

Numbers Chapter 2 Commentary

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

As we begin chapter 2 & 3; we see the beginning of order and structure in God's plan for his people. We can parallel this order and structure to organized religion, individual churches, and even down to individuals as Christians. We will see how God lays out before Israel, and its leadership, instruction for all movements, and for carrying out the commandments, which God has laid down for them.

Even as John Bunyan in *The Pilgrims Progress* laid out an allegorical life of the individual Christian, in an ordered and progressive manner, so God, here in this book of Numbers, will show us progressively our manner of life today through his people here in Numbers.

In the following chapters we shall see:

- God will prepare them, and set up a structure for the warfare they shall see, and be engaged in.
- God will set in motion everything necessary to move his tabernacle and ark.
- How and when the people are to move.
- God will provide them with his presence, and teach them how to follow his commandments; of when to move and when to be still.
- God will prove himself to be alive and real every day of their lives.

We can apply these same principles to our own lives. Israel, on the other hand, will demonstrate to us our very inherent natures of disobedience. We shall see the consequence of their sins affecting their lives. We shall be able to see parallels between their lives and our own.

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.

Let's look at the map we have inserted at the end of this chapter, of the structured layout that God is presenting here in chapter 2 & 3.

We see, the tabernacle is the central figure, and it is used as the alignment tool for everything, and everybody, to find their position. Certainly, we can apply this to our life; as we put Christ in the place of the tabernacle, and then structure our position and life around him.

We see, the people were to be positioned a goodly distance from the tabernacle, which accomplishes 2 things:

- It gives space for those, who are chosen to carry out the ceremonial/sacrificial laws, to be in the right place, to do their individual duties. Compare this to the ministers and deacons today in their positions of leadership and see the comparisons.
- It puts the people at large in position between the enemies, the world at large, which has its own purposes. The arranged armies will be in position to engage the enemies on all sides and they won't be caught off guard.

Now apply that to the individual church. Rather than everyone looking to the preachers and deacons; they should be looking to Christ and standing guard against the enemy. They should be

trained and ready to make war as necessary to protect the name of Jesus Christ, their Saviour and Lord. People seem to focus on the ministry and leadership of the church and forget to be preparing themselves for war, and being on the watch for the attack of the enemy.

Eph 6:11-20; 11 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

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. 4 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 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. 6 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 7 Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun. 8 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 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. 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. 11 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred. 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. 13 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel. 15 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 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. 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. 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. 19 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty thousand and five hundred. 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. 21 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideon. 23 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 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. 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. 26 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 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. 28 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. 29 Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan. 30 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 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. 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. 33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. 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.

We have in these verses; the layout and enumeration of the tribes of Israel. There is a picture on the next page, which gives us a visual image of the layout and position of the tribes. As we have laid this visual image out from the descriptions given in this chapter; we see that it actually forms a cross with the tabernacle in the central point. This is a prophetic picture of the coming of Jesus incarnate and the work that He must accomplish on the cross. After all; his pure, sinless, blood was the only truly acceptable sacrifice that would appease the eternal wrath of God against his people.

Wilderness March Encampment Layout of the Tribes of Israel

Numbers 2:1 - 3:39

			NORTH					
			CAMP OF DAN (157,600) Numbers 2:25-31					
			Dan (62,700)	Asher (41,500)	Naphtali (53,400)			
WEST	CAMP OF EPHRAIM (108,100) Numbers 2:18-24	Benjamin (35,400)	Gershon (7,500) Numbers 3:23-26	Merari (6,200) Nu 3:32-37	Moses & Priests Numbers 3:38	Judah (74,600)	CAMP OF JUDAH (186,400) Numbers 2:3-9	EAST
		Manasseh (32,200)		TABERNACLE		Issachar (54,400)		
		Ephraim (40,500)		Kohath (8,600) Nu 3:27-31		Zebulun (57,400)		
				Gad (45,650)	Simeon (59,300)	Reuben (46,500)		
			Numbers 2:10-17 CAMP OF REUBEN (151,450)					
			SOUTH					

This map was created from the wording of the scriptures, after looking at several different camp layout maps. The basic layout concept is from a map by Vernon G. McGee with additional information inserted that I felt to be pertinent.