

Numbers 4 - Beneath the Badger Skins

The counting and work assignments of the Levites

Num 4:1-2 NIV The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: 2 "Take a census of the Kohathite branch of the Levites by their clans and families. 3 **Count** all the men *from thirty to fifty years of age* who come to **serve in the work** at the tent of meeting.

There were 3 branches from the sons of LEVI (Kohath, Gershon, Merari)

The Kohathites

Vs 4 "This is the work of the Kohathites at the tent of meeting: **the care of the most holy things.**

The Gershonites

24 "This is the service of the Gershonite clans **in their carrying and their other work: 25 They are to carry the curtains** of the tabernacle, that is, **the tent** of meeting, its **covering** and its outer covering of durable leather, the **curtains for the entrance** to the tent of meeting, 26 **the curtains of the courtyard** surrounding the tabernacle and altar, **the curtain for the entrance** to the courtyard, the ropes and all the equipment used in the service of the tent.

The Merarites

31 As part of all their service at the tent, **they are to carry the frames of the tabernacle**, its **crossbars, posts and bases**, 32 as well as the **posts** of the surrounding courtyard with their **bases, tent pegs, ropes**, all their equipment and everything related to their use. **Assign to each man the specific things he is to carry.**

The last verse of the chapter is a great summary of the whole chapter

Num 4:49 At the LORD's **command** through Moses, **each** was **assigned** his **work** and **told** what to **carry**. Thus they were **counted**, as the LORD **commanded** Moses.

times these words are used in the chapter

Command - 5 times ... **Assign** - 4 times ... **Work** - 13 times ... **Carry** - 13 times ... **Count** 15 times

Kohathites - more detail

It may have been looked at as demeaning

15 "After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, **only then are the Kohathites** to come and do the **carrying**.

- **ONLY THEN --"we are not good enough to look or touch - only to carry"**

It was potentially life-threatening

But they must not touch the holy things **or they will die**. The Kohathites are to **carry** those things that are in the tent of meeting.17 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 18 "See that the Kohathite tribal clans are not destroyed from among the Levites. 19 **So that they may live and not die when they come near the most holy things**, do this for them: Aaron and his sons are to go into the sanctuary and **assign** to each man his **work** and what he is to **carry**. 20 But the Kohathites **must not go in to look at the holy things, even for a moment, or they will die."**

...But what if your your whole purpose in life was to carry stuff...

- Who wants to spend the prime of their life carrying stuff from place to place
- They would spend 40 years in the wilderness and set up camp in 42 places

How to find value in a seemingly meaningless task

I think it could be found in these 4 words

- **Command** is used 5 times
- **Assign** - 4 times
- **Work** - 13 times
- **Carry** - 13 times

1st) - What has God COMMANDED?

If God commands something it is **IMPORTANT** to Him ... and it is what is **BEST** for me

“Command” is also translated as “portion” and “edge of the sword”

2Ki 2:9 NIV When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double **portion** of your spirit," Elisha replied.

- What God commands is **my portion** - everything else is outside it
- It is like the edge of the sword that separates

If God's command for you is to carry the curtains, then **His blessing goes along with that task...AND His help** in the fulfillment of that task. Something you might see as a demeaning or unimportant, He sees as the very reason He put you on earth...your assignment...your portion.

2nd) How do I view my Assignment? - as a bondservant

ASSIGNED (KJV - according to his service)

- From H5647; work of any kind: - act, bondage, + **bondservant**
- Paul calls himself a BondServant of Jesus Christ.

Num 4:49 Each man was registered as the LORD had commanded Moses; and at the command of the LORD given through Moses, **each man was assigned responsibility for his task of serving or carrying.**

What about embracing the heart of the BOND SERVANT? - **We fear commitment, we like to keep our options open**, serving God becomes too mundane, too dry & drab...I wait for the next exciting thing to catch my attention - BUT I HAVE RECEIVED AN ASSIGNMENT - **Each man was assigned a responsibility.**

3) Am I Willing to Work and Carry (a burden)

Being a Christian assumes WORK (it is called the work of the ministry)

- 1Co 15:58 NIV Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. **Always give yourselves fully to the work** of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Each person has a BURDEN to carry.

- Gal 6:5 NIV for each one should carry their own load.

Your place in God is a burden of sorts - something to carry

- Sometimes it is physical, sometimes emotional, sometimes spiritual - but it is a burden
- At times the word **burden** was used to describe a **prophetic utterance** by a prophet
- We even say things like “**the LORD has put a burden upon my heart for _____...**”

4) Do I have eyes to see “What is Beneath the Badger Skins?”

Outwardly the burden looked like Badger Skin - but what was underneath?

WHAT DID THEY CARRY? - Things that manifest the glory and presence of God

- **The ark** - the place where the glory and the presence of God dwelt
- **The table of the Presence** - the place of fellowship with God
- **The Lampstand** - that which shines with the light of God
- **The Gold Altar** - the place of prayer and worship
- **The bronze altar** - the place of sacrifice for sin

Walking out the Christian life is viewed by many like the badger skin - (unglamorous, a burden, not exciting)... But UNDER THE BADGER SKIN - UNDERNEATH IS GLORY - UNDERNEATH IS THE COMMAND OF GOD - UNDERNEATH IS THE DOUBLE PORTION BLESSING OF GOD

Jesus has no comeliness

- Isa 53:2 NIV ... **He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.**

The cross is foolishness to some - to others it is the POWER OF GOD

- 1Co 1:18 NIV For the message of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power of God**.

Beautiful to some

- 2Co 2:15-16 NIV For **we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ** among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are **an aroma that brings death**; to the other, **an aroma that brings life**. And who is equal to such a task?

We have TREASURE in earthen vessels

- 2Co 4:7 NIV **But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.**

May the LORD give us JOY in our portion, the heart of a bondservant with our assignment, and the understanding of the treasure we carry in these earthen vessels when we do the work He has called us to do. May we truly “see” what is “under the badger skins”.