the tribe of Asher; 28. his host as numbered was 41,500.

29. Then the tribe of Naphtali, with Ahira, the son of Enan, leader of the tribe of Naphtali; 30. his host as numbered was 53,400. 31. All those who were numbered in the camp of Dan were 157,600. They shall go forth last with their standards."

32. These are the children of Israel as they were numbered by their fathers' houses; all who were numbered in their armies were 603,550. 33. But the Levites were not counted among the people of Israel, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. 34. So the people of Israel did everything according to what the Lord had commanded Moses. In this manner they camped by their standards, and in this manner they set forth, every one with his family, according to his father's house.

COMMENTARY

Since the Tent of Meeting represented the literal presence of Jehovah, it was only appropriate that the Tent should be situated in the very center of the camp of Israel. All tribes were virtually equidistant from this Tent, lying roughly along the sides of a large rectangle.

With three tribes designated to each point of the compass about the Tent, and with the priestly families and the other Levites established in the inner camping area, directly before the door of the Tent, the place of greatest importance was toward the east, or sunrise. The sons of Aaron held this favored spot among the Levites, while Judah was awarded the choice

spot among the secular tribes—the area central toward the rising sun.

We know the symbols of some, but not all, of the tribes. The best known of all must be Judah's lion. The symbol was both historic and prophetic, pointing to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:5). Jacob had spoken of Judah as a "lion's whelp", one to whom his brothers' children would bow, one who would conquer his enemies, and one from whom the scepter would not depart 'until Shiloh come', (Gen. 49: 8-10). History will show the validity of the statements. Rabbinical literature consistently affirms the symbol of Judah to be a young lion. The same sources, primarily Aben Ezra, assign to Reuben the sign of a man, to Ephraim that of an ox (see Deut. 33:17), and an eagle to Dan; on the other hand, the Targum of Palestine, while concurring in the case of Judah, makes the stag a sign of Reuben, assigns a young man to Ephraim, and a basilisk serpent to Dan. In his blessings to his sons, Jacob had identified several of them with various figurative expressions. Besides that given of Judah, he had spoken of Reuben as boiling water (49:3); of Issachar as a strong donkey (49:14); of Dan as a horned snake (49:17); of Naphtali as a freed doe (49:21); of Joseph as a fruitful bough (49:22); and of Benjamin as a ravaging wolf (49:27). No symbolic terms are given for Simeon, Levi, Zebulun, Gad or Asher. Since the list is incomplete, we may not infer that these omitted tribes had no symbols, nor that the symbols they used in the wilderness coincided with Jacob's identifications among those which are known, with the exceptions of Judah and, perhaps, Dan.

We do not know in what precise form these symbols were made, although it is believed the standard (*degel*) was a kind of banner or flag, perhaps of great size, such as might be carried in advance of a large troop under martial conditions. The ensigns (*othoth*), it is suggested, were smaller pennants which might be carried at the front before tribal subdivisions. Each tribe had its standard; each family its ensign. In no way did Israel consider the making of the flags a violation of the Commandment prohibiting images or likenesses of any created thing (Ex.

ARRANGEMENTS OF TRIBES FOR CAMPING, MARCHING 2:1-34

20:4). After all, they were erected by the very commission of the Lord; and, more important, in no way were they to be mistaken for religious objects and worshiped. Their erection simply served as a means of identifying the location of the tribes and families while encamped and on the move, and would allow quick regrouping should any lose its place. During the prolonged marches and many settlements, an unorganized or illogical arrangement could have caused numerous unnecessary problems.

The matter of Israel's multiplication between the time of entering and leaving Egypt has been much discussed. Genesis 46:27 gives a total of seventy souls who came to Egypt, including the family of Joseph, which was already there. The census here taken gives the number of male Israelites of age twenty and over at 603,550. To this must be added the number of Levites, or 22,000 (3:39), more than one month old. Tribe by tribe, the increase is given as follows:

Tribes	Number at Coming to Egypt	Census in Numbers 2,3
Reuben	7	46,500
Simeon	7	59,300
* Levi	4	*22,000
Judah	7	74,600
Issachar	5	54,400
Zebulun	4	57,400
Gad	8	45,650
Asher	9	41,500
Joseph	o 3	
Ephraim		40,500
Manasseh		32,200
Benjamin	11	35,400
Dan	2	62,700
Naphtali	<u>5</u>	<u>53,400</u>
	o 72	* 603,550

* The Levites, and their totals, are not included in the final figure.

^oThe total of 72 includes Ephraim and Manasseh, who would not have been reckoned among those who came into Egypt; they were born there.

Judah, along with Issachar and Zebulun, received the front position in the camp, that is, the eastward side, and their combined army of 186,400 men was appointed to lead the entire group as they marched. Those who camped on the south under the banner of Reuben, with Gad and Simeon, marched next. They totalled 151,450 men. At this point as the armies moved forward, the Tabernacle and the Levites moved into the center position. Symbolically, then, whether Israel might be in camp or on the march, the sacred Presence was in their midst.

Following next, under the banner of Ephraim, also came Manasseh and Benjamin. Their number totalled 108,100 men of war. Bringing up the rear was the tribe under Gad's standard, together with Asher and Naphtali, with 157,600 soldiers. The total picture would be impressive indeed.

The Palestinian Talmud says that the encampment of the Israelites covered an area of approximately twelve square miles. Later historians have estimated, however, that it was more probably three to three and one-half square miles, basing their figures upon relative sizes and spaces occupied by the Roman armies in camp. Whatever the true area might have been, there was a clear need for careful planning, tight discipline and constant cooperation among the people. We are not told what provisions are made for the animals; it would seem fit to assume they were pastured about the perimeter of the camp, and driven at the end of the marching band. Further, in many areas where the camps must have been erected, it would be very difficult to find even three square miles of level land in one spot, complicating the camping problems. This would have been true throughout their travels until they reached the plateaus of Moab. Doubtless adjustments were made, with the camp much elongated to fit the narrow accommodations of the tight valleys through which they traversed. We must not forget that these were slave people, and the tight quarters and handicaps of the wilderness should have been accepted as a part of the price of

their freedom. What has been described is the ideal arrangement; how often they were able to conform precisely to the instructions, we may only speculate upon. As set forth, the plan of organization for the camp of Israel has become symbolic of the great city of Zion as portrayed by Ezekiel (48:20), and in Revelation 21:16. Binnie, in his homily based upon the passage, points out the resemblances between the camp of Israel and the church of Christ as he notes 1. that the church is an army; it is 2. an army on the march; that is 3. an army moving under a banner; that 4. God keeps a perfect roll of His men by name; and that 5. the army has the Lord for its ever-present Leader.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

40. Suggest some complications which might arise if the tribes of Israel had simply camped and marched at random.
41. Draw a diagram showing the places of the camps of each tribe as they related to the Tent of Meeting.
42. What reasons may be given for placing the sons of Aaron and the families of the Levites immediately about the Tent of Meeting?
43. Group the placement of the tribes according to their maternal origin (see Gen. 35:23-26).
44. Why was the tribe of Judah chosen to lead the marching order of the people? Is there something prophetic in this arrangement?
45. Why are the Levites and the Tent of Meeting placed in the center of the camp? Why do they march in the midst of the tribes?
46. What arrangements might have been made to provide for the herds and flocks both while camping and marching?
47. Discuss the symbolism attached to the centrality of the Tent of Meeting; of the design of the encampment.
48. Identify the tribes whose symbols we know, or for which

there is traditional evidence. What is unusual about the symbol for Judah's group?

49. List the totals of the tribes, tribe by tribe; then give the number of the Levites counted. Now show what the sum of the congregation was when the Levites are not counted, and what it was with them included.
50. What are the probable differences between the 'standards' and the 'banners'? What were their separate purposes?
51. Arrange the tribes in their marching order.

V. FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LEVITES (3:1-51)

A. THE SONS OF AARON vv. 1-4

TEXT

Chapter 3:1. These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses, in the day that the Lord spake with Moses in mount Sinai. 2. And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. And Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord, when they offered strange fire before the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 3:1. These are also the descendants of Aaron and Moses from the time that the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai. 2. The names of the sons of Aaron were Nadab, his first son, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; 3. these are the names of the sons of Aaron, the ones who were anointed as priests, whom he consecrated to serve in the office of priest. 4. Nadab and Abihu lied in the presence of the Lord when they offered unholy fire unto Him in the wilderness of Sinai. They had no children. Then Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the

lifetime of Aaron their father.

COMMENTARY

From this time forward, we may think of Ephraim and Manasseh as replacing Joseph and Levi among the twelve tribes of Israel. Levi is set apart unto a special task among his people; he will be dispersed among the tribes when they establish themselves in the Promised Land (35:1-8). All of Joseph's descendants, of course, are through the two sons.

We may compare this section with Ex. 6:23 and Lev. 10:1, 2. In this manner the priesthood is introduced. However, although Moses is mentioned along with Aaron his brother, Moses' descendants appear in I Chron. 23:14 as Levites. With the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, who were childless, the entire descent of the priests is now traced to Eleazar and Ithamar. Aaron's sons were set apart to be custodians of the sanctuary; this was the Lord's chosen alternative, with the other possibility that of taking the firstborn of all tribes.

The word 'consecrate' is, in the original, a term meaning 'to fill the hand'. The possible significance is that of occupying all of one's industry in behalf of that to which he has been set apart. The priests were not to dilute their service to God in any manner whatever.

Had there been children to Nadab and Abihu, they need not necessarily have shared the consequences of offering the "strange fire before the Lord" unless they had actually participated in the wrongdoing. The consistent biblical truth makes the father responsible for his own sins, and the son free of parental iniquity (see Ezekiel 18:19, 20); the reverse is also true, as parents are not liable for the sins of knowledgeable children. But the crime of the two priests had been mortal. In the historical account (Lev. 10:1, 2), we are given no more indication of the sin itself, whether they had violated the ritual, or substituted for the incense, or offered in an irreverent attitude, or offended in some other way. The hand of God struck with such suddenness and such finality that none could fail to realize the gravity of their crime. Like the imposition of

death upon Ananias and Sapphira in the early church (Acts 5), this incident would serve a stern warning upon all who stood in a like holy place before God.

Aaron may be mentioned before Moses in the passage for various reasons. He was, first of all, older. This might be reason enough, expecting that the order is usually reversed. The more probable reason now is that since we are being directed to the development of the priesthood, and since the priestly families will be descendants of Aaron only, his name is given the priority.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

52. Why is Aaron named before Moses in this passage?
53. How far can we trace the descendants of Moses?
54. Relate what happened to Nadab and Abihu.
55. Comment upon the special meaning of "consecrated" in v. 3.
56. What is meant by the "strange fire" offered by Nadab and Abihu, and why was their offense so grave?

B. THE LEVITES COUNTED AND ASSIGNED DUTIES

vv. 5-39

TEXT

Chapter 3:5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. 7. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. 9. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. 10. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 12. And I,

behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; 13. Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord.

14. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, 15. Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them. 16. And Moses numbered them according to the word of the Lord, as he was commanded. 17. And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. 18. And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni and Shimei. 19. And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izeah, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20. And the sons of Merari by their families; Mahli, and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers.

21. Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. 22. Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and five hundred. 23. The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. 24. And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25. And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation shall be the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, 26. And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof.

27. And of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeaharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the

Kohathites. 28. In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary. 29. The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward. 30. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son Uzziel. 31. And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof. 32. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary.

33. Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merari. 34. And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were six thousand and two hundred. 35. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail: these shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward. 36. And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto, 37. And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.

38. But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. 39. 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.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 3:5. And the Lord said to Moses, 6. "Bring the tribe of Levi near, presenting them before Aaron the priest, that

they may serve him. 7. They shall perform duties for him, and for the entire congregation before the Tent of Meeting, serving at the Tabernacle. 8. They shall have custody of all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting, and perform duties for the children of Israel, serving at the Tabernacle. 9. And you shall give the Levites unto Aaron and his sons: they are all given to him from among the children of Israel. 10. And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall maintain themselves in the priest's office: but any stranger who comes near is to be put to death."

11. And the Lord said to Moses, 12. "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of each firstborn son which opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore, the Levites are all mine, 13. because all of the firstborn are mine. On the day that I slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated unto Myself all of Israel's firstborn, of both man and beast. They are mine. I am the Lord."

14. And the Lord said to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, 15. "Count the sons of Levi according to their fathers' families: every male one month old or more is to be counted." 16. And Moses counted them according to the word of the Lord, as he was commanded. 17. And these are the names of the sons of Levi: 18. Gershon, Kohath and Merari. And these are the names of the sons of Gershon according to their families: 19. Libni and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath by families: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. 20. And the sons of Merari by families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' families.

21. Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. 22. Those who were counted of them, according to the number of all the males one month old and up, even all of those counted were seven thousand five hundred. 23. The families of the Gershonites are to pitch their tents behind the Tabernacle to the west. 24. And Eliasaph, son of Lael, is to be head of the fathers of the Gershonites; 25. And the duty of the sons of Gershon in the Tent of Meeting is to be the Tabernacle,

the Tent, its covering, the curtain for the door of the Tent of Meeting, 26. the drapes of the court, the curtain for the door of the court surrounding the Tent, and the altar, and its cords; and all the service relating to these things.

27. The family of the Amramites were of Kohath, as well as the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites. 28. Counting all the males from a month of age and older, there were eight thousand six hundred who handled the duties of the Sanctuary. 29. The families of Kohath's sons were to pitch their tents on the south side of the tabernacle. 30. Elizaphan, the son of Uzziel, was the head of the house of the fathers of the families of the Kohathites. 31. And their duty was the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which the priests minister, and the curtain, and all the service relating to these things. 32. Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, was to be chief over the leaders of the Levites, having supervision of those who were in charge of the sanctuary.

33. The family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites were of Merari: these are the families of Merari. 34. Their number counting all the males from a month of age and older was six thousand two hundred. 35. Zuriel, the son of Abihail, was the head of the fathers' house of the families of Merari; they were to pitch their tents on the north side of the Tabernacle. 36. And the duty of the sons of Merari was to care for the boards of the Tabernacle, the braces, the posts, the bases, and their accessories, with all the service relating to them, besides the posts of the surrounding court, with all their bases, pegs and cords.

38. Moses and Aaron, with their sons, were to pitch their tents in front of the Tent of Meeting on the east side; they were given charge of all the sanctuary services required for the people of Israel. Anyone else who approached was to be put to death. 39. The total number of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron counted by the Lord's commandment, including their families, all the males one month of age and older, was twenty

two thousand.

COMMENTARY

The Levites are placed at the disposal and service of the priests, under the direct supervision of Aaron. Serving the Lord in His tabernacle would require an infinite number of carefully specified acts of service, involving numerous items of all sizes and types. In order that these all might be ready for use, even at a moment's notice, the Levites are charged with their supervision. This will be true while the tribes are in the wilderness, and when they have established themselves in Canaan. Without the intelligent and dedicated work of these men, the labors of the priests would have been utterly impossible.

Moses describes the Levites as the *nethunims* (the 'totally given ones'), v. 9. It is an emphatic term, specifying that their service is without limitation. They are gifts of God to the priests, and they are engaged in an honorable work. The term is to be distinguished from the similar *nethinim* ('slaves'), non-Israelite servants who are given the grosser tasks at and about the tabernacle (see Joshua 9:27). These latter men were placed at the disposal of the Levites, completing the complement of service personnel.

When v. 10 pronounces the death sentence for any stranger who approaches the Tent of Meeting, we must understand the special meaning of the term in its context. Ordinarily, a "stranger" would be an alien, a non-Israelite. But the word is broader in this usage, including anyone who is not authorized to serve the Lord as a priest; hence, even the Levites themselves would be considered strangers if they presumed to act beyond their specially designated responsibilities; and the death sentence served to punctuate the limitation upon them.

For reasons of His own, God adopted the Levites rather than all of the firstborn, appointing them unto their place of honor among the tribes. The slaughter of the firstborn of the Egyptians stands as a memorial unto the particular honor shown Israel's firstborn; and the Levites become essentially typical of this preservation. In a secondary appointment, all future

firstborn must be sanctified—firstborn sons were dedicated to the Lord at the sanctuary; firstborn animals must have been sacrificed to Him. Now, with the particular adoption of the Levites, both the Levites and their cattle are to stand in the stead of their brothers, and the firstborn sons of Israel are released (see v. 40, sqq.). The service became more orderly, concentrated in the hands of a single tribe, which should devote its entire and undivided interest to their vocation. It is commonly supposed that the tribe of Levi was chosen for this work because of their zeal in ending the worship of the golden calf. It is also proposed that the choice came because the tribe was considerably smaller than any of the others. We can only advise caution in making either suggestion a dogmatic statement, since Scripture does not inform us of any of God's reasons. The choice may have been purely arbitrary.

The rules for mustering the Levites differ greatly from those governing other tribes: all males one month of age and older are counted. It is approximate, since at this age (one month) the firstborn were to be given up or redeemed (cf. vv. 40, 43 and 18:16). From birth, the Levites would have a single fact firmly instilled in their hearts, that they were possessed by the Lord Himself, consecrated to His service. Theirs was a lifetime with a constant commitment.

First counted were the Gershonites, who number 7,500. They are assigned the camping post to the west of the Tent, under Eliasaph, son of Lael. For their special responsibility, they are assigned the care of the tapestry of the dwelling, or inner covering, Ex. 26:1ff.; of the Tent, or the goats' hair covering, Ex. 26:7ff; the Tent's covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of the dolphin skin over it, Ex. 26:14. They were further charged to care for the curtain at the door, Ex. 26:36, as well as the hangings for the court and the curtain for the door of the court, Ex. 27:9-16. With these, they also had custody of the cords, or tent ropes, which were secured to the pins to support the tent materials (see Ex. 35:18, 39:40). Finally, they had the responsibility for the utensils or instruments of service. Ex. 27:19. Care of these items included

especially the duty of assembling or disassembling them when the people encamped or moved, as well as daily custody while the Tabernacle remained in use.

Next, the Kohathites, numbering 8,600, received their duties. Under their hands were the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, the seven-branched lampstand, both altars (incense and sacrifice), and the articles of service for all of these items. Additionally, they were to care for the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. All of the articles of furniture had to be wrapped with care when being transported (4:5ff.). In camp, the Kohathites were situated south of the Tent. Chief of the four families of the Kohathites was Elizaphan, son of Uzziel; but the chief of all the Levites was also a Kohathite: Eleazar, son of Aaron.

The third family counted were the Merarites, numbering 6,200, and placed north of the Tent. Zurriel was prince of the group, who had the work of the framework of the Tent: its boards, bars, pillars and sockets. They also handled the comparable units for the framework surrounding the court. While this assignment might seem somewhat less impressive than those given the other families, such would not be the case; there simply was nothing assigned which was unimportant. All of the jobs were interdependent, and the Tabernacle could not be moved or used unless the cooperation of each family was assured. Nothing is insignificant if God has asked it!

In the favored eastern position, in front of the door to the court, was the camping area of the priests—Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons. Not only is this a place of honor, it is also the position of greatest convenience for the priests' responsibilities of service, and it places them where they may intercept any "stranger" who might, for any reason, approach unto the forbidden area.

There is a discrepancy in the totals from the census. Verse 39 gives the number an even 22,000, whereas verses 40-51 show 22,300. The mistake is of long standing, and appears to have been a scribal error in transmission. Other attempts to explain the difference seem much too speculative.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

57. Distinguish between the terms "priest" and "Levite" Show their differing functions.
58. Why should the priests need so many to assist them?
59. Draw up a list of the "instruments of the Tabernacle," (v. 8), and tell how they were used.
60. Define the term "stranger" in v. 10. Why should there be such a severe penalty for approaching unto the Tabernacle unlawfully?
61. In what respect would setting aside the Levites recall Israel's release from Egypt?
62. Why are the firstborn animals recognized, along with the firstborn sons of Israel?
63. Among the other tribes, the census began with 20-year olds. However, the Levites were counted from the age of one month. Why the difference?
64. Draw a design of the placement of the families of the sons of Levi around Tabernacle.
65. Beside the names of the families of the Levitical families, list their assignments in assembling and disassembling the Tabernacle.
66. What special honor was given to Aaron's son Eleazar?
67. Name the articles for which the Merarites were responsible, and tell what each of the items was used for.
68. For what items were the Kohathites responsible, and how were they used in the Tabernacle?
69. What were the responsibilities of the Kohathites? How were these things prepared for travel?
70. What special advantages were there in having Moses and Aaron and his sons camp at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting?

C. CENSUS OF THE FIRST BORN vv. 40-43

TEXT

Chapter 3:40. And the Lord said unto Moses, Number all the firstborn of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. 41. And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the Lord) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel. 42. And Moses numbered, as the Lord commanded him, all the firstborn among the children of Israel. 43. And all the firstborn males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 3:40. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Count all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from one month old and up, and list their names. 41. And you shall take the Levites for me (I am the Lord), rather than all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites rather than all the firstborn among the cattle of the children of Israel." 42. So Moses counted all the firstborn among the children of Israel, as the Lord commanded him; and the total of all the firstborn males named, from one month old and up, came to 22,273.

COMMENTARY

The number of the firstborn, 22,273, can hardly be a complete figure for all of the tribes of Israel. If there were an equal number of firstborn females, the total of about 45,000 would mean that the average family would have had about 50 children or more, if the total population exceeded two million. Various suggestions have been made. It has been proposed that only the firstborn males who were not heads of their own families were included—those too young to have their own firstborn. Again, there is the thought that in many instances the firstborn might have died, and hence is not tallied. Even if these

factors be granted, the number would have not been reduced as much as the figures demand. Perhaps an answer is that only those firstborn sons were counted whose births had transpired after the departure from Egypt. But this theory would require a very unusually high birth rate for the period. A final suggestion is that the sanctification of the firstborn, being designed to strike a blow at the practice of the sacrifice of the pagan infants to the worship of Moloch, would hence have included only the very young firstborn among Israel.

But all of these are speculative, and none is without its difficulties. Whatever the actual reason for there being such a small number, we are not told: the most likely explanation may be that of *PC*, (pp. 19, 20), that the tally included only the firstborn sons in Israel who were not themselves heads of houses. The conclusion is reached by drawing a parallel between this counting and the deaths of the Egyptian firstborn at the Passover, at which time each household lost only its eldest son; but the father, although a firstborn, was not touched. "These," it is stated, "were the destroyed in Egypt—these the redeemed in Israel."

The number of firstborn of the tribes, 22,273, was exchanged for the 22,000 Levites; and the cattle of the Levites were consecrated in the place of all the firstborn cattle of Israel. The exchange was not one-for-one, but approximate.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

71. What explanations are suggested for the small number of firstborn among the tribes of Israel? Can you find the difficulty in these suggestions?
72. Compare the number of firstborn in the nation with the census of the Levites.
73. In what sense are the Levites and their cattle to be taken in place of the firstborn of Israel and of the cattle?

D. LEVITES DEDICATED IN BEHALF
OF THE FIRSTBORN vv. 44-51

TEXT

Chapter 3:44. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 45. Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord. 46. And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and three-score and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites; 47. Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:) 48. And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons. 49. And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites: 50. Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: 51. And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 3:44. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 45. "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites rather than their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord. 46. And for those who are to be ransomed of the 273 of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are in excess of the Levites, 47. you shall take five shekels for each man, that is, the shekel of the sanctuary (or, twenty gerahs),* 48. and you shall give the money, which is the ransom of the excess, to Aaron and his sons. 49. And Moses took the ransom money from those of the excess beyond those ransomed by the Levites; 50. he took the money, as of the shekel of the sanctuary, totalling 1,365, from

*In our terms, approximately 6.8 pounds, avoirdupois.

the sons of Israel. 51. Then Moses gave the ransom money to Aaron and his sons, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

COMMENTARY

Verses 44 and 45 repeat earlier instructions for the purpose of emphasis and clarity. The Lord underscores the purpose for adopting the Levites; He also adds necessary instructions with reference to the number of firstborn among the tribes which exceeds that of the Levites—273. They were to be redeemed on the basis of the established price for redemption of the firstborn among the people (see 18:16).

The shekel of the sanctuary had been established in Exodus 30:13; see also Lev. 27:6. "Shekel" means "weight", and demonstrates the ancient practice of establishing the value of an item by equating it with a measured weight of gold, silver, or even bronze or iron; The shekel weighed about four-tenths of an ounce. It required 1365 shekels to redeem the excess of the firstborn (273) over the number of the Levites. The sum was given to Aaron in lieu of the firstborn. From the beginning it was ordained that those who served their brothers in the capacity of priests and Levites should derive their livelihood from those whom they served. The principle would be extended into the New Covenant of the Gospel by the apostle Paul in declaring that the Lord has "ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel," (I Cor. 9:14). Denied the opportunity of ordinary livelihood by labor, those whose occupation involves total service to God in behalf of their fellow men may rightly ask their provision by those whom they serve.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

74. What is suggested when the Lord said, "The Levites shall be mine"?
75. Establish the value of the ransom price of the firstborn if it was paid in gold, and if it was paid in silver, according to the current values of these metals.
76. The provisions given in this section are only for a single

time and a single circumstance. What regulations were given for consecration of the firstborn of the people and animals later?

77. Who paid the ransom money to the priests?

VI. MARCHING DUTIES ASSIGNED TO THE LEVITE FAMILIES (4:1-49)

A. THE KOHATHITES vv. 1-20

TEXT

Chapter 4:1. And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, saying, 2. Take the sum of the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, 3. From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 4. This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things.

5. And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it: 6. And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. 7. And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: 8. And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. 9. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: 10. And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it upon a bar. 11. And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof: 12. And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the

sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put them on a bar. 13. And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: 14. And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it. 15. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

16. And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that thereon is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof.

17. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, 18. Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites: 19. But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden: 20. But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 4:1. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. "Count the descendants of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' houses, 3. from thirty years of age, all who enter into the service to do the duties of the Tent of Meeting. 4. This shall be the service of the descendants of Kohath in the Tent of Meeting among the holy things:

5. When the camp moves out, Aaron and his sons shall enter

in and take down the veil of the screen, and cover the ark of the covenant with it; 6. and they shall lay a covering of goatskin on it, and shall spread a cloth of pure blue over it, and insert its poles. 7. "And they shall spread a cloth of blue over the table of showbread, and put on it the dishes, the spoons, the bowls and the jars for pouring; and the continual bread shall be upon it. 8. And they shall spread over them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of goatskin, and insert its poles. 9. Then they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the lampstand of light, along with its lamps, its snuffers and its pans, and all its oil vessels used in serving it: 10. and they shall put it and all its vessels inside a cover of goatskin, and they shall put it upon the carrying staves. 11. And they shall spread a blue cloth over the golden altar and cover it with a covering of goatskin, and insert its poles. 12. And they shall take all the utensils of service, with which they serve in the sanctuary, and put them in a blue cloth, and cover them with a covering of dolphin skin, and put them on the carrying staves. 13. Then they shall remove the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth upon it. 14. They also shall put on it all the vessels by which they serve, the pans, the forks, the shovels and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of goatskin, and insert the poles. 15. And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all of the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to move out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry it; but they must not touch any holy things, lest they should die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the Tent of Meeting. And the duty of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, is the oil of the light, the sweet incense, the daily meal offering, the anointing oil—the responsibility for all the Tabernacle and everything in it, along with the sanctuary and its vessels."

17. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 18. "Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites, 19. but do this to them that they may live and not die when they come unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall enter, and designate each man to his duty and

his burden; 20. but they must not enter in to see when the holy things are covered lest they die.

COMMENTARY

To the Kohathites was given the most responsible chores. The family included Moses, Aaron and his sons; that is, the priests. Their service is said to have begun at age 30 here (v. 3), whereas 8:24 gives the age as 25, the LXX adopts the lower age in this verse. It has been suggested that the age might have been first established at the earlier figure, then lowered, as more men were to be served, due to the population growth.

The Kohathites have been referred to as the *militia sacra*, or sacred army. A military term is used to describe their "service", (v. 3). Their obligations are as clear and regimented as those of an army; and their commitments are total, demanding unquestioning allegiance to their Commander. To them is assigned the most holy things in the Tabernacle: the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, the lampstand (candlestick), the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offerings, as well as all the articles pertaining to them.

When the call came for the Israelites to move, the priests first carefully followed a set procedure. Aaron and his sons took down the curtain between the holy place and the holy of holies, using it to wrap up the ark of the covenant (vv. 5, 6); and they covered the entire bundle with skins variously identified as those of the badger or sea-cow. The Hebrew word *tachash* is currently translated "goatskins" in the RSV. It is a very probable correction, since the quantity of badgerskins required for the coverings would have been excessive. Furthermore, the availability of either the badgers or the sea-cows in sufficient quantity is subject to reasonable question. Finally, staves were inserted into the rings of the ark, and it was ready for carrying.

Preparations for the other items was somewhat less complicated. The table of showbread was wrapped inside a blue cloth (vv. 7, 8), and on this were placed all the dishes, spoons, bowls, pitchers, and the bread itself. Great care must be taken

in the process to see that none of these things were touched directly, under pain of death (v. 15), even while wrapping them with the cloths of covering. The lampstand was wrapped with blue cloth, together with its small pots, its snuffers, trays, and oil vessels. Again, it was carried by means of a pole inserted through the covering, vv. 9, 10.

Similarly, the altar of incense should be wrapped, with its many utensils, and carried upon poles. The cloth encompassing the golden altar was blue, v. 11

The large altar of sacrifice, or burnt-offering, was wrapped in purple, after its ashes had been carefully removed, v. 13, along with the numerous items required for its use—firepans, forks, shovels, basins, and miscellaneous articles. The removal of the ashes was not done to clean the altar: it was hollow, with a filling of earth or stones. Rather, the ashes were most carefully tended as living embers. The sacred fire was never permitted to go out.

There is a surprising omission here, the great laver. Both the Septuagint and the Samaritan text add, after v. 14, "And they shall take a purple cloth, and cover the laver and its foot, and they shall put it into a hyacinthine cover of skin, and put it on bars." Although this is a spurious interpolation, it is certain that the Kohathites were required to carry the laver. The suggestion in *PC* (p. 25) is unsatisfactory—that the laver was "not regarded as of equal sanctity with the rest" will not suffice to explain the omission; there simply is no satisfactory explanation.

Upon completion of the wrapping of all articles, the Kohathites came to carry them. It is evident from the order in which the account is related that the Kohathites and their burdens marched at the forefront of the nation when on the move.

Special tribute, along with special duty, fell upon Eleazar. His responsibility included oversight of the oil for the lampstand, incense for the golden altar, the continual meal-offering, the anointing oil, and the vessels for their care. He further directed the entire process of gathering and preparing the

Tabernacle and all the sacred objects for transportation. We may infer that the Kohathites worked directly under his supervision. The Kohathites are recognized to be especially significant among the tribes. Lest they be guilty of any degree of negligence or carelessness which others might prevent, Moses and Aaron are strictly admonished to supervise their duties most carefully. Should they fail, they are to be held accountable directly to God. Any carelessness or irreverence in the conduct of the priests' functions would induce similar attitudes and serious mistakes among the Levites; death then must be the inevitable consequence. Every phase of the service of Jehovah is of gravest importance, and God's instructions are to be carried out to the letter.

The final note of caution (v. 20) summarizes all that has been said. Wrapping the furnishings is the task of the priests; the Kohathites must be cautious not even so much as to look upon the vessels for an instant, under pain of death.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

78. How do you reconcile the differences given for the time of the priestly service, as stated in Num. 4:3 and 8:24?
79. In what sense might the Kohathites be called the "militia sacra"?
80. Give in full detail the step-by-step measure which must be followed when the Tabernacle and its various articles were to be moved.
81. Why is it more likely that "goatskins" is the proper word in this passage, rather than "porpoises" or "sea-cows"?
82. Why should there be such a severe penalty for the unauthorized sight of the various items of furniture before they are completely wrapped?
83. Why was it unnecessary to clean ashes from the altar of sacrifice?
84. What possible explanations are offered for the omission of the laver from the list of the Tabernacle's furniture?
85. Why was Eleazar given special responsibility over the

process of packing and moving all the articles of the Tabernacle?

86. In what manner might clumsiness, carelessness or indifference in performing their duties as priests affect the general attitude of the Levites? of the people as a whole?

B. THE GERSHONITES vv. 21-28

TEXT

Chapter 4:21. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 22. Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families; 23. From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. 24. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens: 25. And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 26. And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them; so shall they serve. 27. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. 28. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 4:21. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 22. "Count the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' houses, by their families, 23. from thirty years old and up to fifty years old you shall count them: all who enter to perform the service, to

do the work in the Tent of Meeting. 24. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in both serving and carrying: 25. they shall carry the curtains of the Tabernacle and the Tent of Meeting, its covering, and the covering of the goatskin on top of it, and the screen for the door of the Tent of Meeting, and the curtain for the court, 26. and the screen for the door of the gate of the court surrounding the Tabernacle and the altar, and their cords and all the equipment for their service, and everything that is made for them; in this manner they shall serve. 27. All the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their duties and all their work, shall be done by the order of Aaron and his sons: you shall appoint all their duty to those in charge. 28. This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the Tent of Meeting; and their duties shall be under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest.

COMMENTARY

Much less complex than the work of the Kohathites were the duties of the second family, the Gershonites. They are tallied for service on the same basis as are the others; from ages thirty to fifty. On the march, they are responsible for the many curtains of the Tabernacle, the Tent itself, and the many coverings they required; they carry also all the screen which filled the door at the eastern Door of the Tent, as well as the bulky hangings which surrounded the outer court and the screen which closed the only opening by which access might be gained into the court. With these, they carried the cords which were used specifically for the erection and solidity of the Tabernacle. In order that there might be no misunderstanding whatever, they are instructed in detail by Aaron and his sons.

Ithamar, who had had a primary assignment during the construction of the Tabernacle (Ex. 38:21), now is placed in oversight of both the Gershonites and the Merarites, although he himself is a Kohathite. We are informed in 7:7, 8 that wagons were assigned for transporting the articles.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

87. Compare this passage with Ex. 27, and see more clearly the duty of the Gershonites.
88. Why did they not carry the "veil"?
89. Distinguish between the cords carried by the Gershonites and those for which the Merarites were responsible.

C. THE MERARITES vv. 29-33

TEXT

Chapter 4:29. As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; 30. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. 31. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and sockets thereof, 32. And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden. 33. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 4:29. "Regarding the sons of Merari, you shall count them by their families, by their fathers' houses; you shall count them from thirty years of age and up to fifty: everyone who enters the service, to do the duties of the Tent of Meeting. 31. And this is the responsibility for their loads, for all their duties in the Tent of Meeting: the boards of the Tabernacle and its bars, its pillars and its sockets, 32. as well as the pillars of the surrounding court, their sockets, pegs and cords, with all their utensils, and all their service; and you shall assign to each man by name the articles he is to carry. 33. This is the service of the

families of the sons of Merari, according to their duties, in the Tent of Meeting, under the supervision of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest."

COMMENTARY

Unto the Merarites fell the heaviest of all the burdens of transport. It was a fitting assignment, since the tribe had a larger number of men in the 30-50 age bracket than did the Gershonites or the Kohathites—51% of their total count.

<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Age 30-50</u>	<u>% of Tribe</u>
Kohath	8600	2750	32
Gershon	7500	2630	35
Merari	<u>6200</u>	<u>3200</u>	<u>51</u>
	22,300	8560	38

The Merarites were the nation's carpenters, and, under Ithamar's direction, they are to care for the structural framework of the Tent and the court. As with the Gershonites, the Merarites were provided with wagons to handle their burdens, (7:8).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

90. Review the instructions for making the boards of the Tabernacle and the court (Ex. 26:15-25); it will help you appreciate the extent of the Merarites' duties in moving to compute the running feet of lumber required!
91. Study Ex. 27:19, with the ten preceding verses, to understand how the many pegs, cords and other accessories were used in the Tabernacle.

D. THE CENSUS OF THE PRIESTLY FAMILIES vv. 34-49

TEXT

Chapter 4:34. And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families, and after the house of their fathers, 35. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the

congregation: 36. And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37. These were they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses. 38. And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers, 30. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation, 40. even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty. 41. 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.

42. And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, 43. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation, 44. Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred. 45. These be those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses. 46. All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers, 47. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation, 48. Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore. 49. According to the commandment of the Lord they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as the Lord commanded Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 4:34. And Moses and Aaron and the princes of the congregation counted the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers' houses, 35. from thirty years of age up to fifty, everyone who entered the service for work in the Tent of Meeting. 36. And those who were counted of them by their families were 2,750. 37. These were the men counted from the Kohathite families, all who were serving in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron counted according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses. 38. And those who were counted of the sons of Gershon, by their families, and by the house of their fathers, from thirty years of age and up to fifty, everyone who enters into the service for work in the Tent of Meeting. 40. And those who were counted by them, by families, by their fathers' houses, were 2,630. 41. These are the men counted of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all who might do service in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron counted according to the commandment of the Lord.

42. And those who were counted of the families of the sons of Merari, by their families, by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old up to fifty, everyone who enters into the service, for work in the Tent of Meeting, even those who were counted of them by their families, were 3,200. 45. These are the men counted of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron counted, according to the word of the Lord, by the hand of Moses. 46. All of the men counted of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the princes of Israel counted, by their families and by their fathers' houses, from thirty years of age and up to fifty, everyone who came to do the work of serving and the work of carrying in the Tent of Meeting—48. those who were counted of them were 8,500. 49. They were counted by the hand of Moses according to the commandment of the Lord, everyone according to his service, and according to his burden; thus they were counted, as the Lord commanded Moses.

COMMENTARY

PC proposes that the numbering in this census is rounded out by tens rather than to show each individual. Further, it is said, the task of carrying all the items of the Tabernacle as listed would not have required such a large number of people; hence, the duties were also assigned by units of ten. It is also suggested that something has disturbed the relative numbers between the Merarites and the other families, with such an abnormally high percentage of those counted being between thirty and fifty years of age. In the ordinary situation, we might expect the age bracket to account for about one-fourth of the total population; the Merarites double this figure. We are given no explanation of the fact. The same source advances the possible thoughts that an abnormally high number of children of this tribe might have been slaughtered as infants in Egypt, or that they may suddenly have reduced the number of marriages. We can only speculate on the actual solution.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

92. Is the suggestion that the census here is computed by tens out of harmony with the totals from the other tribes?
93. What advantage would there be to tallying in this fashion?
94. What explanations might be offered for the unusually high percentage of Merarites between the ages of thirty and fifty?

VII. ASSORTED LAWS (5:1-6:27)

A. EJECTION OF THE UNCLEAN vv. 1-4

TEXT

Chapter 5:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: 3. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them: that they defile not their

camps, in the midst whereof I dwell. 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the Lord spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:1. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone with leprosy, and everyone having a discharge, and anyone who is unclean because of a dead person. 3. You shall put out both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camps, among which I dwell." 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them outside of the camp; as the Lord spoke to Moses, so did the children of Israel.

COMMENTARY

Full details for detecting the initial symptoms of leprosy for isolating him for three successive weeks before being consigned to perpetual separation or restoration to society, and for his ultimate return in the event of its cure are given in Lev. 13 and 14. The leper's expulsion from camp was immediate; his life must be spent where contact with others, even in the most casual manner, would be virtually impossible. Neither the Israelites nor any other ancient people have the vaguest concept of the manner in which the disease was spread. But the wisdom of such isolation would never be questioned today. The God whose hand was leading Israel long anticipated the discoveries of medical science in prescribing this treatment.

Other issues, discussed in Lev. 15, are cause of defilement as long as they obtain. They might spring from a wide variety of problems, and the victim remained separate from the nation until the matter was overcome. The term "issue" would refer to any unnatural oozing of blood, pus, or any similar liquid from the flesh, other than as the natural consequence of an injury. We are told that, until the time of Maimonides at least, a common custom in the East required the women's isolation during menstrual periods, (*ICC*, p. 40).

Defilement also occurred as a consequence of contact with a corpse, (Lev. 11:24, 21:1). The former reference applies when the corpse is that of an unclean animal; the second exempts from the law of uncleanness one who has come in contact with the body of his near of kin. These laws of exclusion from the camp were put immediately into force, and obtained when the people occupied Canaan, as prescribed in Lev. 13:45, 46.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

95. Explain the reasons for such harsh treatment of lepers as this commandment requires.
96. Review the laws relative to the period of isolation of one who is suspected of having leprosy. What provisions were made for his reinstatement into society if the problem disappeared?
97. What various kinds of bodily issues rendered a man or a woman unclean?
98. Why should an individual be considered unclean for having touched the corpse of an unclean animal?
99. This is one of the all-too-few instances in which the Israelites are said to have complied fully and immediately with the commandment of the Lord. What other such instances can you find during the period of wandering?

B. RESTITUTION AND OFFERING FOR THEFT vv. 5-10

TEXT

Chapter 5:5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; 7. Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. 8. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an

atonement shall be made for him. 9. And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. 10. And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:5. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6. "Speak to the children of Israel, 'When a man or a woman commits any sin that men commit, sinning against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 7. then he shall confess the sins which he has committed, and make restitution in full for the trespass, and shall add one-fifth to it, and give it to him who has been wronged. 8. But if the man has no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the trespass, let the restitution which is made to the Lord be the priest's, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him. 9. And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. 10. And every man's holy things shall be his: whatever any man gives to the priest, it shall be his.' "

COMMENTARY

The law here supplements that of Lev. 6:1-7 telling the proper procedure to follow in the event of the death of the original owner, who has left no kinsmen who might receive repayment. By no means is he exempted from restitution, since his offense is primarily against God. As David was later to say so well, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," Ps. 51:4. Whether discovered or not, whether restitution in full is made to the wronged person in the event of robbery or any other crime, the essential thought is that all sin is first of all an assault upon the laws and will of God. *PC*, p. 36, cites the "general principle that the priest was the visible representative of the invisible majesty", hence, the offender's recompense is given him. The offering, in this instance, is a ram, given as a heave offering (Ex. 29:28). Such offerings were not burned upon the altar, but were "presented", after which they became the

property of the Lord, and were passed to the priests.

Three steps are involved, then, in the process of righting a wrong: the guilty must acknowledge his sin, he must make full restitution, and, by some process, there must be an atonement. Under the Law, the atonement involved his heave offering; under the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God effects our pardon.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

100. What was a thief required to do if he was caught with stolen goods, and the victim was still alive? (See Lev. 6:1-7).
101. How is it justifiable for the priest to receive the ram brought him as an offering for any sin?
102. Explain how all sins are essentially against God.
103. What three steps have always been required by God in order that any man's sins may be forgiven?
104. What great difference is there between the method of atonement in the Old Covenant, and in the New?
105. Discuss whether or not you think stealing and similar crimes might be discouraged today if our laws required that thieves repay what was stolen with a substantial increase, as the Law required.

C. THE ORDEAL OF JEALOUSY vv. 11-31

TEXT

Chapter 5:11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 12. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13. And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she is defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14. And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

15. Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the Lord: 17. And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18. And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: 19. And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20. But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee besides thine husband: 21. Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22. And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, Amen, amen. 23. And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: 24. And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse; and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25. Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar: 26. And the priest shall take a handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27. And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the

curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28. And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29. This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30. Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31. Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:11. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 12. "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'If any man's wife go aside, and commit a sin against him, and a man have intercourse with her, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected, she is defiled, although there is no witness against her and she has not been taken in the act, 14. if a spirit of jealousy come upon him and he be jealous of his wife when she is defiled; or if a spirit of jealousy come upon him and he be jealous of his wife when she is not defiled, 15. then shall the man bring his wife to the priest, and he shall bring an offering for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense on it, for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16. Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the Lord; 17. and the priest shall take holy water in a clay pot, and he shall take of the dust which is on the floor of the tabernacle, and shall put it in the water. 18. The priest shall then have the woman stand before the Lord, and loosen the hair of her head, and put the memorial offering in her hands—that is, the grain offering of jealousy; and the priest shall have in his hand the water of bitterness which causes a curse. 19. And the priest shall have her take an oath, saying unto the woman, "If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone aside to uncleanness with someone other than your husband, be immune to this bitter water which causes the curse;

20. however, if you have gone aside to someone other than your husband, and if you are defiled and some man other than your husband has lain with you," 21. Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of the curse, and shall say to the woman, "The Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people when He causes your thigh to waste away and your abdomen to swell; 22. and this water which causes the curse shall enter your bowels and make your abdomen to swell and your thigh to waste away." And the woman shall say, "Let it be so; let it be so." 23. "Then the priest shall write these curses on a scroll and wash them off with the bitter water; 24. and he shall make the woman drink the bitter water which causes the curse, so that the water which causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter. 25. Then the priest shall take the meal offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and wave the offering before the Lord and offer it upon the altar; 26. and a priest shall take a handful of the offering, of the memorial portion, and burn it on the altar, and later shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27. And when he has caused her to drink the water, it shall happen that if she is defiled, and has sinned against her husband, the water which causes a curse shall enter into her and become bitter, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away and she will become a curse among her people. 28. But if the woman is not defiled, and is clean, then she shall be free and conceive children. 29. This is the Law of Jealousies: when a wife goes aside to someone other than her husband, and is defiled; 30. or when the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he becomes jealous of his wife, he shall bring the woman before the Lord and the priest shall apply all this law unto her. 31. The man shall be without guilt of sin, but his wife shall bear her guilt."

COMMENTARY

Among all the sins which men commit, few or none are viewed with such loathing as that of adultery. Its consequences may spread in an ever-widening sphere, beginning with the offender and the offended, and including the immediate family,

the close and more remote circle of friends, neighbors, and an almost infinite combination of possibilities of social, business, religious and community factors. No other single wrong is so disruptive of the basic unit of God's ordained social structure, the home.

Even when there is reasonable ground for suspicion of marital infidelity, the consequences may be profound. The case is well presented in *KD*, pp. 29, 30: "As any suspicion cherished by a man against his wife, that she either is or has been guilty of adultery, whether well-founded or not, is sufficient to shake the marriage connection to its very roots, and to undermine, along with marriage, the foundation of the civil commonwealth, it was of the greatest importance to guard against this moral evil, which was so utterly irreconcilable with the holiness of the people of God, by appointing a process in harmony with the spirit of the theocratical law, and adapted to bring to light the guilt or innocence of any wife who had fallen into such suspicion, and at the same time to warn fickle wives against unfaithfulness."

The ordeal prescribed in this section was to be undergone where adultery was suspected, but could not be proved, for lack of witnesses. The penalty for demonstrable adultery was set (Lev. 20:10). It is in no way directly related to this test. The wife is to come with her husband, bringing an offering of barley meal to the priest. She is then to be brought before the Lord as she subscribes to an oath, setting forth the conditions that if she is innocent no harm will come of the test; but if there is guilt upon her soul, she will suffer the extraordinary consequences of having her body swell and her thigh "fall away". Josephus has suggested this is a form of dropsy. Michaelis proposes it to be dropsy of the ovary, in which a huge tumor may form in place of the ovarium, and swell to almost unbelievable size, causing dreadful emaciation. *KD* notes that "The punishment was to answer exactly to the crime, and to fall upon those bodily organs which had been the instruments of the woman's sin, viz. the organs of child-bearing.

No little symbolic value has been found in the ingredients

of the test. *KD* has the holy water representing the righteousness and justice of God; the dust, taken from the sanctuary floor, signifies the curse of sin since dust was to be eaten by the serpent (Gen. 3:14); the earthen vessel is used rather than one of copper because it is virtually worthless; loosening the woman's hair suggests the loss of "the proper ornament of female morality and conjugal fidelity"; she stands with the offering in her own hands, as a symbol of her conduct before God, while the priests, holding the trial water, represents God and divine judgment, pp. 31, 32. Such hypothetical speculation is interesting and, to some degree logical; but the Bible makes no such associations.

After the charges against the woman had been inscribed on a roll, the writing itself was washed off into the bitter water, to become the water of trial. Much is made of this in *ICC* and *PC*, since antecedents and similarities may be found in numerous ancient, pagan societies, and contemporarily in parts of Africa among semi-barbarous people. Indeed, among some Mohammedans, those who are ill swallow portions of the Koran in hopes of a cure. *PC* cites an incident in the middle ages when Archbishop Edmund Rich, later canonized, washed a crucifix in water, drank it, and cited the thought, "Ye shall drink from the wells of salvation," p. 33. If one reckons without the power of a personal, righteous God, there is no difference between the superstitious practices of the pagan and the obedient response of believers in such a God. The Hebrews did not question either the method or the divine power behind the method of enforcing this test. In her response, "Amen, amen," the wife placed herself under the strictures of the test. If guilty, she awaited a horrible consequence; if innocent, a welcome acquittal, and the ability to produce children, v. 28.

The concluding verses, 29-31, free the husband of any guilt in subjecting his wife to the law's ordeal. It is generally believed that the consequences of the ordeal, if negative, would be apparent within a brief time. Josephus makes it a maximum of ten months. If, in the meanwhile, she should bear a son, the fact is considered an exoneration. *PC* says it is unlikely the ordeal

was ever actually used, since no guilty woman would dare subject herself to such a dreadful challenge, unless she had no fears of the actions of God. The same source asserts, with the Talmud as its authority, that the use of the law of jealousy ended forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, p. 41.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

106. Compare the process of this testing by the Law of Jealousy with the law covering demonstrable adultery.
107. The test of infidelity here has been called "almost inhuman" by today's standards. Discuss the point, showing problems which arise in a marriage afflicted by jealousy.
108. List the possible symbolisms in the steps followed in the test.
109. Could there be any danger in the wife's undergoing her ordeal if she is innocent of any wrongdoing?
110. The test of jealousy has been compared to numerous paganistic rituals. What essential differences do you find between the two?
111. What was the composition of "holy water", and for what various purposes, other than this test, was it used?
Show the role of God throughout such a testing period.

D. THE VOW OF THE NAZIRITE 6:1-21

TEXT

Chapter 6:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord; 3. He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. 4. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he

separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6. All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. 7. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. 8. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord. 9. And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. 10. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 11. And the priest shall offer for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. 12. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

13. And this is the law of the Nazarite: when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: 14. And he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, 15. And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. 16. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering: 17. And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. 18. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. 19. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the

basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven: 20. And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: this is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. 21. This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the Lord for his separation, besides that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 6:1. Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. "Speak to the children of Israel and tell them, 'When either a man or a woman takes the special vow of a Nazirite to separate himself to the Lord, 3. he shall abstain from wine and strong drink, and shall drink neither fermented wine, nor other fermented drink, nor any liquid from grapes, nor eat fresh or dried grapes. 4. All the days of his abstinence he shall eat nothing which comes from the grape vine, from the seeds to the skin. 5. All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall touch his head. Until the days are completed during which he separates himself to the Lord, he shall be holy unto the Lord; and he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long. 6. All the days of his separation unto the Lord he shall not approach a dead person. 7. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister when they die, because the sign of God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord. 9. "And if any man dies very suddenly near him, and his head of consecration has been defiled, then he shall shave his head on the day he becomes clean, that is, on the seventh day. 10. Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the door of the Tent of Meeting. 11. The priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering and make atonement for him, because he was defiled by the dead; and he shall consecrate his head on that same day, 12. and dedicate to the Lord the days of his abstinence, and

bring a year-old male lamb for a guilt offering: and the previous days shall be void because his separation was defiled.

13. Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are completed: he shall be brought to the Tent of Meeting, 14. and he shall offer his offering to the Lord, one year-old male lamb without blemish for a sin offering, and one year-old ewe lamb without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for a peace offering, 15. and a basket of unleavened bread, loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and their drink offerings. 16. Then the priest shall present them unto the Lord, and shall offer with his sin offering and his burnt offering. 17. He shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer his meal offering and his drink offering. 18. Then the Nazirite shall shave his head of separation at the door of the Tent of Meeting and take the hair of his head of separation and put it in the fire beneath the sacrifice of peace offerings. 19. And the priest shall take the boiled ram's shoulder and one unleavened loaf from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after his hair of separation is shaved. 20. Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. This is holy for the priest, together with the waved breast and the lifted shoulder; and after that the Nazirite may drink wine. 21. This is the law of the Nazirite who has vowed, and of his separation offering unto the Lord, in addition to whatever else he can afford; according to the vow he has taken, so he must do according to the law of his separation.' "

COMMENTARY

The name here has been misspelled consistently by those who have made a false association between a Nazirite and a Nazarene. Aside from the similarity in spelling, confusion is impossible. A Nazarene was simply one from Nazareth, a city unknown during the Old Testament period. The term 'Nazirite' is derived from the Hebrew root *nazir*, whose basis meaning

indicates 'separation', which is significant to the vow. The name of the city of Nazareth was derived from *netser*, meaning a "shoot" or "sprout".

The Nazirite pledged himself to one of two kinds of vows, either temporary or lifelong. Three individuals in the Bible are known to have been lifelong Nazirites: Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist. Although women were privileged to subscribe to the vow, we have no record of any who so pledged themselves, on either condition.

When one became a Nazirite, it was for the purpose of separation unto a special service for Jehovah. The vow lasted until the special task was accomplished. Such vows of separation are not found in Israel's history alone, although there are distinguishing marks in the system: (1) neither wine, nor grapes, nor any portion of the products of the vine were to be consumed; (2) the hair was never to be cut nor trimmed at all; and, (3) the subject should never come into contact with a dead body, even of the near of kin. When the angel of the Lord listed the details of the vow to which Samson should be pledged, a fourth element was included: he should eat no unclean thing (Judges 13:7). Since this final provision was a law unto Israel, its inclusion should have been unnecessary; however, the state of affairs at the time may have dictated that the term be included. Both Samuel and Samson were given to be Nazirites before their birth, and it is inferred from Luke 1:15 that the same is true of John. *PBD* affirms that many, but perhaps not all, of the Qumran community at the time of John were Nazirites, p. 575. Acts 21:23ff. makes reference to Paul's support of the four men who were Nazirites, and some have believed the apostle himself subscribed in Acts 18:18. But the evidence is inconclusive. We do know that Herod Agrippa supported a number of Nazirites, according to Josephus, and that numerous Jews took the vow as a protest against Antiochus Epiphanes in the time of the Maccabees. Among the bitter denunciations of Amos is a strong condemnation of those who gave wine to the Nazirites, thus inducing them to break their vows. In the passage, (Amos 2:11, 12), the Nazirites apparently

are considered, along with the prophets, to be spiritual leaders of the people.

Upon completion of the term of his pledge, the Nazirite was released to ordinary life according to the schedule announced in vv. 13-20. The climax came when the hair of his head was shaved and burned. Thus the Nazirite acknowledged that he had been able to keep his vow by virtue of the strength God had given him. The "sodden shoulder" was the ram's left; the right already belonged to the priest. (Lev. 7:32). Since the offerer shared in this offering, the peace offering, it was appropriate that he should take the choice portion not assigned to the priest for the sacrificial meal for himself and his family as all celebrated the conclusion of the vow. Wine was allowed for the occasion (v. 20).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

113. Distinguish between the Nazarene and the Nazirite, both as to meaning and derivation.
114. At what age might one take the vow of the Nazirite?
115. What is the purpose of this vow?
116. Give the restrictions placed upon the Nazirite, and tell why each one was prescribed.
117. What relationship might there be between the length of the Nazirite's hair and the validity of his vow?
118. Which of the Bible characters are known to have been Nazirites? What proof have we in each case?
119. How long did the Nazirite vow last?
120. Describe the ritual through which a Nazirite devotee must go in the event of his defilement.
121. List the steps associated with the completion of the vow of the Nazirite. What is the special symbolism of the shaving of the head? of the unleavened bread?
122. How was the termination of the vow celebrated? by whom?

E. THE AARONIC BENEDICTION vv. 22-27

TEXT

Chapter 6:22. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 23. Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 24. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: 25. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26. the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. 27. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 6:22. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 23. "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'In this way you shall bless the children of Israel, saying to them, 24. "The Lord bless you, and keep you; 25. The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you: 26. The Lord lift up His countenance unto you, And give you peace." 27. They shall put my name on the children of Israel; and I will bless them.' "

COMMENTARY

Although Aaron and his sons had been established now as high priest and family, God delivers a special formula of blessing to Moses, and, through him, the people. The method underscored once more the esteem in which Moses is held. According to the Mishnah, this blessing was given daily in Jerusalem at the temple, and the proper name for Jehovah was used rather than the altered form, "Adonai," which suggests the solemnity of its pronouncement. The same source reports use of the blessing in the synagogues, but with the substitute name. Aaron was appointed to bless the people (Deut. 21:5, cf. I Chron. 23:13), and Lev. 9:22 gives an example of this action. In this sequence of thoughts we readily see the divine name being committed exclusively to the high priestly line.

The structure of the benediction is elementary, consisting of three sections, each of which begins with "The Lord," followed

by two parts. Each of the two parts is directed to the hearer. It might be analyzed as follows:

The Lord	bleſs thee,	and keep thee:
The Lord	make his face ſhine upon thee	and be gracious unto thee:
The Lord	lift up his countenance upon thee	and give thee peace.

Analysis by ICC yields a fruitful harveſt of thought. "The Lord bleſs thee" is tied to the promiſes of Deut. 28:2-14—that plenteous harveſts and ſucceſs in all undertakings. "And guard thee" gives the reverse of this wiſh—that God ſhould guard againſt ſuch things as drouth and hoſtile invaſions. The ſhining face of the Lord is related to many references, ſuch as Ps. 31:17; Dan. 9:17; Ps. 80:4, 8, 20, and many others. The ſignificance is that of inward pleaſure or, when turned upon another, a favorable diſpoſition. It ſuggeſts alſo, as in Ex. 34:29ff., the radiant glory of the divine preſence. God's graciousneſs hardly needs comment. It is obvious in all ages through His ſupreme mercy and providence. That God ſhould "lift up his countenance" ſuggeſts favorable regard, juſt as hiding the face would indicate imminent trouble for His creatures. God's ſmile ſhines as the ſun upon thoſe who love Him. The peace, *shalom*, which only God can beſtow, is much more than a negative circumſtance—the abſence of war, or diſruptive circumſtance—it is the ſtability, calmneſs and utter tranquility captured in beautiful thought by Iſaiah (26:3): "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtayed on Thee." With this thought, the benediction is moſt appropriately closed.

The "name" which was to be put upon the people has now been irrecoverably loſt by thoſe into whoſe cuſtody it was moſt carefully entrusted. For fear of profaning the original form of the name of Jehovah, its uſe was gradually abandoned and ultimately forfeited entirely. The various names we uſe today are either ſpeculation and gueſſwork, or ſubſtitutes. In its original form, the name pointed to the timeleſs and eternal nature of God—without beginning and without end; exiſting at all times and at any time, before time was ordained for man, and after time ſhall end. In His eternal Perſon is grounded any

and every blessing man may seek.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

123. Why was this benediction, to be used by Aaron and his descendants, first delivered through Moses?
124. Arrange the benediction into its poetic components, showing the finely balanced thoughts.
125. What special kinds of blessings are suggested here?
126. How had God promised to "guard" or "keep" Israel?
127. What is the significance of the phrases "make His face shine upon you" and "lift up His countenance unto you"?
128. Cite some examples of the appearance of God's radiance to men in both the Old and the New Testaments. What was the common reaction? Is the expression here any different, and if so, in what way?
129. What paradox do you find in God's promise of "peace" unto the Israelites as you think of their later history?
130. Why are we unable to say exactly what the original form of God's name might have been? How was it lost, and by whom?

VIII. PRINCES' OFFERINGS AT THE DEDICATION (7:1-89)

TEXT

Chapter 7:1. And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them: 2. that the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: 3. And they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle. 4. And the Lord spake

unto Moses, saying, 5. Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. 6. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. 7. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service: 8. 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. 9. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders.

10. And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar. 11. And the Lord said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

12. And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah: 13. And his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 14. One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense: 15. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 16. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 17. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18. On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer: 19. He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 20. One spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense: 21. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 22. One kid of the goats for a sin

offering: 23. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

24. On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, did offer: 25. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering: 26. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 27. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 28. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 29. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30. On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, did offer: 31. His offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 32. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 33. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 34. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 35. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36. On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, did offer: 37. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 38. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 39. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 40. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 41. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

42. On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, offered: 43. His offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 44. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 45. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 46. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 47. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48. On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, offered: 49. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 50. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 51. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 52. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 53. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54. On the eighth day offered Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh: 55. His offering was one silver charger of the weight of a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 56. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 57. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 58. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 59. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60. On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, offered: 61. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty

shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 62. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 63. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 64. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 65. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66. One the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, offered: 67. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 68. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 69. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 70. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 71; And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72. On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, offered: 73. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 74. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: 75. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 76. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 77. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78. On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, offered: 79. His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: 80. One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of

incense: 81. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: 82. One kid of the goats for a sin offering: 83. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84. This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: 85. Each charger of silver weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: 86. The golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary; all the gold of the spoons was a hundred and twenty shekels. 87. All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering: and the kids of the goats for sin offering: twelve. 88. And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This was the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed. 89. And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim: and he spake unto him.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:1. Now it happened on the day that Moses had finished erecting the tabernacle, and had anointed and sanctified it with all its furnishings, both the altar and its utensils, and had anointed and sanctified them, 12. that the princes of Israel, heads of their fathers' households, who were princes of the tribes and were over those who were counted, offered. 3. They brought their offerings unto the Lord: six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two princes, and an ox for each one; and they brought them before the tabernacle. 4. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5. "Accept

the offering from them, that they may be used in serving the Tent of Meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service." 6. And Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. 7. He gave two carts and four oxen to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; 8. and he gave four carts and eight oxen to the sons of Merari, according to their service under the supervision of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. 9. But he gave none to the sons of Kohath because the service of the sanctuary was theirs: they bore it upon their shoulders.

10. And the princes offered the dedication offering for the altar on the day it was anointed, and the princes offered their offering before the altar. 11. And the Lord said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, each prince, on his day, for the dedication of the altar."

12. The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah; 13. his offering was one silver dish, weighing one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a meal offering; 14. one spoon weighing ten gold shekels, full of incense; 15. one young bullock, one ram, one year-old lamb, for a burnt offering; 16. one male goat for a sin offering; 17. and for a peace offering sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five year-old lambs: this was the offering of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab.

18. On the second day Nethanel, the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, offered. [From this point forward, through the eighty-third verse of chapter seven, the account of the offerings of the twelve princes proceeds from man to man virtually verbatim, differing only as the names themselves change, and briefly in the introductory formula of v. 19, as noted in the comments. We are not reproducing the text excepting only those verses which show the order of the princes' offerings.] 24. On the third day Eliab, the son of Helon, prince of the sons of Zebulun, offered . . .

30. On the fourth day Elizur, the son of Shedeur, prince of the sons of Reuben, offered

36. On the fifth day Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the sons of Simeon, offered

42. On the sixth day Eliasaph, the son of Deuel, prince of the sons of Gad, offered

48. On the seventh day, Elishama, the son of Ammihud, prince of the sons of Manasseh, offered

54. On the eighth day Gamaliel, the son of Pedahzur, prince of the sons of Manasseh, offered

60. On the ninth day Abidan, the son of Gideoni, prince of the sons of Benjamin, offered

66. On the tenth day Ahiezer, the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the sons of Dan, offered

72. On the eleventh day, Pagiel, the son of Ochran, prince of the sons of Asher, offered

78. On the twelfth day Ahira, the son of Enan, prince of the sons of Naphtali, offered

84. This was the dedication of the altar, on the day it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve silver dishes, 85. twelve silver bowls, twelve golden spoons; each silver dish weighed one hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy: altogether the silver vessels weighed two thousand four hundred shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. The gold of all the spoons was one hundred and twenty shekels. 87. Altogether there were twelve oxen, bullocks, for the burnt offerings, and twelve rams, twelve year-old lambs with their meal offering, and twelve male goats for a sin offering. 88. The total number of oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings was 24 bulls; of the rams, 60; of the male goats, 60; of the year-old lambs, 60. This was the dedication of the altar, after it was anointed. 89. Now when Moses had gone into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard the Voice speaking to him from the covering that was on the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim: and it spoke to him.