

MARCH 4

Numbers 2-3

Numbers 2

So, before you "Google" a chart or a map or revert to some other source, get a piece of paper and colored markers or pencils, or steal your kids crayons (or use your own); and read through this section and map it out yourself. If you do, you'll gain confidence in your ability to figure stuff out. If you Google it, well, you already know how to use a search engine. Try it yourself. Make sure if you draw the tabernacle first, both the entrance to the outer court and the entrance to the tabernacle proper faced east. When you place the tribes in order around the tabernacle, leave room between the tribes and the tabernacle for the families of the Levites. The positions of the families of the Levites will be given in chapter 3.

The only thing I would bring to your attention is the major tribe of Israel that was placed opposite the entrance of the tabernacle. This was a great honor and is a foreshadowing of what is to come for that tribe.

Seeing how God chooses, it reminds me that regardless of who we are, the very fact that we have somehow come to know Christ is an amazing honor. We feel tired and beaten up and depressed, but it is only because of the toxic atmosphere of this place and this body of death we lug around with us. Ephesians 1-3 gives you a lift, and so does Romans 5:1-6. It is an incredible honor and miracle that we know the Lord and are following.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:1-6)

Vs. 1-9 This is the camp of Judah. Notice that each camp had its own flag. You noted that Judah was the largest tribe and is given a place of honor here. This reflects back to Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49. Notice too that this camp began the march first. This naming went clockwise, but the camp unraveled counter-clockwise.

Vs. 10-16 This is the camp of Reuben. They were second to join the march.

V. 17 Sandwiched in the middle, and protected by all, were the Levites and the tabernacle.

Vs. 18-24 This is the camp of Ephraim. Notice that this camp represents all of the children of Rachel.

Vs. 25-31 This was the camp of Dan, and they were the rear guard.

Vs. 32-34 God is preparing the people to march to the land.

So, how do you figure out how many people were in the camp of Israel? If there were 603,550 men from 20 years old and up (who could fight) from all the tribes but Levi, and if there were 22,000 total men from Levi, we have about 625,550 men. There were probably more women, but for simplicity, let's just double the men. Now we're up to 1,251,100. Now, there were at least this many kids because the people were very "fruitful," but if we only added another 625,550, we're up to almost 2 million people. There were probably over 3 million and estimates say there were 6-10 million. Later when Moses blesses the Lord as the camp of Israel comes to rest in Numbers 10:36, he will say, *Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.* My wife has informed me that ten thousand thousands equals 10 million.

Numbers like this are important to think about. When it says Jesus fed 5000, it says in Matthew 14:21, *And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.* The likelihood is that Jesus actually fed over 15,000 people.

What God was doing for Israel every day in the wilderness was a "class A" miracle.

Numbers 3

Now comes the tribe of Levi. They will become the servants of Israel, but even more, they will protect Israel and act as mediators between a holy God and the people. If you've made a diagram of the camp of Israel, we'll now find out where they were to camp, and what their responsibilities were in taking down, transporting and rebuilding the tabernacle.

Vs. 1-4 Aaron is mentioned first, because only his descendants could be priests in Israel.

Vs. 5-10 This will be the function of the Levites. It is interesting that they are "given" to Aaron. Their job is to guard (also care for) different parts of the tabernacle. Aaron would be their boss and he would guard the priesthood.

Vs. 11-13 This is very interesting. All of the firstborn of Israel were to be dedicated to the Lord. In their place, God took the Levites.

Vs. 14-20 After Aaron, there were three main clans in the tribe of Levi. Notice that they were listed from one month old.

Vs. 21-26 These are the Gershonites. Notice where they camped, what they guarded and what they were responsible for when they had to take down and rebuild the tabernacle.

Vs. 27-32 These are the Kohathites. Again, notice all the particulars. Notice too that Eleazar, Aaron's son, is mentioned here because of the taking down of the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies and all of the furniture in those places. Later we'll find out what Aaron and his sons had to do to the furniture, so that the Kohathites didn't get blasted.

Vs. 33-37 The Merarites were last and took down all the frames.

Vs. 38-39 Aaron and Moses were camped between the entrance to the tabernacle and the camp of Judah.

Now, if you add up all the totals for the Levites, it is more than 22,000. It is suggested that the extra 300 were themselves firstborn in the tribe of Levi and so were not included in what follows.

Vs. 40-51 This is the redemption of the firstborn from the people of Israel. Again, in the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#), p. 220, it is suggested that the firstborn being counted were since the Exodus, since the firstborn previous to the Exodus were covered by the blood of a lamb.

To me, it's interesting to see how often God built redemption and substitution into the lives of the people of Israel. They would have constantly been reminded that sin required a substitute and payment for redemption. You notice too, that God mentions that everything belonged to Him. That means that He Himself provided the redemption price and the substitute. That's exactly what He did with Jesus too.

Mark 11:27-12:17

It's amazing that the leaders were so set on killing Jesus. When you see irrationality working at this level, you know it is of a deep sick spiritual origin. There are situations I have been in, where at one point or another it became clear that "rationality" wasn't the issue. Things had gone deeply spiritual and personal. In those cases, "one more" illustration or attempt to bring sense to things didn't help unless the spiritual root was addressed.

Mark 11:27-33

This confrontation comes as a result of Jesus cleansing the temple. It looks very much like what happened in John 2, when Jesus cleansed it three years earlier. We read about this in Matthew so there isn't too much to add here.

In Jesus trying to get the scribes to admit that John's authority was from heaven, had they done that, it would have been admitting that Jesus was from heaven. John bore witness to Jesus. Their silence was not just an admission of their hardness of heart, but it gave the people the freedom to keep regarding Him as the possible Messiah. A similar thing happened in John 7.

Mark 12:1-17

Vs. 1-12 We read this parable in Matthew. A couple of thoughts to add to this reading come from the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT](#), pp. 160-161.

First, the image of a vineyard might come from Isaiah 5:1-2. The mention of the stone the builders rejected comes from Psalm 118:22-23.

Also, it is mentioned that with the son coming to the vineyard, it might have been supposed by the tenants that the owner was dead. If they killed the heir, it could be theirs. Apparently back then, possession was nine tenths of the law, especially if the land holder lived in a foreign, distant country. That makes more sense to me. When applied to man's response to God's messengers and Son, it is still irrational. But then, we are man.

V. 12 Notice again that the scribes understood that the parable was told against them, but rather than repentance, there was increased hate. If they hadn't feared the people, they would have taken Jesus then.

Vs. 13-17 This is the trap regarding the giving of taxes. Again, the trap was in trying to get Jesus to say, "yes" or "no," to paying taxes. If Jesus had said, "yes," the people would have been upset. If Jesus had said, "no," the Romans would have gotten mad. In Jesus answering this way, He supported paying taxes, humbled His enemies and spoke wisdom to the crowd. They would see that the real issue was honoring the one from whom we received our image.

Psalm 47

This was written by the sons of Korah; and with the tone of this psalm, it might also have been composed after Jerusalem's adventures with the Assyrians. To sense fully what is being celebrated, read 2 Kings 18-19.

Vs. 1-4 If you look back to what the sons of Korah wrote in Psalm 44:9-26 on March 1, you'll see here that the answer arrived. God acted and the news went out to all of the world. Israel had the promises and the right theology, but now they saw that in fact, God reigns over all nations and selected Israel as His messenger.

Vs. 5-7 The appropriate thing to do is always to praise God. It is one of those things God always deserves whether we feel like it or not.

Vs. 8-9 Notice that this declares the promise to Abraham to be a blessing to all nations. This is the promise of redemption to all nations through Israel and their God. I've never noticed v. 9 before. How cool.

The Assyrians were making a push to become the first world empire and were threatening all the surrounding nations. Because of the amazing deliverance at Jerusalem and the destruction of the Assyrian army, the world was now looking to the God of Israel.

Proverbs 10:24-25

Amen!