

Numbers 2

Mobilized by God to Enter His Rest

Friday, February 23, 2024 ▪ Read Numbers 2

Questions from the Scripture text: Who spoke to whom in v1? Who were to camp where (v2)? Distant from where? On what side does Judah camp (v3)? Led by whom (cf. 1:7)? How many (v4, cf. 1:27)? Who next to them (v5)? Led by whom (cf. 1:8)? How many (v6, cf. 1:29)? And who next to them (v7)? Led by whom (cf. 1:9)? How many (v8, cf. 1:31)? How many, total, for these three tribes (v9)? When in the order would they break camp? On what side does Reuben camp (v10)? Led by whom (cf. 1:5)? How many (v11, cf. 1:21)? Who next to them (v12)? Led by whom (cf. 1:6)? How many (v13, cf. 1:23)? And who next to them (v14)? Led by whom (cf. 1:14)? How many (v15, cf. 1:25)? How many, total, for these three tribes (v16)? When in the order would they break camp? What moves out in v17? With whose camp? At what place in the order? On what side does Ephraim camp (v18)? Led by whom (cf. 1:10)? How many (v19, cf. 1:33)? Who next to them (v20)? Led by whom (cf. 1:10)? How many (v21, cf. 1:25)? And who next to them (v22)? Led by whom (cf. 1:11)? How many (v23, cf. 1:37)? How many total for the three tribes from Rachel (v24)? When in the order would they break camp? On what side does Dan camp (v25)? Led by whom (cf. 1:12)? How many (v26, cf. 1:39)? Who next to them (v27)? Led by whom (cf. 1:13)? How many (v28, cf. 1:41)? And who next to them (v29)? Led by whom (cf. 1:15)? How many (v30, cf. 1:43)? How many total for these three tribes (v31)? When in the order would they break camp? How does v32 summarize this census? How many were numbered altogether? Who were not numbered (v33)? Why not? What did the children of Israel do (v34)? In what particular details?

Who arranges the church and why? Numbers 2 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord's Day. In these thirty-four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord arranges His church with their mission in mind.**

God decides the order of His people. 1Cor 12:18 tells us that "God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased." Our fellow-members, and our elders and deacons, in our particular congregation have been assigned to us by God according to an order that He has decided. No one in Israel had ground for complaining about where they were camped, or with whom, or what place they had in the order of march. The Lord had selected these things for them, and their following it was a matter of obedience (v34). Knowing this, we ought to take our part in the church with zeal and diligence.

God made them mobile. The Lord teaches Christians today to live with a pilgrim mindset (cf. 1Cor 7:29–31; Heb 11:10–16; 1Pet 2:11), and this was something that He made plain to Israel in this chapter. They were to live as those who were ready to move at any moment. Not only does He refer to their districts as "camp," but the five (including Levites) groups are listed in the order by which they would break camp. Again, knowing the order in which they would move would help limit chaos and conflict when that time came. And setting a leader in each tribe, and a leader-tribe in each group, would also help keep things orderly.

Seeing that God arranged them to be a mobile people reminded them that they were not at their final destination. They were kept looking forward to a better and permanent home. This is true for you, too, dear Christian. No place on earth is ultimately your home. You can be at home anywhere in the world, for the world is your Father's, your King's, and yours. But nowhere in this world is your home!

God put Himself at the center and at a distance. Remember that this was no ordinary camp. They numbered in the millions. The tabernacle was at the center of a large, priestly district, which will be the subject of the next couple chapters. In each direction, there would be a significant distance (probably almost a mile, cf. Josh 3:4) from the tabernacle to the main body of the Jews. This made the tabernacle and its precincts into a large "downtown" area, but it would be God Himself who dwelt there among those particular servants who were to attend to Him. The prominent focus upon the Levites reminds us from the previous chapter (cf. 1:51, 53) that the greatest danger to them was not outside the camp but in the middle.

For us, our "tabernacle" is in glory, where Christ Himself is seated. But we are not kept at a distance. We are united to Him and seated with Him in the heavenly places. This is one great blessing of what is called "the priesthood of all believers" in Jesus's administration of the covenant of grace. Were Israel taught that the Lord is the center of their lives? Then how much more you are taught so, dear Christian! Let us seek grace to live our lives with Him at the center, rejoicing that we are no longer "kept at a distance," and living as those who are holy.

How does this chapter remind you to embrace God's own general order in the church, and His providentially chosen members and officers in your own specific church? What is your final home? How can you be "at home" here, and what does it look like to live as someone for whom this is not your ultimate "home"? What does having God at the center of your life mean for your schedule (e.g. mornings, evenings, Lord's Days)? What does it mean for the "ordinary" times of life? What difference does it make to you that you are now seated with Christ?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You that You have set the order for Your church as it should be. Please help us to submit ourselves to You cheerfully. Give us to live in this world as pilgrims, focusing upon You and how our life revolves around You, we ask, through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP116B "I Still Believed" or TPH61B "O Hear My Urgent Cry"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers Chapter 2. These are God's words. And you always spoke to Moses and Aaron saying every one of the children of Israel. So I can't bite his own standard beside the emblems of his father's house. They shall Camp some distance from the Tabernacle meeting. On the east side, towards the rising of the sun, those Of the standard of the forces with Judah shall Camp according to their armies and National and son of amenadab shall be leader of the children of Judah.

And his army was numbered at 74, 600. Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of visakar and nothing else. The son of Zuar shall be the leader of the children of issakar, and his army was numbered at 54 400 and then comes the tribe of zebulun and Ali.

Abb, the son of hilon shall be the leader of the children of zebulun. Summer is numbered at 57 400. All who are numbered according to their armies of the forces with Judah 186 400 This strawberry Camp first. On the south side, shall be the standard of the forces with Reuben according to their armies and the leader of the children of Raven shall be elizur.

Son of your His Army was numbered at 46 500, those get next to him, Shelby the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the children of Simeon. Shall we shall lumiel? The son of Zarissadite It was numbered at 59 300. Then it comes the tribe of Gad and the leader of the children of God shall be.

Elias asks on her very well. And his army was numbered at 45 650. All who are numbered according to their armies, the forces with Reuben. 151 450. They shall be the second to break in. In the Tabernacle of meetings shall move out with the camp of the Levites, in the middle of the camps as they camp, so they shall move out.

Everyone in this place by their standards. On the west side, shall leave. The standard of the forces with fraim according to their armies. And the leader of the children of Ephraim shall behud. His army was numbered at 40 500 next to him, comes the tribe of Manasseh and the leader of the children of Manasseh, shall we gamaliosur?

And his army was numbered at 32 200, then comes the tribe of Benjamin. The leader of the children of Benjamin Shelby, heavy done, son of Gideon. And his army was numbered at 35 400. All who are numbered according to their armies. The forces with Ephraim 108 100. They shall be the third to break him.

The standard of the forces with Dan shall be on the North side, according to their armories. And the leader of the children of Dan shall be a yazer, son of a me. Should

I His army was numbered at 62 700, those who came next to him. Shall be the tribe of Asher and the leader of the children of Asher.

Shelby paggio, son of Akron. And his Army is numbered of 41, 500, then comes the tribe of Napolei and the leader of the children of naphtali shall be a Heroes on avenan. Is numbered at 53 400? Over and under the forces within 157. 600, they shall break can't last with their standards.

These are the ones who are numbered for the children of Israel by their father's houses. All overnumbered according to their names, according to their armies. Of the forces where six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty with the Levites. We're not numbered among the children of Israel. By their father's houses.

Sorry. But the Levites. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel just as Yahweh. Commanded Moses. Thus, the children of Israel did according to all That Yahoo commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards. And so, they broke Camp each one by his family. According to their father's houses.

And then that sense this reading of God, Inspired and inherent word. In last week's passage in chapter one. The Lord showed Israel, many things. Just by the fact that he numbered them. Yeah, and those number of those numbers. I would remind them that the Lord was. Uh, their Sovereign that he ruled over them that that he was faithful to multiply them.

That Expected them. Uh, to fight in the war, although he would give them Victory yet. This did not take away responsibility but rather. Reinforced it, that the God who was giving the land to them was giving it to them by means of their armies, by means, Of their warring.

And now he continues to teach them, not just Uh, by the fact that he numbered them. And Uh, what their numbers? Uh, words, he's about to Do this impossible thing of moving a two million Person Mega City nation. Through the Wilderness. Uh, but now he comes. He gives them his wisdom for how he's going to accomplish that by the order.

That is among his people. The order now is A means a mechanism, an instrument that the God who is going to take them through the Wilderness is going to use. And so, the, the camp has Uh, assigned designed layout, God is the one who decides the order of his people.

God is the Who is intentionally making them mobile? God puts himself. At the center of their Camp. And then, God puts himself. At a distance.

First, then God decides the order of his people. Notice that he's referring to all of these things as camps. There's the camp. That is with Judah. There is the camp that is with Reuben. There is the Of the Levites. There is the That is with Ephraim. And there's the camp that is.

With. This Camp language. Is not just mobile. Like we're going to think about in the second place. But it's it's also army language. The camp of David versus the camp of Saul or versus the camp of Absalom. Perhaps you remember that sort of language. Um but God is the one who has not just said that they should be in camps but which can't swear.

Which three tribes in each of the And then the Levites in the With the Tabernacle. Who will be taken instead of the firstborn. They're not. Uh, they're not numbered for the war but they are. Numbered for Uh, the Redemption of The firstborn. That'll come later. Uh, but God is the one.

Arranges them. Uh, now as an army and a church, Gathered around the Tabernacle as it were and arranged for war and arranged for travel. And notice that part of his Arrangement is, Uh, the institution of the family. They are. Uh, put alongside Their brothers and their fathers. Uh, there is an intentional family, relation, even those who came from Rachel, all together, the children of Joseph and the children of Benjamin Uh, on down to you would be with your own household.

And within, Your tribe. You would be according to to father's houses. So, those who are nearest relations, uh, would be alongside one another and God appointed for each tribe. A man who would be over that tribe to make sure. That all of their families. Uh, were alongside one another.

And this is a strong reinforcement to the fact that God is the one who picked your family for you. God is the one who who picked the the place that you would be born into whether it's here for Israel. Your great grandfather and your grandfather and your father. So that the particular nearness or the particular distance of your relations is exactly decided by God.

And this is something that we must not Grumble against or resist but receive as wise and good. Uh you say well there are sinners in my family well that was going to be true. Whichever one he put you in. Uh and yet what, to whatever extent there has been Grace.

In your family line. That is opposite. What you deserve. Uh, and so there's the There's the mercy or from last night's sermon in Romans Uh, there is the goodness. Of God already. But this trains us to receive the family itself as God's institution. And to receive our own particular family, then as God's particular Mercy to us and to plan for us, Um, Yeah.

What is God's will for my life? Uh, well just now God's will from my life is that I should be. Uh, father and mother's child and my brothers and sister siblings. And that we might. We might have our family relations. God also picks the leaders. You know, within each family, God picks, uh, the husband and father Uh, as the leader.

Every bit as much as he picks by name, nashon son of a minute to lead the tribe of Judah. And just as we were saying, a moment ago, God picks our family's Nash on isn't Jesus's family. And so God, who is going to send his son into the world.

Makes this particular man to appear in Genie in Jesus's genealogy. And praise God, for Matthew Henry. Perhaps others before him. Uh, and like him who rightly recognize. This puts Christ in the loins of nashon. As the leader of the first tribe, he leads Israel out in the wilderness. And indeed, God.

Sent his Angel before them. Making. This Mighty appearance of Christ with the pillar and the fire. Uh, to go before. As well, but God is the one. Who picks our leaders? Whether in the in the family. Where it's a little bit more obvious. Just it's Biological women in marriage.

I guess covenantal. Or in the Providence of whom, he gifts and Graces, and in the following of his word, We receive the elders and deacons that he has appointed to us. But don't we remember from First Corinthians, 12, 18 that God has set the members, each one of them in the body, just as he Pleased.

And so God is the one who Ordered given not just the general order of his people. Uh, but even Uh, to the very specifics of who your own particular family are Who the particular nearest leader over you in his Those things have been. Assigned to us. The Lord has selected them and following them.

Then as a matter of obedience, that's the conclusion of the chapter, isn't it? Thus, the children of Israel did according to all that. Yahweh had commanded Moses. And so later in the Book of Numbers, Um, When there are those who raise themselves up against Moses? Even at one point.

Remember Aaron and Miriam had done this. Uh, but in the book of numbers, when the, when people rebel against Gods, Organized structure. It's a rebellion against him. Um, Well, second place. Um, God intentionally made them mobile, this isn't just where they, they are to camp in relation To the Tabernacle.

But when they are to set out, They're always to be ready to move. They are not at their final destination yet This is not. Ultimate inheritance. It's from the Lord. It's the place that he's putting them. It's the place that they are. To love him and love their neighbor and serve him and serve their neighbor.

But it's not their home. It's not their rest. He calls coming into the land, their rest. Well, he then comes to us. Doesn't he Psalm 95, Hebrews 3 and 4 and he refers to What happens when we depart from this life, as entering our rest, he reminds us that we are We are in the place that he put us in a place to love him.

You're in the place where you're supposed to love him and love your neighbor. Love your brother, especially your nearest neighbors, and your nearest brothers in this house. And this is the place to love him and serve him to love them and serve them. This is not your final destination.

Uh, you are always to be ready to move, ready for some new place that the Lord takes you, some new service. Uh, that the Lord gives you. Uh, you can be at home anywhere. Because the Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and he is your father, and so you're always on your, uh, your daddy's land, uh, as it were.

Uh, so you can be at home anywhere, but in this world Uh, nowhere is your home. You are looking for a better country. A lasting City whose designer and Builder is God. And this, that has people looked for throughout. Uh, throughout the administration under Moses and even before Moses, he Uh, Uh, goes back further of course than Moses even to Abel.

Um, This is still the mindset that we are to have. The mindset of walking by faith, the mindset of not yet being At our destination because God, According to the Everlasting Covenant, in the blood of the Lord, Jesus has not finished. Perfecting us and working in us. Everything pleasing in his sight.

And so, as we often hear that blessing at the end of Hebrews 13, even then we're being reminded

To live with a pilgrim mindset. Is the one.

Beautiful order. This is incidentally. You may remember Um when Balaam gets himself to a vantage point so that he can pronounce a curse upon Israel and the Lord fills his mouth instead with a blessing. Upon him. One of the thing that he Remarks uh upon is the beauty and orderliness of of the camp.

That's not just saying, oh look at Israel. They're um they are so good at Municipal Logistics or military Arrangement. No it is. They are the people Organization is designed by God. And the nitty-gritty you might not have liked nation's decision. Yeah. This week about, you know, who's on trash duty or, you know, whatever and hopefully, everyone's on trash TV and they just pick up after themselves and they don't have the problems that Um, They might not have liked the nitty-gritty particulars on any particular day, but praise God, it was his order and his plan and Balaam is writing what he pronounced.

Uh and uh and we may struggle from time to time with particulars of whom he sets over us.

But praise God, he's the one. Who's arranged it and selected it. Um, so God has decided their order. God has made them Noble, which Contains with it, the promise. That you're not yet home but you will be

So that, uh, they would not Become complacent or passive. Uh, but they would always be looking forward. Always be hoping Always be on Mission, ready to serve. As those who are still going to come into their final and full rest, which we may do in our lives. Uh, but then notice also That God puts himself.

At the center. Uh, this is no ordinary Camp. Uh, they number in the millions. So when when God puts the Uh, the Levites around the Tabernacle at the center. It's a pretty significant concentration. Uh, Uh,

The number. Uh, of the Levites being 22. And then, The Tabernacle in the midst of, I'm not sure how big Colombia is probably a little bit more than 22 000, but just to give you an idea of the number of people in that District and the people were supposed to be At a distance from the Tabernacle.

Those who came near who are not of the tribe of Levi. Remember from last chapter were to be put to death. And, Uh, if the distance in Joshua 3, verse 4 is an indication. Um, there would be about a mile from Uh, the Tabernacle to the nearest non-levite camp, And so you see how Um, This circle.

Uh, with the Uh, with the two mile diameter. Would create kind of a downtown area. And Columbia is a helpful City for us to think about this. Although the downtown isn't situated perfectly in the middle but it does have the prominent place with the big building where wherever you are in the camp, you can see the location of the king.

Our case, the County Courthouse, which has a tiny little bit of a similar sense. Uh, God the king. Was in the midst of. Was in the midst of his people. He put Himself at the center. And he put the Levites around him, you never went downtown. If you were to levite, and in this particular case, And you didn't do so because God is saving your life.

Remember from the last chapter that if you came near, you were to be put to death. And so the Levites had a very important job. Not just acting as a buffer But also handling all of the Tabernacle things correctly. Uh, so that there would not be wrath. Against the children of Israel.

How God put himself at the center and reminded them continually, then? Um, that Their greatest blessing was his Holiness and their greatest danger was also. His Holiness. They were near to God, he would act for the sake of his name. In saving them delivering them, bringing them into their inheritance, praise God.

That they were near to God and he would act for the sake of his name. Uh, and so his Holiness. Was a danger to them. And so God didn't just put himself at the center, but he put himself at a distance. Now here there is a little bit of a difference.

God still, of course, has put himself at the center of our life. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. We are Of people who as we were saying just a few minutes ago, Our home is in heaven. Jesus is home. You say home is where the heart is.

Home is where the savior is. A home is the where the Whose identity is most? United to ours is. Bless God for marriage. I love Uh, my marriage. I look forward to each of you. Being married. And there's a wonderful Union. Uh, with Uh, there. In marriage. But Union with Christ is greater and stronger and it is the First Union.

Of the believer's identity. Um, And the Lord has put himself. Uh, at the center. Of our lives. And he will act for the glory of his name, which means he will deliver us, he will sanctify us, he will bring us, Home at last. Because this is what. Has invested himself and his Holiness and the glory of his name in And we can look to Christ by faith.

Who is our Tabernacle, the one, uh, in whom we draw near to God? Just as as much in the same way as any of those Israelites could look to the Tabernacle with their eyes, and remember who and why they were, and where they would end up and that they would be Delivered.

But here is a great difference. The Lord does not keep us at a mile's length. Or an arm's length. He has brought us all the way near this is. Um, Uh, this is part of what

we refer to as the priesthood of all believers. Where they rejoice. Um, In Revelation you have made us Kings and Priests to, our God.

Uh, or where he Tells us, you are a royal priesthood. That we we all now in Union with Jesus Christ have been reconciled to God and we have been brought near to him by faith and glory and he comes near to us By his Spirit who is not just with us, but even in And the father and the son.

Uh, come and make their home. Um, with us. The spirit and the ministry. Of the spirit. Uh, praise God. Uh, he has He has brought us near. He hasn't just Uh, brought Gentiles past the dividing wall. So that they can be mixed with Jews and be near to one another.

He has brought all of us. Through the veil in Christ. In the Holy host holies, all believers. Uh, and so As the Lord had not just by numbering them but by arranging them. Uh, taught them to follow his order. Uh, submitting to him. Trust in and rejoicing in his wisdom and Therefore being ready to serve being ready to move having assigned that to them, that they are not yet, at rest, they're not yet at home.

So he has assigned that to you And he's put himself at the center of our lives where we must always remember our life as hidden with him. With hidden Christ with God and we should set our minds on things above just as we live on the Uh, rejoicing that he has closed the distance for us.

By our Union with Christ, our great high priest. So, the Lord Uh, give you a sense, not just today, but your whole life. That he is the one who is arranged. Where you are and with him. And what sort of Life, what sort of mission you have? Until at last, he brings you finally all the way home.

Into your rest into Rest. Let's pray. Father, thank you for This portion of your word. Thank you for ordering out our lives writing down. Your book each of our days before, one of them comes to be We pray that you Indeed blessed to us. This portion of your work that you would, Uh, make us.

See where you have put us and with whom and under whom Gifts from your hand and assignments. For where you would have us work. Please help each. One in our family to fulfill. Today's portion of that assignment. By faith in you. We thank you that. We shall at last.

Come into the rest that Christ has won for us. Uh, knowing that it is not in doubt. But help us O Lord, since You have made us the church militant and the church mobile. To keep pressing forward even as we have that hope. Not to be complacent or to treat our current circumstances.

As if they are our final rest. And we pray that you would. Turn our eyes continuously to you in Christ. Lift up our faith continually to him. Whom our soul loves because he first loved us. To you, who our soul loves, because you first loved us and And we pray that.

But keeping us mindful. Of yourself. Uh, that you Give us to live with the right purpose and the right hope and the right pleasure. But also Lord. Give us to see the difference. Between the distance that was necessary without Christ and without his blood And how you have brought us now near?

In him, and in his blood, That we might Rejoice over our nearness to you and our intimacy with you and him. We pray, especially for that Ministry of your spirit that communicates to us. This nearness and this intimacy. Grant to us to In fellowship with you, we ask in Jesus name, amen.