

Day 150 - TUESDAY: May 9th

Numbers 3

Numbers 3:1-51 NKJV

Now these are the records of Aaron and Moses when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests. Nadab and Abihu had died before the LORD when they offered profane fire before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle. Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle. And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel. So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death." Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "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, because all the firstborn are Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I am the LORD." Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: "Number the children of Levi by their fathers' houses, by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above." So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. These were the sons of

Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, Izechar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites by their fathers' houses. From Gershon came the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; these were the families of the Gershonites. Those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above—of those who were numbered there were seven thousand five hundred. The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward. And the leader of the father's house of the Gershonites was Eliasaph the son of Lael. The duties of the children of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting included the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the screen for the door of the court, the hangings of the court which are around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, according to all the work relating to them. From Kohath came the family of the Amramites, the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites. According to the number of all the males, from a month old and above, there were eight thousand six hundred keeping charge of the sanctuary. The families of the children of Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle. And the leader of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. Their duty included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work relating to them. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the leaders of the Levites, with oversight of those who kept charge of the sanctuary. From Merari came the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these were the families of Merari. And those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, were six thousand two hundred. The leader of the fathers' house of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. These were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. And the appointed duty of the children of Merari included the boards of the tabernacle, its bars,

its pillars, its sockets, its utensils, all the work relating to them, and the pillars of the court all around, with their sockets, their pegs, and their cords. Moreover those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tabernacle of meeting, were Moses, Aaron, and his sons, keeping charge of the sanctuary, to meet the needs of the children of Israel; but the outsider who came near was to be put to death. All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, by their families, all the males from a month old and above, were twenty-two thousand. Then the LORD said to Moses: "Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names. And you shall take the Levites for Me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel." So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the children of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above, of those who were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "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. And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites, you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take them in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs. And you shall give the money, with which the excess number of them is redeemed, to Aaron and his sons." So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those who were redeemed by the Levites. From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. And Moses gave their redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for today: “Though God had chosen the family of Aaron to serve as the priesthood of Israel, He had also earlier mentioned that the firstborn of all the tribes of Israel were to be His—and therefore directly in His service, evidently to support the work of Aaron's family in caring for the tabernacle and instructing the people in God's ways. But the incident with the golden calf demonstrated the general unworthiness of the people as a whole. Yet at that time, the tribe of Levi, to which Moses and Aaron belonged, stood with Moses “on the Lord's side” (Exodus 32:26). And this stand for God was apparently part of the reason that God determined to choose the entire tribe of Levi as His direct servants. They were to, in this sense, replace the firstborn (verses 11–13).

As we have already read, the tribe of Levi was to encamp around the Tabernacle, take care of it and administer all the sacrifices and rites (Numbers 1:50–53). The Aaronic priesthood was a subset of the general Levitical priesthood—albeit the *leading* subset. Aaron and his sons were to be the priests, while the *rest* of the Levites were divided into family groups to serve in the physical areas, such as setting

up and taking down the tabernacle and as ushers, porters, teachers, scribes, musicians, officers, and judges, etc. (see 1 Chronicles 23).

It is interesting to note in Numbers 3 the different method of numbering used to count the Levites. Whereas the count for the rest of the Israelites was according to men 20 years and up, the Levites were counted even as male infants one month old—and still the Levites were the smallest of all the tribes at only 22,000 men and boys (verse 39). So small, in fact, that there weren't enough Levites to redeem merely the firstborn males a month and older of the other Israelite tribes (verses 40–43). Therefore, the Israelites of other tribes had to make up the difference in money (verse 49).”

[END]

Verse 4 – We covered this situation back in Leviticus 10.

Verse 7 – John Gill’s commentary states: “not within it, neither in the holy place, nor in the most holy place, where they might not enter, to do any service peculiar thereunto, but at the door of the tabernacle, and in the court of it, and in the rooms and chambers in it: and do the service of the tabernacle; not to offer sacrifices on the altar of the burnt offering, which stood in the court, and much less to burn

incense on the altar of incense, and to him the lamps, and set on the shewbread in the holy place; and still less to enter into the most holy place, and do there what was to be done on the day of atonement; but to do all that is before observed, and to bring the people's offerings to the priest, and to assist in slaying them; and to keep all profane and polluted persons out of it, the tabernacle, as we find in later times; they were porters at it, and some of them were singers in it, and had the care of various things belonging to it: see 1Ch_9:14." [END]

Verse 9 – Here is another example where in Hebrew a word is used twice in a row to demonstrate that the word is amplified. Here the entire tribe of Levi was “given given” unto Aaron. This means they were completely, wholly, entirely given.

Verse 12 – John Gill’s commentary states: “he made an exchange of those for the Levites; upon the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and saving the firstborn of Israel, he claimed the latter as his own in a special sense, and now he gave up his right to them, and instead thereof took the Levites; nor could the people of Israel reasonably object to

this, nor be uneasy at it, but rather be pleased with it; since hereby they were not only freed from the charge of redeeming their firstborn, but since they were the Lord's, he might have appointed them to be servants to the priests; and every Israelite would choose rather, no doubt, to part with a tribe for this service than to have their firstborn sons employed in it; and there were none so fit as the tribe of Levi, not only because it was a small tribe, but because the priests were of this tribe, to whom they were to minister; and therefore as there was a connection between them, the Levites would readily serve them:" [END]

Verse 43 – Verse 39 records that the Levites had 22,000 males over a month old. Here of all the remaining tribes of Israel, their firstborn males over a month old added up to 22,273 (273 more than the Levites).