The Levitical Census
3:1 to 4:49

One possible reason to count **the Levites** was so that **they** could easily be organized for **their** work. There was much work to be done and plenty of men to do it. But it all had to be coordinated. This is what **4:1-3** seems to be stressing. There, **Moshe** commanded to count **the Levites**, then, in **4:4-16** instruction was given for the work they had to do. Thus, according to the Bible, the counting and the delegation of responsibilities seem to go hand in hand. **Jewish historical records have provided some interesting information about how the Levites were organized. The sages say that Moses divided the Levites and the priests into eight groups of families called "watches," each to perform their Temple service for a week. The cycle of eight watches would repeat every eight weeks. Later the prophet Samuel and King David changed the arrangement, dividing the responsibility for the service into twenty-four watches** (see the commentary on **the Life of David, to see link click Ev – The Divisions of Priests**).

The second possible reason for the **Levitical** census was so that there could be an accurate **redemption of the firstborn** (see **As – The Census and the Redemption of the Firstborn**). **ADONAI** claimed every **firstborn** for **His** own. In doing so, **the firstborn males** had to be counted. Then **YHVH** instructed that instead of families giving up all of their **firstborn sons** for the service of **the LORD**, **He** would accept a **Levite** in **their** place. It was to be one for one. If there was an excess of **firstborn males** over the number of eligible **Levites**, the remainder was to be ransomed by **money**. In that process, **Ha'Shem** declared: **The Levites shall be mine (3:45).** Hence, **the Levites** were **the ones** selected to do the sacrifices. **They** were to live off the service they performed for **God**, receiving no

personal property as **their** inheritance. If **they** belonged to **Him**, **He** promised to take care of **them**.[37]