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BIBLE STUDY

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“PITCH BY HIS OWN STANDARD”

Numbers 2:1-34

Numbers 2:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,"

Numbers 2:2 "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch."

In chapter 1, Moses and Aaron had numbered the young men of the tribe. They took the results into the tabernacle, and God spoke to them there. In this chapter, we will see the order of God. Host and company are the same Hebrew word which could be rendered “army.” The people were organized as an army and marching to the Promised Land. “Pitch” means to erect and fix firmly in place i.e., pitch a tent. Notice that God is in the center of the encampment. Jesus must be the hub of the wheel, that all the spokes {denominations of Christians} attach to. Just as this encampment has order when it moves, the church must move in unison to be effective. Each must stay in his appointed place, for the wheel to turn correctly. If one pulls loose from the hub, you have a crooked wheel. Jesus must be the focal point of it all, or it will not succeed.

Acts 17:28 “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

Colossians 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

John 17:18-23

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

"Standard" means flag or banner and refers to the group encamped around each standard. It would be more appropriately translated “company.” "Ensign" means flag, beacon, monument, omen, prodigy, evidence, mark, or miracle. The ensign by which each tribe camped was another piece of military equipment pictured in ancient inscriptions. Far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch. There seems to have been a flag for each family that they would

raise and cause their people to gather around. They were to be careful not to pitch too close to the tabernacle. The twelve tribes were to camp around the tent of meeting at a distance from it. This gave the Levites room to camp on the inside perimeter while also illustrating the importance of the Levites' ministry of interceding before God on behalf of the nation. The fact that the Levite men were excused from military service demonstrates how essential their ministerial duties were to God. Joshua 3:4 stipulates that a distance of two thousand cubits (one thousand yards) should separate the ark from the secular tribes. From 1:52, 53; 2:17, and chapter 3 we learn that the Levites were to encamp between the secular tribes and the tent of meeting.

Hebrews 5:1-4

5 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

Numbers 2:3 "And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab [shall be] captain of the children of Judah."

Numbers 2:4 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred."

Numbers 2:5 "And those that do pitch next unto him [shall be] the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar [shall be] captain of the children of Issachar."

Numbers 2:6 "And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred."

Jesus was to come through the tribe of Judah. The east is the direction of the rising sun. The eastern gate in the wall at Jerusalem is the gate that God entered and left by. It would be appropriate for the tribe of Judah to camp in the east.

II Peter 1:19 "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

The day Star is Jesus. The tribe of Judah, of the men that were counted, was 74,600. The tribe of Issachar, led by Nethaneel, is on the eastern side, as well. They camp beside the tribe of Judah. The young men of the tribe of Issachar that were numbered were 54,400.

Numbers 2:7 "[Then] the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon [shall be] captain of the children of Zebulun."

Numbers 2:8 "And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred."

Numbers 2:9 "All that were numbered in the camp of Judah [were] an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth."

Of the tribe of Zebulun, with Eliab as the prince, were numbered 57,400. The tribe of Zebulun was to camp next to the tribe of Issachar. These three tribes were camped on the east side of the tabernacle. Their total number of men, of the age to go to war, were 186,400. It appears, Judah was the head of these three tribes. This will be the tribe to lead the way when they do set forth.

Each tribe had to stay in its place assigned, or there would have been total confusion. The placement of the tribes around the camp, three tribes to a side, generally followed the various groupings of Jacob's sons by his four wives: Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, and their maidservants, Zilpah and Bilhah, respectively. The three tribes on the east side were Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. They were all sons of Jacob by Leah. The east was the direction in which the tabernacle faced. This meant that the tribe of Judah led the way when the nation traveled. It was the appropriate position for the tribe from which kings would come. Judah's leader, Nahshon son of Amminadab, is named in the genealogy of David and the genealogy of Christ.

Numbers 2:10 "On the south side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben [shall be] Elizur the son of Shedeur."

Numbers 2:11 "And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred."

Numbers 2:12 "And those which pitch by him [shall be] the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon [shall be] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai."

Numbers 2:13 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred."

Reuben's, tribe led by Elizur, set up camp on the south side of the tabernacle. The number of their young men, of the age to go to war, was 46,500. Reuben and Simeon were brothers. Their mother was Leah. It would be a natural thing for their tribes to be camped together. The tribe of Simeon's leader was Shelumiel. The young men of Simeon's tribe were numbered 59,300.

Numbers 2:14 "Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad [shall be] Eliasaph the son of Reuel."

Numbers 2:15 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty."

Numbers 2:16 "All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank."

Gad was from the handmaid Zilpah, and was a half-brother of Simeon and Reuben. The number of his young men numbered was 45,650. They, too, were camped on the south next to Simeon's tribe. Reuben's tribe led all three tribes. When they marched, they were the second, after Judah's three tribes. The total number of Gad's, Simeon's, and Reuben's tribes were 151,450.

Numbers 2:17 "Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards."

The church {tabernacle} would be in the middle of the camp. The tabernacle, where God dwelt with them, was surrounded by the Levitical tribe. It was the focal point of their lives. Notice, also, that six tribes would march ahead of the tabernacle, and six behind it, when they were moving from place to place. The tabernacle with the Ark was to be protected at all times.

Numbers 2:18 "On the west side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim [shall be] Elishama the son of Ammihud."

Numbers 2:19 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty thousand and five hundred."

Ephraim's tribe was the leader of the three tribes on the west side of the tabernacle. They were led by Elishama. They were numbered 40,500. It is very interesting, to me, that the tribe of Ephraim is not mentioned in the tribes that were sealed in Revelation chapter 7. They are the great multitude in verse 9 of chapter 7 of Revelation. They are spiritually the same as Abraham's seed.

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

Numbers 2:20 "And by him [shall be] the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh [shall be] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur."

Numbers 2:21 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred."

We must remember in this, that Ephraim and Manasseh were brothers, who were sons of Joseph. They made up two tribes, instead of one. They both camped on the west side of the tabernacle. The young men of Manasseh were counted 32,200. Their leader was Gamaliel.

Numbers 2:22 "Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin [shall be] Abidan the son of Gideoni."

Numbers 2:23 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred."

Numbers 2:24 "All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim [were] an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank."

The west side of the camp included the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Ephraim and Manasseh (the sons of Joseph) and Benjamin represented the two sons of Rachel. Benjamin was the younger brother of Joseph. His tribe camped in the west with Ephraim and Manasseh. They were led by Abidan and were numbered 35,400. The tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were all camped on the west side of the tabernacle. They represented the sons of Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin. All three tribes together were numbered 108,100. They were the fewest numbered of any of the divisions. The tabernacle was in the middle of the march, after Judah's three tribes and Reuben's three tribes. Just after the tabernacle and the Levites, the tribes of Ephraim came. They were third in the sense of being after the East and the South. Benjamin was not only the baby of the family, but his tribe was also the smallest later, in fact, it would be almost completely absorbed into the tribe of Judah. After the division of the kingdom of Israel into two parts hundreds of years into the nation's history, the southern kingdom was known as Judah; it is often spoken of in the biblical accounts as if only one tribe lived there.

Numbers 2:25 "The standard of the camp of Dan [shall be] on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan [shall be] Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai."

Numbers 2:26 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred."

Numbers 2:27 "And those that encamp by him [shall be] the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher [shall be] Pagiel the son of Ocran."

Numbers 2:28 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred."

Numbers 2:29 "Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali [shall be] Ahira the son of Enan."

Numbers 2:30 "And his host, and those that were numbered of them, [were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred."

Numbers 2:31 "All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards."

Dan's tribe was led by Ahiezer. They were numbered 62,700 and encamped on the north side. It is interesting that he would be so prominently mentioned, here, and then be totally dropped from the list of the twelve tribes in Revelation. His tribe got into idolatry, even more than the others. The tribe of Asher was encamped by Dan in the north. Their leader was Pagiel. Their young men were numbered 41,500. The tribe of Naphtali was led by Ahira. The young men numbered were 53,400. Naphtali, along with Asher and Dan, were all sons of the handmaidens. The three tribes that Dan's tribe led were numbered 157,600 all together. The last group listed was to camp on the north side and move out last. They were the last in the march. These three tribes were Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Dan and Naphtali were the sons of Bilhah, while Asher was the son of Zilpah. Both were sons of the handmaidens.

Numbers 2:32 "These [are] those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts [were] six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty."

Numbers 2:33 "But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses."

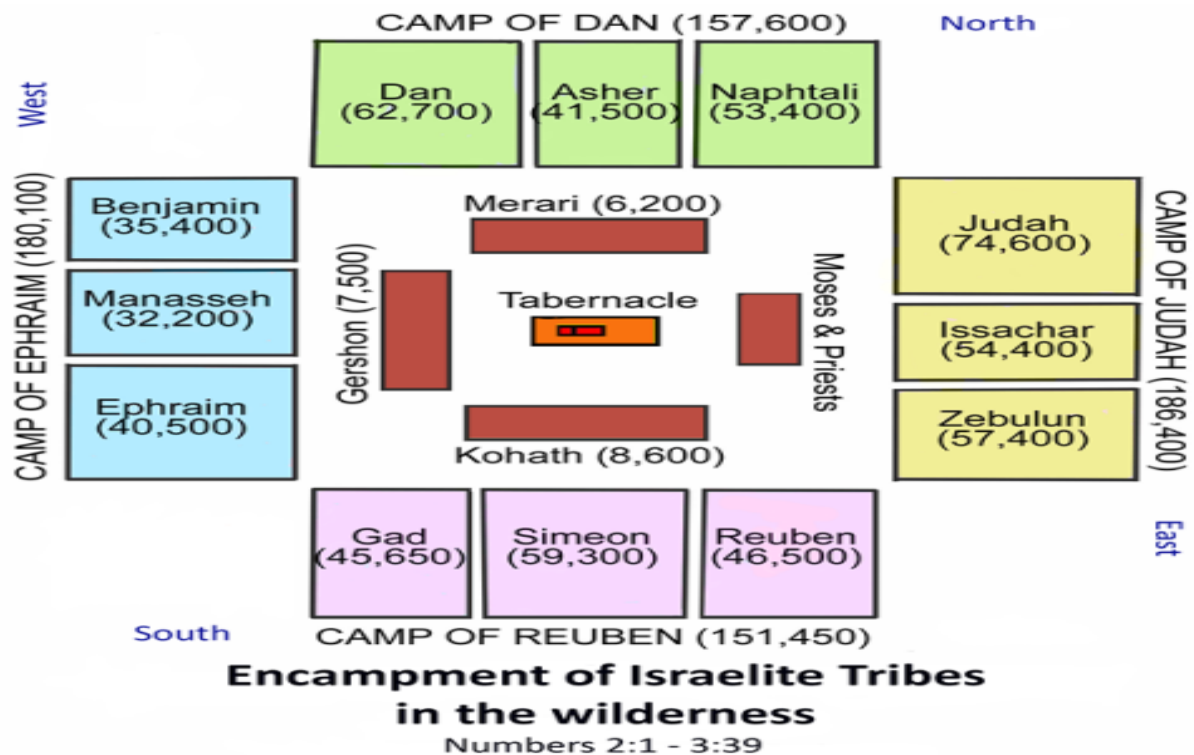
Numbers 2:34 "And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers."

The total number given here of all the tribes is 603,550. Including women and children the number would swell to close to 3,000,000. To have a place large enough for this many people to camp, you would need over 3 miles square. The Levites did not go to war, and they would not have been numbered in this group, for that reason. The Israelites did everything the Lord commanded. Most of the early Jewish writers thought the area they encamped in, to be twelve miles square. The three miles square used were estimates of Roman soldiers. The difference in the space could have been because they were not in army regiments, but individual tents. Two things to remember in all of this, is that God was at the center of their lives. We must, also, remember that they encamped in such a way to protect the tabernacle and the presence of God within. Many believe the tribes symbolize the Christians today, varied in details of belief enough to have different denominations, but headed for a common goal. The wilderness wanderings are much like the lives of the Christians on earth. They were not permitted to enter the promised land, until they had Egypt {world} out of them. With each new trial they faced, they discovered the only answers lay in God's hands.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did Moses and Aaron, probably, take the results of the census?
2. Every man shall pitch by his own _____.
3. What does "standard" mean in verse 2?
4. What does "ensign" mean
5. The east side was toward the _____ of the _____.
6. Which tribe was first on the east side?
7. Jesus came through the tribe of _____.
8. Which gate did the Lord enter and leave Jerusalem by?
9. Who is the day Star?

10. Who pitched next to Judah?
11. Where did the tribe of Zebulun camp?
12. How many young men of war were camped on the east side?
13. Who camped on the south side?
14. Who was the mother of Reuben and Simeon?
15. Who was Gad's mother?
16. How many young men were counted all together in Reuben's three tribes?
17. Where will the Levites camp?
18. Where would the Levites and the tabernacle be in the march?
19. Whose tribe was the leader of the three tribes on the west?
20. Ephraim and Manasseh were sons of _____.
21. What did Benjamin and Joseph have in common?
22. The standard of the camp of Dan was on the _____ side.
23. What was the total number of young men camped on the north?
24. Why were the Levites not numbered?
25. How large would the area have to be, to accommodate this large a group of people?



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