

Numbers 03 - Duties of Levites; The Tabernacle; Moving the Tabernacle

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Numbers 3

(B) Organization of the priests (Num 3:1—4:49)

Num 3 refers back to the Lord's revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai concerning the family of Aaron and Moses (Cf. Ex 28-29).

(a) Census and arrangement (Num 3:1-51)

(i) Aaron's sons (3:1-4)

1 Now these are *the records of* the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.

1 Now these are *the records of* the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.

1 This is a record of the genealogies of Aaron and Moses current as of the day on which the LORD addressed Moses on Mount Sinai.

1 These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai.

2 These then are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

2 These then are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

2 The sons of Aaron were Nadab the first-born, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar

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 anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests.

3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests.

3 who were anointed priests and whom he consecrated as priests.

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.

- Aaron, the high priest, had four sons who were to assist him and succeed him in the sacred office

- Since only Aaron and his direct descendants could serve as priests (Ex 28:1; 29:9; 40:15) it was impossible for them to attend to all Israel's religious needs by themselves

- So the entire tribe of Levi was selected to undertake religious responsibilities short of actual priestly ministry

- Since Aaron was a Levite this meant that all the priests were Levites but not all the Levites were priests

4 But Nadab and Abihu died in the presence of the LORD when they offered strange fire before the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of their father Aaron.

4 But 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. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of their father Aaron.

4 Nadab and Abihu died in the LORD's presence when they offered unauthorized fire before him in the Sinai wilderness. Since they didn't have their own children, Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests under the authority of Aaron their father.

4 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.

- But two of these four, Nadab and Abihu, died as the result of an arrogant deviation from authorized priestly procedure (Cf. Lev 10:1-2)

— Good intentions are not enough (Cf. David's relocating the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam 6:1f))

— This left the other two sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, who served with their father

(ii) Responsibilities of the Levites (3:5-10)

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

5 The LORD told Moses,

5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

6 "Bring the tribe of Levi forward and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him.

6 "Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him.

6 "Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them to Aaron the priest so they may serve him.

6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

7 They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation in front of the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle.

7 They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle.

7 They are to take care of his needs and the needs of the whole congregation at the Tent of Meeting by performing duties at the tent.

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 They shall also take care of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

8 They shall also keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

8 They are to take charge of the utensils at the Tent of Meeting and meet the needs of the Israelis by performing duties on behalf of the tent.

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 So you shall assign the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are exclusively assigned to him from the sons of Israel.

9 You shall thus give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel.

9 Assign the descendants of Levi to Aaron and his sons from among the Israelis.

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 So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death."

10 So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death."

10 Appoint Aaron and his sons so that they are to take responsibility for their priesthood. Any unauthorized person who approaches it is to be put to death."

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.

- The specific task of the Levites was to do the work of the tabernacle (v7-8)

- They could not approach the sanctuary itself (v10)

- This reference to the sanctuary (the Hebrew says only "anyone else who draws near" and does not explicitly mention the sanctuary) clearly outlines the limitations of the Levites—they could not serve as priests by offering sacrifices or by performing other functions in the tabernacle

The Tabernacle: "The House of Blood"

- In addition to the famed Two Tablets of the Law, Moses also received a set of engineering specifications for a portable sanctuary
- The Scriptures devote more space to the description of the Tabernacle than any other single subject

The Tabernacle

- The Structure - Exodus
- The Furniture - Exodus
- The Priesthood - Exodus
- The Offerings - Leviticus

Holy of Holies



Mercy Seat

Ark of the Covenant

Holy Place



Golden Altar



Table of Shewbread



Menorah

"The Word was made flesh and *tabernacled* among us..."

John 1:14

Holy of Holies



The Propitiation for our sins

Our Sin Bearer

Holy Place



"Intercession for us"



"I AM the Bread of Life"



"I AM the Light of the World"

"I AM the Door"

Material Symbolism

- Brass: Fire, Judgment
- Gold: Deity
- Silver: Blood

(iii) Levites in lieu of first born (3:11-13)

11 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

11 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

11 Later, the LORD told Moses,

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12 "Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the firstborn of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.

12 "Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.

12 "I'm taking the descendants of Levi for myself from among the Israelis in place of every first-born who opens the womb. The descendants of Levi belong to me

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 For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I fatally struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from the human *firstborn* to animals. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD."

13 For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD."

13 because all the first-born belong to me. When I destroyed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated all the first-born in Israel for myself—from human beings to livestock. They belong to me, since I am the LORD."

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.

- The reason for the selection of the tribe of Levi is reviewed here

- Since the Lord had spared the firstborn of Israel's children and animals in the 10th plague, He now had claim on the firstborn as His own possession

— In lieu of the firstborn, however, the tribe of Levi was substituted (see comments on Ex 13:1-16)

— The implementation of this principle of substitution is described in Num 3:40-51

(iv) Names of the clans (3:14-20)

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

14 The LORD also told Moses in the Sinai wilderness,

14 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

15 "Count the sons of Levi by their fathers' households, by their families; every male from a month old and upward you shall count."

15 "Number the sons of Levi by their fathers' households, by their families; every male from a month old and upward you shall number."

15 "Number the descendants of Levi according to their ancestral houses and tribes, numbering every male from a month old and above."

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 So Moses counted them according to the word of the LORD, just as he had been commanded.

16 So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, just as he had been commanded.

16 So Moses numbered them according to the instruction of the LORD, as he had been commanded.

16 And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.

- The Levites were also numbered in preparation for their order of encampment and service
- All the males a month old or more must be tallied (v15)

17 These, then, are the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

17 These then are the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari.

17 These are Levi's descendants by name: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

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;

18 These are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei;

18 These are names of Gershon's descendants according to their families: Libni and Shimei.

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 Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel;

19 and the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram and Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel;

19 These are the names of Kohath's descendants according to their families: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

19 And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

20 and the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' households.

20 and the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' households.

20 Merari's descendants according to their families were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the descendants of Levi according to their ancestral house.

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.

- They were divided into three clans according to their affiliation with the three sons of Levi —Gershon, Kohath, and Merari (v17)

- The Gershonites were subdivided into the Libnites and Shimeites who altogether numbered 7,500 males (v21-22)

(v) Census and arrangement of the clans (3:21-40)

(a) Gershonites (3:21-26)

21 Of Gershon *was* the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimeites; these *were* the families of the Gershonites.

21 Of Gershon *was* the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimeites; these *were* the families of the Gershonites.

21 The families of Libni and Shimei were descendants of Gershon. As families of the descendants of Gershon,

21 Of Gershon *was* the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites.

22 Their numbered men, in the counting of every male from a month old and upward, their numbered men *were* 7,500.

22 Their numbered men, in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, *even* their numbered men *were* 7,500.

22 all the males a month old and above numbered 7,500.

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 were to camp behind the tabernacle westward,

23 The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward,

23 The families of the descendants of Gershon encamped behind the tent toward the west.

23 The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward.

24 and the leader of the fathers' households of the Gershonites: Eliasaph the son of Lael.

24 and the leader of the fathers' households of the Gershonites *was* Eliasaph the son of Lael.

24 The leader of the tribe and family of Gershon was Lael's son Eliasaph.

24 And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael.

25 Now the duties of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting *included* the tabernacle and the tent, its covering, and the curtain for the entrance of the tent of meeting,

25 Now the duties of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting *involved* the tabernacle and the tent, its covering, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting,

25 The duties of the descendants of Gershon at the Tent of Meeting pertained to the tent, the tent covering, the curtain to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting,

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 curtains of the courtyard, the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its ropes, according to all the service concerning them.

26 and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords, according to all the service concerning them.

26 the hangings at the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard that surrounded the tent, the altar, and all of the tent cords in use.

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.

- The Gershonites camped on the west and were responsible for the care of the tabernacle cloths, hides, and curtains including the curtain that surrounded the outer courtyard

(b) Kohathites (3:27-32)

27 Of Kohath was 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.

27 Of Kohath was the family of the Amramites and the family of the Izharites and the family of the Hebronites and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites.

27 The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel were descendants of Kohath. As families of the descendants of Kohath,

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

- Amram was the father of Aaron and Moses (26:58-59; Cf. Ex 6:16-20)

28 In the counting of every male from a month old and upward, *there were* 8,600, performing the duties of the sanctuary.

28 In the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, *there were* 8,600, performing the duties of the sanctuary.

28 all the males a month old and above numbered 8,600. They were tasked to the care of the sanctuary.

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 were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle,

29 The families of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the southward side of the tabernacle,

29 The descendants of Kohath encamped beside the tent toward the south.

29 The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward.

30 and the leader of the fathers' households of the Kohathite families: Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

30 and the leader of the fathers' households of the Kohathite families was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

30 The leader of the tribe and family of Kohath was Uzziel's son Elizaphan.

30 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

31 Now their duties *included* the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they minister, the curtain, and all the service concerning them;

31 Now their duties *involved* the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary with which they minister, and the screen, and all the service concerning them;

31 Their duties pertained to the ark, the table, the lamp stand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, and all the curtains in use.

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.

- To the Kohathites, who camped on the south, fell the responsibility for the tabernacle's holy objects (Num 3:31)

- Their leader was Eleazar, son of Aaron, the high priest (v32)

32 and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was* the head of the leaders of Levi, *and he had* the supervision of those who performed the duties of the sanctuary.

32 and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was* the chief of the leaders of Levi, *and had* the oversight of those who perform the duties of the sanctuary.

32 The chief of all the leaders of the descendants of Levi was Aaron the priest's son Eleazar. He was assigned to oversee those who were in charge of the services of the sanctuary.

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.

(c) Meriarites (3:33-37)

33 Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these *were* the families of Merari.

33 Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these *were* the families of Merari.

33 The families of Mahli and Mushi were descendants of Merari. As families of Merari,

33 Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merari.

34 Their numbered men in the counting of every male from a month old and upward: 6,200.

34 Their numbered men in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, *were* 6,200.

34 all the males a month old and above numbered 6,200.

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 leader of the fathers' households of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel the son of Abihail. They were to camp on the northward side of the tabernacle.

35 The leader of the fathers' households of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel the son of Abihail. They *were* to camp on the northward side of the tabernacle.

35 The leader of the tribe and family of Merari was Abihail's son Zuriel. The descendants of Merari encamped beside the tent toward the north.

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 Now the appointment of duties of the sons of Merari *included* the framework of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its bases, all its equipment, and all the service concerning

them,

36 Now the appointed duties of the sons of Merari *involved* the frames of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, all its equipment, and the service concerning them,

36 The duties of the caretakers from the descendants of Merari included the boards of the tent, its bars, crossbars, sockets, all its utensils for their services,

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 around the courtyard with their bases, their pegs, and their ropes.

37 and the pillars around the court with their sockets and their pegs and their cords.

37 the pillars around the courtyard, their sockets, pegs, and tent cords.

37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.

- The Merarites camped on the north side. They were put in charge of the wooden framework of the tabernacle and all the fastenings and other gear related to the framework.

(d) Moses, Aaron, and the priests (3:38-39)

38 Now those who were to camp in front of the tabernacle eastward, in front of the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, *were* Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but the layman coming near was to be put to death.

38 Now those who were to camp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, are Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but the layman coming near was to be put to death.

38 In front of the tent and east of the Tent of Meeting, Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons encamped facing the east. They were tasked to perform the duties of the sanctuary and care for the needs of the Israelis. Any unauthorized person who approached was to be executed.

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 the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the command of the LORD by their families, every male from a month old and upward, *were* twenty-two

thousand.

39 All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of the LORD by their families, every male from a month old and upward, were 22,000.

39 As the LORD had instructed, everyone counted by Moses and Aaron from the descendants of Levi, according to their tribe, all males from a month old and above numbered 22,000.

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.

- The total number of Levites was 22,000 whereas the total reached by adding up the figures in v22,28,34 is 22,300

- The 22,000 figure cannot be a rounding off since the 22,273 firstborn of Israel outnumbered the Levites by 273 (v46)

- The most satisfying solution is to suppose that the excess 300 were themselves the firstborn of the Levites who obviously could not serve to redeem the firstborn of Israel (Cf. comments on v40-51)

(vi) Census of first born, Levites, and redemption (3:40-51)

40 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Count every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names.

40 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Number every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names.

40 Later the LORD instructed Moses: "Number all the first-born males of Israel from a month old and above and list their names.

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 you shall take the Levites for Me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites in place of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel."

41 You shall take the Levites for Me, I am the LORD, instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel."

41 Separate the descendants of Levi for me—since I am the LORD—in place of all the first-born sons of Israel. Also separate the livestock of the descendants of Levi in place of all the firstborn of the livestock of Israel."

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.

- In compensation for His having spared the firstborn males of Israel at the time of the Exodus, the Lord declared that all the firstborn of men and animals should belong to Him (see comments on v11-13)

- This would not involve their deaths, but their lifetime service

- A further development of this principle was the arrangement whereby the tribe of Levi would be given in service to the Lord as a substitution for all the firstborn of the other tribes

42 So Moses counted all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded him;

42 So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded him;

42 So Moses numbered all the firstborn from the sons of Israel just as the LORD commanded him.

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 for their numbered men, were 22,273.

43 and all the firstborn males by the number of names from a month old and upward, for their numbered men were 22,273.

43 All the first-born males according to the list of their names from a month old and above numbered 22,273.

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.

- The number of Levites to offer this vicarious service was 22,000 (v39) whereas the firstborn males in all Israel amounted to 22,273 (v43)

- This meant that there were insufficient Levites. Therefore, the 273 firstborn Israelites without Levitic redemption had to be redeemed in another way

- The solution was to exact five shekels for each of the 273 (v47), a total of 1,365 silver two-ounce shekels (more than 170 lbs., worth several thousand dollars in present-day currency)

Firstborn Males

- Levites serving: 22,000 (3:39)
- Firstborn males: 22,273 (3:43)

- Redemption req'd: 273 @ 5 shekels each = 1,365
- 1,365 @ 2 oz = 170 lbs of silver

44 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

44 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

44 Then the LORD told Moses,

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45 "Take the Levites in place of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites in place of their cattle. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am the LORD.

45 "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am the LORD.

45 "Separate the descendants of Levi in place of all the firstborn sons of Israel and the livestock of the descendants of Levi in place of their livestock. The descendants of Levi belong to me, since I am the LORD.

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 as a redemption price for the 273 of the **firstborn** of the sons of Israel who are in excess of *the number of* the Levites,

46 For the ransom of the 273 of the firstborn of the sons of Israel who are in excess beyond the Levites,

46 You are to pay a ransom for the 273 first-born Israelis who exceed the census number of the descendants of Levi,

46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the **firstborn** of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

- "...firstborn" - most likely refers only to those who were born after the tribe of Levi was established as a sacerdotal unit

- The original statement concerning the firstborn (Ex 13:11-13) clearly indicates that the implementation of the command was not retroactive to the Exodus but would come into effect in the future

- Only the firstborn males who were born between the time of the Exodus and the setting apart of Levi about two years later (Num 1:1) would be counted

- So a total of 22,273 would be in line for that period of time since there could hardly be more than that number of families that would give birth to their first sons during that time

47 you shall take five shekels apiece, per head; you shall take *them* in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs),

47 you shall take five shekels apiece, per head; you shall take *them* in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs),

47 so collect five shekels for each individual, denominated in shekels of the sanctuary, that is, the shekel that weighs 20 gerahs.

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 you shall give the money, the redemption price of those who are in excess among them, to Aaron and to his sons."

48 and give the money, the ransom of those who are in excess among them, to Aaron and to his sons."

48 Then give the money meant for ransom of their excess to Aaron and his sons."

48 And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.

49 So Moses took the redemption money from those who were in excess of *the number of* those redeemed by the Levites;

49 So Moses took the ransom money from those who were in excess, beyond those ransomed by the Levites;

49 So Moses took the ransom money to account for the difference in the total number of those redeemed by the descendants of Levi.

49 And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites:

50 from the firstborn of the sons of Israel he took the money in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary, 1,365.

50 from the firstborn of the sons of Israel he took the money in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary, 1,365.

50 From the firstborn of the Israelis, Moses took money amounting to 1,365 shekels according to the shekel of the sanctuary.

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 Then Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and to his sons, at the command of the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

51 Then Moses gave the ransom money to Aaron and to his sons, at the command of the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

51 Moses gave the ransom money to Aaron and his sons according to the LORD's instructions, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

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.