



## The Book of Numbers Setting Up Camp Chapters 1-4 January 20, 2018

- Jews call it Numbers *Bemidbar* (literally, “In the Wilderness”).
- Sometimes called *va-yedabber* after the first word.
- The English title *Numbers* goes back to the Latin *Numeri* (due to the multiple census – counting of the people)

### Identity

#### Identity of God.

Numbers 1:1 & 5 (NKJV) – Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai....<sup>5</sup> “These are the names of the men who shall stand with you.”

**God chose leaders or heads of each tribe. (Num. 1:5-16).**

**God chose the leaders who would divide up the land (Num. 34:16-19).**

Numbers 34:16-19 (NKJV) – <sup>16</sup> **And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,** <sup>17</sup> **These are the names of the men who shall divide the land** among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. <sup>18</sup> And you shall take one leader of every tribe to divide the land for the inheritance. <sup>19</sup> **These are the names of the men:** from the tribe of Judah, Caleb....

**God chose the Levites.**

Numbers 3:11-13 (NKJV) – <sup>12</sup> “Now behold, **I Myself have taken the Levites** from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, <sup>13</sup> **because** all the **firstborn are Mine**.

Numbers 3:44-45 (NKJV) – <sup>44</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>45</sup> “Take the **Levites instead of all the firstborn** among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. **The Levites shall be Mine: I am the Lord.**

**God did NOT choose the 12 spies.**

Numbers 13:1-2 (NKJV) – <sup>1</sup> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> “**Send men to spy out the land of Canaan**, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers **you shall send a man**, every one a leader among them.”

### Identity of the tribes.

Numbers 1:2-4 (NKJV) – <sup>2</sup>“Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their **families**, by their **fathers’ houses**, according to the number of names, **every male individually**, <sup>3</sup> from twenty years old and above—all who *are able* to go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies. <sup>4</sup> And with you there shall be a man **from every tribe**, each one the head of his father’s house.

<u>By Birth Order</u>	<u>Named</u>	<u>Future of Tribe Foretold</u>
Reuben: “Son”	Gen. 29:32	Gen. 49:3-4; Deu. 33:6
Simeon: “Heard”	Gen. 29:33	Gen. 49:5-7; Deu. 33 <b>no mention</b>
Levi: “Attached”	Gen. 29:34	Gen. 49:5-7; Deu. 33:8-11
Judah: “Praise”	Gen. 29:35	Gen. 49:9-12; Deu. 33:7
<u>Dan</u> : “Judge”	Gen. 30:6	Gen. 49:16-18; Deu. 33:22
Naphtali: “Wrestling”	Gen. 30:8	Gen. 49:21; Deu. 33:23
Gad: “Troop”	Gen. 30:11	Gen. 49:19; Deu. 33:20-21
Asher: “Happy”	Gen. 30:13	Gen. 49:20; Deu. 33:24-25
Issachar: “Wages”	Gen. 30:18	Gen. 49:14-15; Deu. 33:18-19
Zebulun: “Dwelling”	Gen. 30:20	Gen. 49:13; Deu. 33:18-19
Joseph: “He will add”	Gen. 30:24	Gen. 49:22-26; Deu. 33:13-17
Manasseh: “Making forget”	Gen. 41:51	Gen. 48:19-20; Deu. 33:13-17
Ephraim: “Fruitfulness”	Gen. 41:52	Gen. 48:19-20; Deu. 33:13-17
Benjamin: “Son of my right hand”	Gen. 49:18	Gen. 49:27; Deu. 33:12

While Deuteronomy 33 does not mention the Tribe of Simeon, Revelation 7:4-8 does mention Simeon, but leaves the Tribe of Dan out.

Revelation 7:4-8 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

- <sup>5</sup> of the tribe of **Judah** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Reuben** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Gad** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
<sup>6</sup> of the tribe of **Asher** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Naphtali** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Manasseh** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
<sup>7</sup> of the tribe of **Simeon** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Levi** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Issachar** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
<sup>8</sup> of the tribe of **Zebulun** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Joseph** twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of **Benjamin** twelve thousand *were* sealed.

Revelation 7 mentions Joseph and his eldest son, Manasseh. Joseph turned into 2 tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim.



## Identity of the camp.

The 11 tribes are camped in order around the throne with a leading tribe on each side.

- The 3 clans of the Levites are told where to camp when they are counted in Numbers 3:23, 29 & 35.
- All the tribe camp by their standard / flag (*dege*l), a mark of identity (Num. 1:52; 2:2, 3, 10, 10, 18, 25, 31, 34, etc.). According to *Numbers Rabba* 2:7, the banners had the same colors as the stone that was on the High Priest's breastplate. (Colors in this diagram are by mother.)

**North** (Guards the rear)

**DAN** (62,700), Lead Tribe 1<sup>st</sup> born of Jacob's concubines; Tribe known for military prowess

**Asher** (41,500) Tribe considered pacifistic)

**Naphtali** (53,400) Tribe considered pacifistic)

Total: 157,600

**Levite Clan: Merari**

**West**

**EPHRAIM** (40,500), Lead Tribe honored by Jacob, Gen 48:14

**Manasseh** (32,200)

**Benjamin** (35,400)

Total: 108,100

**Levite clan: Gershon** **ARK OF COVENANT**

**East** (Choicest)

**JUDAH** (74,600), replaced Reuben (Gen. 49:3-4)

**Issachar** (54,400)

**Zebulun** (57,400)

Total: 186,400

**Levites:**

**Moses**

**& Priests –**

**Aaron & sons**

**Levite clan: Kohath**

**South** (Secondary importance)

**REUBEN** (46,500), Lead Tribe is First born

**Simeon** (59,300)

**Gad** (45,650)

Total: 151,450

The tribes are largely camped according to the 4 mothers: **1. Leah:** Reuben (1), Simeon (2), Levi (3), Judah (4), Issachar (9), Zebulun (10) --- Levi is often not counted as 1 of the 12 due to their calling. Joseph and Levi are replaced by the 2 tribes that came out of Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh keeping the total at 12. **2. Bilhah** (Rachel's maid): Dan (5), Naphtali (6). **3. Zilpah** (Leah's maid): Gad (7), Asher (8). **4. Rachel:** Joseph (11), Benjamin (12) (Jacob adopts Joseph's sons (Ephraim & Manasseh) as his thus making 2 tribes out of Joseph, Gen 48).

Similar to Revelation 4 & 5, there are circles around God's throne. (Four Beasts, 4 Living Creatures, 24 thrones [24 divisions of Priesthood in 1 Chron. 24], many angels, 10,000 times 10,000). God sits on a throne between the cherubim on the mercy seat over the ark.

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## Identity of the marching (Num. 10:14-27).

**Order of marching** (Num. 10:14-27) **is similar to the order of camping:**

Judah (Num. 2:9); Reuben (2:16); Ephraim (2:24), Dan. (2:31). Scholars differ on translations for the Hebrew stones. Colors are *attempted* by stones. Here are 2 sources for the stones: <https://www.samifinejewelry.com/education/12-tribes-israel-gems/> OR <http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2005/12stones.html>

- Tribe of Judah (4<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Emerald**
- Tribe of Issachar (9<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Sapphire**
- Tribe of Zebulun (10<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Diamond**
- ❖ **Levitical** clan of Gershon (carries curtains; Levi's 1<sup>st</sup> son)
- ❖ **Levitical** clan of Merari (carries boards, bars, pillars, sockets; Levi's 3<sup>rd</sup> son)
- Tribe of Reuben (1<sup>st</sup> in birth order) **Sardius**
- Tribe of Simeon (2<sup>nd</sup> in birth order) **Chrysolite**
- Tribe of Gad (7<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Amethyst**
- ❖ **Levitical** clan of Kohathites (carries sancta: ark, table for showbread, lampstand, brazen altar, laver; Levi's 2<sup>nd</sup> son)
- Tribe of Ephraim (Son of Joseph who is 11<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Onyx**
- Tribe of Manasseh (Son of Joseph who is 11<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Onyx**
- Tribe of Benjamin (12<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Jasper**
- Tribe of Dan (5<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Topaz**
- Tribe of Asher (8<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Beryl**
- Tribe of Naphtali (6<sup>th</sup> in birth order) **Agate**

### Marching Order of Tribes (4<sup>th</sup> Tribe Leads, 6<sup>th</sup> Tribe last)

6, 8, 5, 12, 11, 11, Levite Clan, 7, 2, 1, Levite Clan, Levite Clan, 10, 9, 4  
 Levite Clans – Kohath (2) Merari (3) Gershon (1-eldest)  
 They carry – Sancta Hardware Curtains

## Identity of the sancta.

The sancta are distinguished from each other in accordance with their degree of sanctity by their **number, color, and the quality of their covers**. The covers themselves are graded according to their colors. Their established sequence, attested consistently throughout Scripture (e.g., Exod. 25:4), **reveals the order of their sanctity: *tekhelet*, “violet” (blue-purple); *argaman*, “purple” (red-purple); and *tola’at shani*, “crimson.” *Tahash*, “yellow-orange,”** is not one of the sacred colors but is used to dye skins (i.e., leather, not cloth) for the sole purpose of protecting the objects it covers from the elements. **Hence, with the exception of the Ark, the Tabernacle in camp and the sancta in transit are always covered with the yellow-orange skins** (vv. 8, 10, 11, 14; Exod. 26:14).

The **Ark**, the holiest of the sancta, was **covered first by the screening curtain, which itself was composed of all three sacred colors** (Exod. 26:31), **followed by a yellow-orange** and, last, a **violet cover**. The **table**, next in sequence and, hence, in

holiness, was covered first by a **violet cloth**, followed by a **crimson** and then a **yellow-orange cloth**. The **lampstand** and **golden altar** were covered by **violet** and **yellow-orange** cloths. The **sacrificial altar** and probably the **laver** ... —the least holy of the sancta since they stood outside in the court and not in the tent—were provided with **purple** and **yellow-orange cloths**.

Thus, the sacred colors of the sancta as well as their sequence indicate their holiness rank. The **Ark, covered by all three sacred colors, is the holiest**. The **table, next in holiness, claimed two sacred colors**. The **golden altar and the lampstand were provided with one sacred color, violet**, denoting that they were equal in holiness. The **sacrificial altar and probably the laver were also granted one sacred color, but it was purple not violet**. In this manner the sequence of the sancta is marked by the differentiation in the colors of their covers, both signifying a descending order in holiness. These distinctions are matched by the quality and workmanship of the sancta themselves: The inner sancta are made of gold, the outer altar of copper (cf. Exod. 25–27). The order of dismantling the sancta is the same as for reassembling them (Exod. 40:17–33). Milgrom, J. (1990). *Numbers* (p. 25). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

### Identity of the role.

The Levites duties:

- **Due / serve, avodah** – general physical labor (3:7, 8, 26, 31, 36; 4:4, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 39, 43, 47 & 49)
- **Guard, mishmeret** (3:7, 8, 25, 28, 31, 32, 36, 38; 4:27, 28, 31 & 32)
- **Carry, massa** (4:15, 19, 24, 27, 31, 32, 47 & 49“

**Chapter 3** is primarily about **guarding**. **Chapter 4** is primarily about **carrying**.

### Identity by age.

- **30–50 years Levites are counted:** Kohathites (4:23); Gershonites (4:23); Merarites (4:30).
- **At 25 years** they become **apprentices**.
- **At 50 years**, they become **overseers only guarding** and **not carrying** the heavy load.

Numbers 8:23-26 (NKJV) – <sup>23</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup> “This *is what pertains* to the Levites: From **twenty-five years old** and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; <sup>25</sup> and **at the age of fifty years** they must **cease performing this work**, and shall work no more. <sup>26</sup> They may minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of

meeting, to attend to needs [mishmeret = guarding], but they *themselves* shall do no work. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties [mishmeret = guarding].”

### Last Days’ Significance of Numbers 1-4 in Revelation 4-5

Revelation 5:4 (NKJV) – “I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.”

Numbers 4:4 (NKJV) – When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the Testimony with it.

- Kohathites were forewarned of **DEATH**.
  - Numbers 4:15 (NKJV) – And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of **Kohath** shall come to carry *them*; but they shall **not touch** any holy thing, **lest they die**.
  - Numbers 4:20 (NKJV) – But they shall **not** go in to **watch** while the holy things are being covered, **lest they die**.”
- Kohathites were warned that they would be **CUT OFF**.
  - Numbers 4:18 (NKJV) – Do not **cut off** the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites.
  - **Cut off** = removal from the covenant that had been “cut.” It involves death, denial of life in the hereafter, and removal of one’s children from the covenant.
- Uzzah touched the ark in (2 Samuel 6:6-8).

#### Jewish Publication Society (not-messianic) explains Numbers 4

“The sanctuary guards must cut down the criminal before God cuts down everyone else!

The right to kill with which the sacred cordon is empowered is not to be confused with the legal category of capital punishment whereby death is set as a just payment for a particular crime. The action of the guards has nothing to do with justice. The proper category for describing their function goes back to the root purpose of their guarding: *mishmeret* as a military category. The encroacher, though he be an Israelite, is the enemy who has it in his power to cause the death of all Israel. Since he is bent on encroachment, words will not dissuade him; in fact, to argue can only augment the danger. He must be struck down in his tracks.” – Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), Excursus 6, pg. 343.