

Preparing the People to Go to the Promised Land

Numbers 1-6

I. Introduction

- A. The goal of the Exodus, and redemption, is that God’s people will have his blessing presence among them.

Exodus 40:34-35 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. **And Moses was not able to enter the tent** of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Leviticus 1:1 the Lord The Lord called Moses and spoke to him **from the tent of meeting...**

Numbers 1:1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, **in the tent of meeting...**

- B. The Lord made a way via sacrifices and the priesthood to graciously forgive and cleanse the people (Leviticus). Now they are getting ready to have God lead them to the promised land (Numbers).

II. Census of men ready for war (Num. 1)

- A. Census of all males who are “able to go to war” (cp. Gen. 15:13-16)
 B. In the census, another element of God’s promises to Abraham are being shown (Num. 1:44-46 cp. Gen. 22:17)

III. Centrality of God’s presence (Num. 2)

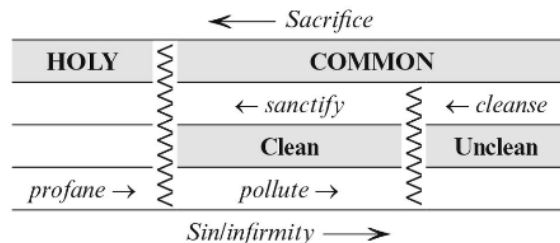
- A. What is at the center of the camp? (Is this true of your life? Of our church?).
 B. Which tribe is mentioned first and where are they located? (cp. Gen 49:10, Rev. 5:5).

IV. Census and jobs of the priests who will “keep” the tabernacle (Num. 3-4)

- A. The Levites represent the idea that all Israel belongs to the Lord (Num. 3:11-13)
 B. The Levites must care for and transport the tabernacle (Num. 4:1-3) (we are a kingdom of priests).

V. Consecrating the camp (Num. 5-6)

- A. They must move those who are unclean outside the camp (5:1-4)



¹ Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Hill of the Lord*, 154.

Putting them outside the camp is for²

1. **Physical** reasons – to promote physical health and protect people from dangerous disease.
 2. **Theological** reasons – to show that God is the holy God of life (sin and death will not come near him).
 3. **Christological** reasons – it points to the gospel work of Jesus (Rev. 21:3, 27; Heb. 13:12).
- B. There must be right relating to others (Num. 5:5-10)
- C. There must be fidelity and purity in marriage (5:11-31)
- D. People can voluntarily consecrate themselves to the Lord for special seasons of service, even if they are not Levites (6:1-21)

VI. The Blessing of God's Presence (Num. 6:22-27)

- A. All blessing comes from God ("the Lord...")
- B. The blessings
1. Keep you – guard, protect.
 2. Be gracious to you – give what is needed to walk with God.
 3. Give you peace – Shalom – total well-being, fully secured.
- C. All this comes from God's presence.

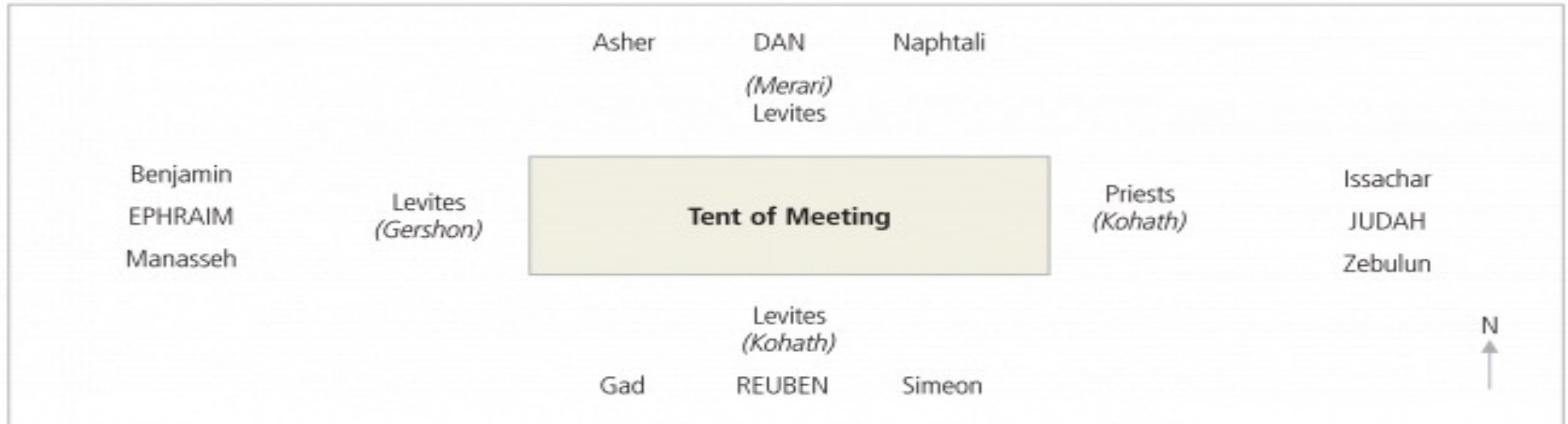
VII. Applications

- A. Gospel
1. The Aaronic blessing is secure for us because of what Christ has done.
 2. He went outside the camp to take our sin and uncleanness.
- B. "As the Lord commanded Moses" is repeated a lot.
1. Being set apart to God is a great privilege and brings a great responsibility to live by God's words.
 2. Do we live by God's words? Do we obey even if it contradicts what we think or want?

² These three categories are from Ligon Duncan's T4G talk "The Gospel by Numbers" <https://youtu.be/eni9KAKNwzI>



Israel in Camp



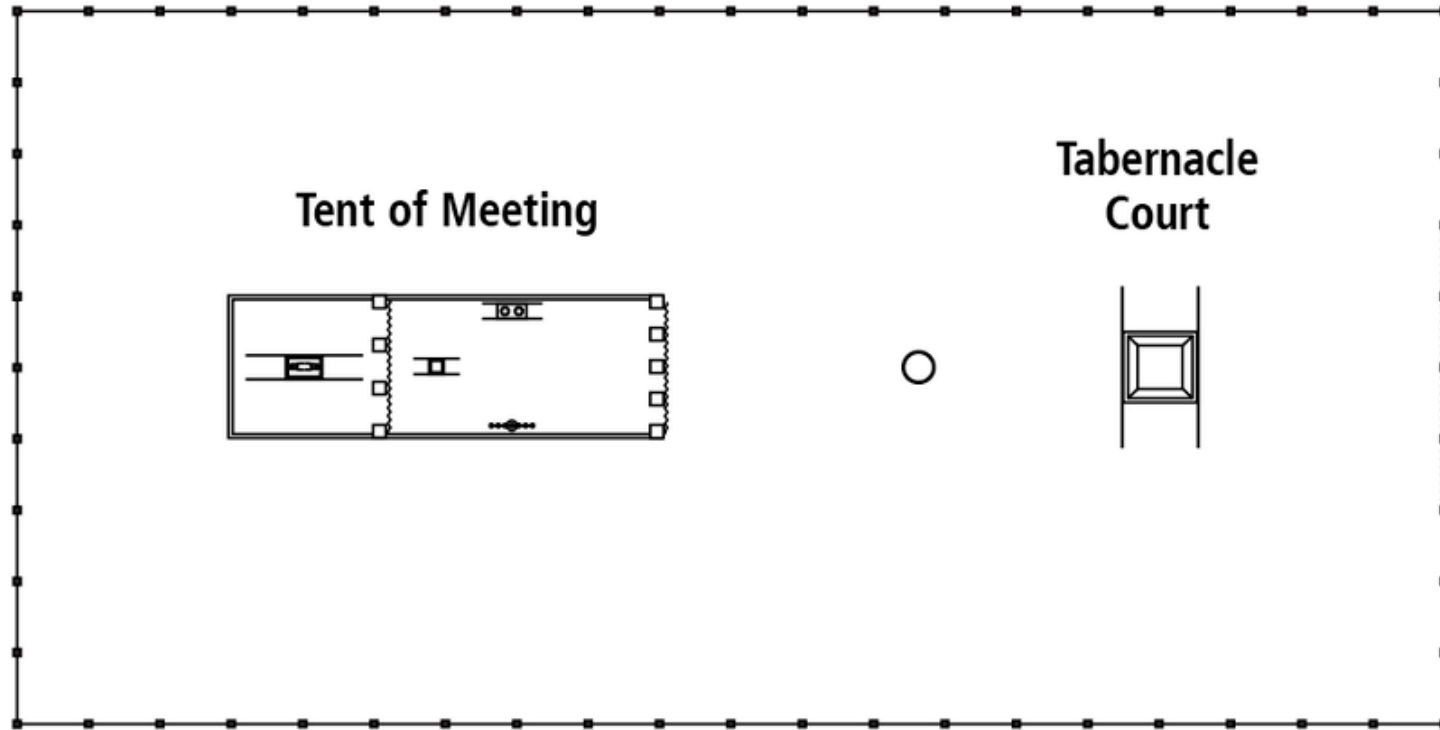
Israel on the March



Both in camp and on the march, the tabernacle (guarded by the Levites) is always at the center, as God is at the heart of the nation. The Judah group has pride of place in the camp and leads the nation on the march (capital letters designate the lead tribe in each of the four groups).

The Merarites camped on the north, guarding and carrying the structural components of the tent and the court (frames, bars, pillars, bases, pegs, cords, etc.).

The Gershonites camped on the west, guarding and carrying the coverings, hangings, and entrance screens of the tent and the courtyard.



Moses and the priests camped on the east, guarding the tabernacle sanctuary and protecting Israel.

The Kohathites camped on the south, guarding and carrying the items within the tabernacle sanctuary (ark, table, lampstand, altars, vessels, and screen).