

Numbers 2 & 3 - God @ The Center

Chap 2 - The encampment ... The arrangement

Num 2:1-2 NIV The LORD said to Moses and 2 "The Israelites are to camp **around the tent of meeting** some distance from it, each of them under their **standard [for the division]** and holding the **banners** of their family."

Chap 2 describes for divisions and their placement

- EAST - Judah (w/ Issachar and Zebulun) 186,400
- SOUTH - Reuben (w/ Simeon and Gad) 151,450
- WEST - Ephraim (w/ Manasseh and Benjamin) 108,100
- NORTH - Dan (w/ Asher and Naphtali) 157,600

Each of the four divisions had a STANDARD & according to rabbinical tradition they were

- Judah - **a lion** ... Reuben - **a man's head** ... Ephraim - **an ox** ... Dan - **an eagle**

This arrangement was a picture of what it's like in Heaven

- Heb 8:5 NIV They serve at a sanctuary that is **a copy and shadow of what is in heaven**. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

The throne and the four living creatures (lion, ox, man, eagle)

- Rev 4:6-7 NIV Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, **were four living creatures**, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a **lion**, the second was like an **ox**, the third had a face like a **man**, the fourth was like a flying **eagle**.
- Rev 7:9-10 NIV ...**a great multitude that no one could count**, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb....

God @ the Center - it was inescapable, always visible (pillar of fire & cloud)

Exo 25:8 NIV "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell **among them**...**"In the Midst"**, **"in the center"**

= **Bend & Middle** ...The lines or marks in the center of the palm are formed by the bending of the palm.

A bending in the middle, the center of something.

Other words that spring from the root

- The leading of a tame animal whose will has been bent
- Oppressor: One who bends the will of another
- Lead: To lead by the hand

Is God at the center of my life? Do I allow my will to be bent? To let God lead me by the hand?

Tension - God dwelling among - and God's wrath upon

Num 1:51-54 NIV Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall do it. ***Anyone else who approaches it is to be put to death.*** 52 The **Israelites** are to set up their tents by **divisions**, each of them in their own camp under their **standard**. 53 The **Levites, however, are to set up their tents around the tabernacle** of the covenant law ***so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community.*** The Levites are to be responsible for the care of the tabernacle of the covenant law." 54 The Israelites did all this just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Chapter 3 -- God @ the Center & the call to Holiness

Num 3:1-4 NIV This is the account of the family of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai. 2 The names of the sons of Aaron were Nadab the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 3 Those were the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests. 4 **Nadab and Abihu, however, died before the LORD when they made an offering with unauthorized fire before him in the Desert of Sinai.** They had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the lifetime of their father Aaron.

God wants to be close...but they cannot be presumptuous about His kindness...He is HOLY

- Lev 10:3 NIV Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: **"Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored."** Aaron remained silent.

God is serious about holiness

Num 3:10 Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests; **anyone else who approaches the sanctuary is to be put to death."**

- Num 3:38 NIV Anyone else who approached the ***sanctuary was to be put to death***
- Num 4:15 NIV But they must not touch the ***holy things*** or they will die
- Num 4:19 NIV So that they **may live and not die** when they come near the ***most holy things***
- Num 4:20 NIV But the Kohathites must not go in to look at ***the holy things***, even for a moment, or they will die."

God has always made a way of escape from wrath - in this case it was the Levites

- Noah's ark...The preaching in Nineveh...
- Here it is the placement of the Levites...***so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community***

The Levites are also a substitute- taken in place of the firstborn

The firstborn were a substitution

- Num 3:12-13 NIV "I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites ***in place of the first male offspring*** of every Israelite woman. ***The Levites are mine***, 13 for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD."

Price of redemption - since 22,000 Levites counted was not enough to cover 22,273 firstborn

- Num 3:46-47 NIV **To redeem the 273** firstborn Israelites who exceed the number of the Levites, 47 collect five shekels for each one, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs.

Summary - Jesus is like the Levite

He saves us from the wrath of God - the one mediator between God and man

- Rom 5:9 NIV Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be **saved from God's wrath through him!**

He is our substitute - the Levites became the firstborn substitute - Christ is that for us

- Rom 8:29 NIV ...[that] he [Jesus] might be the **firstborn among many brothers and sisters.**
- Heb 12:23 NIV **to the church of the firstborn**, whose names are written in heaven...

He has paid the price of redemption - not 5 shekels - but he gave himself, his blood

- 1Pe 1:18-19 NIV For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were **redeemed** from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but **with the precious blood of Christ**, a lamb without blemish or defect.

In the wilderness we see a shadow of what it is like in heaven

- The tabernacle (Is like his throne - His presence and His glory)
- The four standards of the divisions of Israel (the 4 creatures surrounding the throne)
- Surrounded by the children of Israel (Surrounded by the innumerable company of people)
- There is a constant flow of sacrifice and shedding of blood (his blood was shed once for all)

The cross...view from above a reminder of how God provides for relationship, holiness and a saving from wrath

In Heaven...the true tent of meeting...a constant reminder of the price it took to make it possible

Rev 5:6-14 NIV Then I saw a **Lamb**, looking as if it had been **slain**, standing **at the center of the throne**, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because **you were slain**, and **with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.**

10 You have made them to be **a kingdom and priests to serve our God**, and they will reign on the earth."

12 In a loud voice they were saying: "**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain**, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!**" 14 The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.