

NUMBERS 4 DUTIES OF THE LEVITES

REVIEW

AGE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

How are the Levites to be counted and what is difference compared to the other tribes?

Why?

Mark down some of the key age milestones in the life of a Levites, what are they and why?

Numbers 3:15,22,28,34,39,40,43

Numbers 8:24

Numbers 4:3,23,30,35,39,40,43,47

Why do you think the scripture is so particular about all these timelines?

Application:

THE DUTIES OF THE FAMILY OF KOHATH (NUMBERS 4:1-20)

Read the census paragraph in Numbers 3, where do you think Kohath ranks among the 3 brothers (Gershon, Kohath and Merari)?

Now read the account in Numbers 4, who do you think has the most “exalted” work among the Levites? What do you think this is trying to convey? (think about Jacob/Esau; Moses/Aaron; Joseph/Reuben; David/other brothers)

Read Numbers 4:1-20, what is the arrangement with regard to the duties for the family of Kohath? Examine closely Numbers 4:16-20. What is the significance of this arrangement? Can you draw an application from what you have learned?

Read the excerpt printed below:

Several impressions emerge in the reading of this section:

1. *The sense of planning, order, and execution. Nothing in the holy things of God was to be left to chance or to improvisation. None of the sacred persons who ministered in his presence was to be unprepared or untaught. All the preparation suggests a rigorous training schedule before actual work would be done by a given priest. This call for preparation may account for the distinction of twenty-five years of age in 8:24 and thirty years in 4:3. That intervening five-year period may have been a time of intense internship.*
2. *The sheer quantity and variety of the holy things. At times we have an impression of a crude, primitive nature of the worship patterns of ancient Israel, especially in the earliest periods. Yet if these texts adequately reflect the*

times of Moses, as a natural reading suggests, then the worship implements from the time of Moses were many and varied—and, we suspect, quite precious.

3. *The use of color, texture, and layers. Each of the covering curtains must have been impressive in color, texture, and design; but the variety of the coverings and their several uses speaks of a legitimate enjoyment of luxury in worship and a celebration of the presence of God. The solid blue cloth, the scarlet cloth, the blue cloth, the gold altar, the bronze altar, the purple cloth, plus numerous hides, skins, and other cloths all present a wondrous delight in serving in the presence of God.*
4. *The mobility and transportability of the tabernacle. A further impression is the sense we have that everything is movable. The tent was designed to be set up and taken down; it was a temporary abode.*
5. *The sense of hierarchy among the workers, along with an affirmation of the sense of dignity of purpose and the importance of work in one's life. Each individual was given a task to do (see v.33). Some tasks were more elegant than others, but every task had to be done.¹*

Do you agree with these observations? What applications can you draw from them for yourself?

Name the colours used? What do you think they represent?

Note: The items from the tabernacles are to be wrapped in some form of leather covering. The NKJV translated it to be “badger skin” and other translations would put it as skin of “sea-cow” or “dugong” or “dolphine”. There is a general preference for the latter as “badger” is not usually found near the Red-Sea/Sinai area and generally

¹ Allen, R. B. (1990). *Numbers*. (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 2: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (p. 734). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

would be too small to be used as a covering. Dugong on the other hand are common animals in those regions.

Possible significance of this “dugong” skin covering:

1. for protection
2. spiritual meaning

As in other instances of this sort, we may observe that the underlying reason on God's part may well have been mercy. It was a mercy of God that he had made himself known to anyone; it was the continuing mercy of God that he does not destroy more persons more quickly because of their wickedness; and it is a condescending mercy of God that he presents himself in their midst. The revelation of God's word brings with it demands, some of which seem harsh and difficult. But God is near. Some seem to be so judgmental; yet God has not destroyed all. Some seem to be so threatening; yet God by his mercy allows some sense of his presence to remain known in the camp. His manifestation is based on his mercy; his strictures allow his mercy to continue to be realized.²

THE DUTIES OF THE FAMILY OF GERSHON NUMBERS 4:21-28

Note down the things that the Gershon family are responsible for:

What can you surmise from verse 28?

Applications:

² Allen, R. B. (1990). *Numbers*. (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 2: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (p. 735). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

THE DUTIES FOR THE FAMILY OF MERARI NUMBERS 3:29-33

Note down the things that Merari family are responsible for:

Can you imagine that for the prime of your life (30-50 years old), you will be responsible for pegs and ropes? What does that teach you about Christian services?

THE CENSUS AND CONCLUSION (NUMBERS 4:34-49)

Family	Total counted	Total in Service
Gershon		
Kohath		
Merari		

Read verse 49 as a summary statement, what conclusion can you draw about the Levites in service?

Refer back to 1 Peter 2:9, would you agree that our spiritual identity is with the Levites? If so, how should we look at Christian services?

My applications: