

Numbers 4 The Great Work of the Priesthood

Friday, March 8, 2024 • Read Numbers 4

Questions from the Scripture text: Who speaks to whom in v1? Of which clan does He command a census here (v2)? Of what ages (v3)? What are they expected to do during these twenty years? To what, especially, were the Kohathites assigned (v4)? Who must do their task first (v5–15)? What items are they to attend to? What are they to do with each of these items? Then what do the Kohathites do (v15)? Who was singled out especially for what task in v16? Who speaks to whom in v17? What is the importance/effect of this new/specific instruction (v18)? Who will assign who/what/when to each of them for their task (v19)? To keep them from doing what (v20)? With what outcome? Who speaks to whom in v21? Concerning which clan (v22)? Which ages (v23)? What will they do during these years? What, specifically, are the Gershonites to carry (v25–26)? Who will oversee them (v27)? And who, more specifically (v28)? Concerning which clan does YHWH now speak in v29? Which ages is he to number (v30)? What are they expected to do during these years? What are the Merarites, specifically, to carry (v31–32)? Under whose direction (v33)? Who number whom in v34? What ages (v35)? How many are there (v36)? How does v37 summarize this? Who are numbered in v38? What ages (v39)? How many (v40)? How does v41 summarize this? Who are numbered in v42? What ages (v43)? How many (v44)? How does v45 summarize this? To whom does v46 now refer? Of what ages (v47)? How many in total (v48)? How does v49 summarize this census?

Why did the Levites have to be numbered again? Numbers 4 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord's Day. In these forty-nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the second numbering of the Levites emphasizes the greatness of the work of the priesthood.**

Hard work. By the ages of those numbered (30–50), the Lord teaches them that they need strength and maturity. This is going to be hard work!

Much work. Over eight thousand Levites were needed. And they are given an extensive, detailed list of tasks to accomplish. There is going to be much work!

Deadly important work. For the Kohathites in particular, it was clear how important this work was. The earnestness with which they put their shoulders to the poles was instructed by the fact that they couldn't begin that work until all of the furnishings were properly covered by Aaron and his sons. They couldn't even watch it being done, lest they die (v20), and the Kohathites be cut off all together (v18).

The Gershonites' service with the hangings, and the Merarites' service with the structure, are also reminders of the sacred space within the tabernacle court. This vitally important work is why the Levites are reserved for it instead of military service.

Prescribed work. The care of God's worship is not a place for creativity or ambition for advancement. Not only does God assign the clans and the leaders for each area of service, but He directs that the leader assign to each one his work by name. The idea that it is evil to have authority or be under it belongs to Critical Theory, not biblical Christianity. Believers must receive God's commandments and God's appointed authorities as good gifts from Him. They must be glad to have their assigned roles and to serve in them with all their hearts.

This priestly work was just a shadow of Christ's. Its greatness declares to us how difficult, how much, how important, how necessary His atoning work was (and His intercessory work continues to be). And just as the Lord prepared the Levites for their hard work by implying its difficulty in this census, so also has He told us how hard our work in this life would be. Whether in our hearts, in our households, or in the church, the Lord has assigned this work, and He will sustain it. It is worth the effort!

What great work has the Lord Jesus done for you? What great work is He still doing? What are you working on in your spiritual life? What role do you have in your family? What role in your church? How are you doing all of these in a way that shows they are worth the work?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for the great and glorious priestly work of Christ. Please grant unto us to serve You with all our heart in our life, in our household, and in Your church. For we ask it through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP197 "Christian Unity" or TPH274 "Jesus, My Great High Priest"

(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 four. These are God's words. In the office spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, take a census of the sensical act. Among the children of Levi by their families, by their father's house. 30 years old. And above even to 50 years old, all who enter the service. To do the work in the Tabernacle.

This is the service of the sons of gohat. It's in the Tabernacle of meeting relating to the most holy things when the camp prepares to journey. Aaron. And his son shall come and they shall take down the covering. Veil and the and cover the Arc of the testimony with it.

Then they shall put on it to covering your Badger skins and spread over that cloth entirely of blue. They shall insert its poles. On the table of show bread, they shall spread a blue cloth and put on it. The dishes, the pans, the bowls, And the pictures for pouring and shall spread over them.

Sorry in the show bread. Shall be on it. They shall spread over them a scarlet, cloth and cover the same with the covering of Badger skins. And they shall insert its poles and they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lamp. Stand of the light. With its Lambs, its Wick trimmers its trays and all its oil vessels with which they service it.

And then shall put it with all its utensils and a covering of Badger skins. Put it on a carrying beam. Over the golden altar, they shall spread a blue cloth. Cover it with a covering of Badger skins and they shall insert its poles. Then they shall take all the utensils of service with which they minister in the sanctuary.

Put them in a blue cloth. Cover them with a covering of Badger skins and put them on a carrying beam. Also, this will take away the ashes from the altar. And spread a purple cloth over it. And she'll put on it all its implements with, which they minister there.

The fire pans the forks, the shovels, The basins and all the utensils of the Altar and they shall spread on it. A covering of Badger skins and insert its poles. And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the Furnishings of the sanctuary. When the camp is set to go, then the sons of cohatch shall come To carry them but they shall not touch any.

Holy thing. Lest they die. These are the things in the Tabernacle meeting which the sons of koath are to carry. The appointed duty of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest is the oil for the light, the sweet incense. The daily grain offering the anointing oil, the oversight of all the Tabernacle of all that is in it.

For the sanctuary and its Furnishings. And you always spoke to Moses and Aaron saying do not cut off the tribe of the families of the coatites from among the Levites. But do this in regard to them that they may live and not die. When they approach the most holy things.

Aaron and his son shall go in. And appoint each of them to his service and his task. But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered. Bless they die. Then you also spoke to Moses. Saying, also take a census of the sons of Gershon, by their fathers, as by their families, from 30 years old, and above even to 50 years old.

You shall number them. All who enter to perform the service to do the work in the Tabernacle of meeting. This is the service of the families of the garrisonites, and serving and carrying. They shall carry the curtains of the Tabernacle and the Tabernacle of meeting. With its covering the covering of Badger skins, that is on it.

The screen for the door. The Tabernacle meeting The screen for the door, the gate of the Court, the hangings of the Court, which are around the Tabernacle and altar. And their cords all the Furnishings for their service and all that is made for these things. So shall they serve?

Aaron and his sons shall assigning, all the service of the sons of the gersonites, all their tasks, and all their service. And you still point to them all their tasks, as their duty, This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon. At the Tabernacle of meeting and their duties shall be under the authority of ithamar.

The son of Aaron, the priest. As for the sons of morari, shall number them by their families and by their father's house. From 30 years old and above even to 50 years old. You shall number them. Everyone who enters the service, to do the work of the Tabernacle of meeting, and this is what they must carry.

As all their service. For the Tabernacle meeting the boards, the Tabernacle It's bars. It's pillars. It's sockets and the pillars around the court with their sockets, pegs and cords. With old air Furnishings and all their service and do so assign to each man by name. The items he must carry.

This is the service of the families of the sons of morari. As all their service for the Tabernacle of meeting. Under the authority of ithamar, the son of Aaron, the priest. And Moses and Aaron and Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the congregation. Number the sons of the coatites by their families and by their followers as his house.

From 30 years old and above even 50 years old. Everyone who entered the service for work in the Tabernacle meeting. And those were numbered by their families were 2750. These were the ones were numbered of the families of the coatites. All who might serve in the Tabernacle meeting, Him, Moses.

And Aaron numbered. According to the Commandment of Yahweh by the hand of Moses. And those were numbered the sons of Gershon by their families and by their father's house from 30 years old, and above even to 50 years old, everyone who entered the service for work. In the Tabernacle of meeting, those were numbered by their families.

But their father's house were 2630. These are the ones who are numbered at the families of the sons of Gershon. Of all who might serve in the Tabernacle of meeting whom, Moses and Aaron numbered, according to the Commandment of Yahweh. Those are the families of the sons of morari who are numbered by their families.

But their father's house from 30 years old and above even to 50 years old everyone who entered Service for work in the Tabernacle meeting those who are numbered by their families were 32. These are the ones who are numbered of the families of the sons of morari. When Moses and Aaron numbered, according to the word of Yahweh, by the hand of Moses.

All her number to the Levites who Moses Aaron and the leaders of the of Israel. Numbered. By their families and by their father's houses from 30 years old, and above even to 50 years old. Everyone who came to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the Tabernacle of meeting.

Those who are numbered were eight thousand five hundred and eighty, According to the Commandment of Yahweh, they were numbered by the hand of Moses each, according to his service. And according to his task, thus were they numbered by him? Has y'all commanded? Moses. So far the reading of God's inspired and inert word.

Who knows the second census of the Levites. But A census specifically of those between 30 and Years old. Those of great strength and great wisdom. This shows us first of all, that there was Hard work to be done. the number, the total number of men of this age.

to do the hard work. Was over eight thousand. And the specific things that needed to be done as detailed in this chapter. Are very many. And so we see that it's not just hard work but it's also Much work that needed to be done. For the Tabernacle worship.

And then it is also important work. the coatites. Job was with things that were so important that they weren't allowed to touch or even see them.

Aaron and his sons would very carefully package. Everything up. Ark of the Covenant and the pure blue cloth. And, From the table of the show bread on down to the Bronze altar. The big altar outside. the tent. items of blue cloth, covered in blue cloth, and then items covered in purple cloth.

And the things from inside the holy place.

They weren't even allowed to watch. Them being covered lest, they die? In fact, when the Lord gives the instruction, for Aaron and his sons. For their packaging work. They're covering work who says, do not cut off the tribe of the families of the goatites. From among the Levites.

As the lines of nadab and abahu were cut off. And so now he says, don't let these families Be cut off. And so, whether it's the coatites who are Carrying the Furnishings of the Tabernacle or whether it's the garshanites, who are carrying all the hangings and the things associated with that, or whether it's the Mara rights.

Who are carrying all the boards and The pillars and all those things. we're reminded of the great importance of the work. By the fact that The things that the coatites were carrying we're so holy is to be deadly. And, The garshits and marites carried. we're wholly also by proximity.

This is very important work. So there's hard work. There's much work. It's very important work. There's also specifically prescribed work, The Lord details. What each Clan what each family. jobs are supposed to be but And, Having the Lord prescribe it, Does two things first? It shows his care but a second.

it shows or implies how important it is that he be obeyed. And so we have several times in the chapter again, as Yahweh, commanded Moses. But then also, this was a may of making sure it was organized and not only did the Lord prescribe generally, But then to each section of the Levites, he assigned, one of the sons of Aaron to be their overseer, Eleazar, For all the stuff of the sanctuary.

itself and then ithamar for the other two tribes, and the hangings and the hardware And LAS are in ithamar. Were to by name. Tell each of the Levites, what to do? there was not to be a bunch of created thinking creative thinking among the ranks. Now this is much more like an army.

In which there's a chain of command and the organization and efficiency is established by the one who has been appointed the leader and everybody knows who he is, Giving you your specific task and then your whole world, your whole world became your task. And so, it was organized. And efficient work.

So there was much work. Sorry, first it was hard work. Much work. Prescribe important work prescribed work. Organized. Work. Now, all of this shows us the

greatness. Both. Strength needed and number of people and endurance. And importance. Of all of these things and yet all of these things. Times hundreds of years.

It would be suddenly and fully and finally replaced and exceeded. But the single work of our Lord Jesus on the cross. And how much then this chapter exalts, the Priestly work of Christ. In our hearts and our minds how much at altitude When we see the greatness. Of. What was necessary to be done for the shadow that pointed to him?

We see the greatness of his final and true. Priestly work at the cross. And even now, Interceding for us as our Tabernacle. In glory. There's also a reminder. That there is much work to be done in the Christian Life and much work to be done. And the Church of Jesus Christ.

And so, the Lord uses. Illustrations metaphors for what it is like to be a Christian. What it is like To be an officer in Christ's Church. Such as Soldier. Or athlete. And he uses words like, fight and run. And Wrestle.

And so, just as when the Levites are being numbered here. And it was announced that it was only those who are from 30 to 50 and they could perceive all of the organizational. Aspect of what was being done. By all these things, the Lord was Stirring them up.

The work that they were going to do and indicating to them. How difficult and significant it would be and so forth. So also, the Lord has indicated to us that the Christian Life Is not going to be. Easy slouching, sort of life. There's going to be. Hard work. And so, he reminds us.

You have not resisted to the point of shutting your blood you Died yet and trying to kill sin. Hebrews chapter 12. And so, Straighten those wobbly knees and strengthened, as we can, And resume your Pursuit. Of peace and sorry, the peaceful fruit of righteousness. And the Holiness without which will not see the Lord.

Even. Than the previous chapter. No, I think it's actually at the beginning of that chapter even as he had just instructed them to cast aside. every weight and everything that entangles. And run the rest. I think it was the previous chapter. Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

And so, let us see how God mercifully. Arranged for and prepared the Levites. For their work. And that he has done the same for us, but Let us remember to take away most of all. The greatness of the Priestly work of Christ. For us.

Our father, we thank you for giving your own son. To be our great high priest. We praise you, Lord Jesus for the Perfection. Of your work and how you even know. Intercede for us in glory. We pray that you would, Strengthen us. Ode to the tasks that you set before us.

And give us. Complete them with joy and strength. There's those Not only had been prepared by you, but Sustained by Give us to obey your word, we pray and all that we do. Let me ask it in Christ's name. Amen.