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The First Numbering of the Levites 3: 14-20

The first numbering of the Levites DIG: What were the three primary families of the Levites? How were they counted for the census? Why did the Levites need to be counted? How were they different from the other tribes? Why was it important to note Isra'el's obedience?

REFLECT: What is different about your family tree? When have you acted out of anger and regretted it later? What consequences did you face as a result of your rash actions? What was distinct about the ministry of the Levites? What is distinctive about your ministry?

They had to know how many Levites there were to redeem the firstborn of Isra'el.



The Levites were to be counted according to **their** three primary families: **Gershon**, **Kohath**, and **Merari**. In the census of the army, only men twenty years old and older were counted. However, in the census for **the Levites**, every **male over a month old** was counted, no doubt necessary to procure the number of **Levites** necessary to match the number of **first born** among the **Israelite** families. In actual duty, **the Levites** did not begin to serve in **the Tabernacle/Temple** until **they** turned **thirty years old** and **their** term of service

ended when **they** were **fifty**. Then why were **the Levites** younger than **thirty** and older than **fifty counted** in **the census** of **the Levites**? They were all **counted** because **they** were all needed in **redeeming the firstborn of Isra'el** (**to see link click As – The Census and the Redemption of the Firstborn**).[47]

The numbering of **the Levites** corresponds to that of the other **tribes** (see **Am – The Camp of the Twelve Tribes of Isra'el**). **The Levites** were not being mustered for war but for special service in **the Tabernacle/Temple**. **They** were distinct from the rest of **the tribes** in several aspects: (1) **they** had **their** service in and about the holy things and the holy place of **ADONAI**; (2) **they** were not **numbered** among **the tribes** but were to be distributed among **them**; (3) **they** were **numbered** differently than the other **tribes**; (4) they were not the fighting men of **Isra'el** but **her** ministers, subject to the leadership of **the priests**; (5) **they** had certain restrictions of behavior and manner that marked **their** office as distinct from the rest of **the Israelites**.

ADONAI said to Moshe in the Sinai Desert, "Take a census of the tribe of Levi by clans and families. Count every male a month old or over." The command to **count the Levites** came by divine decree and **Moshe counted them in the manner ADONAI had said, as he had been ordered. The names of the sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The names of the sons of Gershon were Libni and Shim'i; they fathered their respective clans; likewise the sons of Kohath – 'Amram, Itzhar, Hebron and 'Uzzi'el – and the sons of Merari – Machli and Mushi.** The passage concludes with the statement that **these fathered the clans of the Levites (3:14-20). The total number of Levites whom Moshe and Aaron counted by their clans, including all the males a month old and over, was 22,000 (3:39).**

The obedience of **Moses** to the commands of **Ha'Shem** in these early chapters of **Numbers** is explicit and total. The records of **Moshe's** obedience will serve to display the paradox of **his** terrible lapse of behavior later in the book (see **Db – The Sin of Moses and Aaron**). We also have here one of the many instances in **Numbers** that speak of the revelation of **the Word of God** to **His** servant **Moshe**. Those who minimize the role of **Moses** do so in the face of abundant, direct textual evidence to the contrary.[48]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for being so wonderful and always loving. **Your** deep and magnificent **love** inspires me to l**ove** and obey **You** joyfully. Loving obedience is **a choice**. **Moses** encouraged **the people** to choose life by loving and*

obeying ***God. What I am commanding you today is to love ADONAI your God, to walk in His ways (Deuteronomy 30:16a). Joshua*** *also told* ***the people*** *that it was important for* ***them*** *to* ***choose*** *to* ***love*** *and follow* ***God****.* ***If it seems bad to you to worship ADONAI, then choose for yourselves today whom you will serve – whether the gods that your fathers worshiped that were beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will worship ADONAI (Joshua 24:15)!***

Even when it may seem that evil in the world is whirling out of control, ***You*** *are still Almighty Sovereign of the World and* ***You*** *are in control. Nothing slips by you.* ***All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to ADONAI. All the families of the nations will bow down before You. For the kingdom belongs to ADONAI, and He rules over the nations (Psalms 22:28-28).*** *I praise and worship* ***You*** *my Holy, Almighty, All-Wise, All–Powerful, Forgiving* ***Savior*** *and Loving* ***Father****! In* ***Your*** *holy name and power of* ***Yeshua's*** *resurrection. Amen*