

**May 20**

**Scriptures:** Read Numbers 3

**Key Verse:** “I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every first born... the Levites shall be Mine.” (Numbers 3:12)

## **Overview**

In this chapter, we see the separation of a single tribe, the Levites, for divine service and their organization by God, expressing the importance of worship. Their census, however, was different from that of the other tribes. They were not to be counted for military duty, but all the males one month old and upward were counted (3:15), for they were being set apart for the sacred service of the Lord.

We learn that God appointed Aaron to be chief over the Levites and they were to aid the priests who had a great job to do. To those who are called by God for a large task, He will give the help they need. The Levites were responsible firstly to God, then to Aaron and the priests; and the Levities were responsible to serve all the congregation of Israel. They were entrusted with the people’s spiritual well-being and enabled to have access to God.

Aaron’s two younger sons were wise (unlike their two older brothers, Nadab and Abihu; Lev.10) for they remained under the close watch of their father (3:4), making sure that all was done just as the Lord had prescribe. They took heed to the warnings of God and proved themselves worthy. The elder of the two, Eleazar, was chief over the leaders of the Levites (3:32), and later replaced his father Aaron as high priest. Ithamar was appointed by God to be in charge of the Tabernacle (4:28, 33).

The descendants of Levi were taken by God in place of the first-born Israelites from whom God had made provision to save in Egypt with the Passover (Ex. 12:12-13; 13:1). Because of the sin of the people, God limited His choice to the tribe of Levi, who had shown their loyalty to Him by going on His side with Moses in the sinful incident of the golden calf (Ex.32:26). It was also out of the graciousness of God that He took the Levites, rather than having the families of every tribe part with their beloved first-born son. In this way, all the families could remain as a unit working together. Yet for us, God, in His great love, did not spare His own beloved first-born Son but gave Him for us (Rom.8:32).

When it was discovered that there were 273 more first-born males among the tribes than there were Levites to replace them, those extra men were to be redeemed from service by the payment of a certain measure of weight in silver. The church of Jesus Christ is called the Church of the First-Born (Col. 1:15-18), and we who are members of His church have not been redeemed with silver, as those of the Old Covenant were, but by the precious blood of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ who has made us kings and priests to God (1 Pet.1:18-19; Rev.1:5-6).

The descendants of Levi’s three sons were assigned specific duties. The Gershonites were responsible for the tent and coverings; the Kohthites (the family of Moses and Aaron) for the inner, most sacred furniture; the Merarites for the external parts of the Tabernacle. It must have been marvelous to see these well-trained teams put up and take down this large structure. Their

tree-fold duties were basically to serve, help, and guard. They encamped on the three sides of the Tabernacle with Moses and the priestly family of Aaron in the honored place at the east side. Upon the treat of death, no “outsider”, that is anyone lacking the authorization, was to come near when the priests and Levites were attending to their sacred duties (3:10); for services to the Lord may be performed only by those whom the Lord appoints.

## **Prayer**

Lord, while Israel fought against flesh-and-blood enemies, we don't. Your Word says our fight is against principalities and powers and the rules of the darkness of this world. We need Your supernatural intervention for victory in our lives, even as You intervened again and again for Israel. Thank You!