

II. The Levites Numbered and Their Duties Described. 3:1-4:49

These two chapters describe the arrangements made for the care of the tabernacle, both in camp and on the march. Systematic arrangements are provided, and definite families assigned to specific tasks. God is a God of order. He desires the Christian Church, and the Christian individual, to apportion tasks and duties so that all may be performed without haste and without mistake.

Since the Israelites often marched through hostile territory, it might seem surprising that a whole tribe should be exempted from military service, not even being counted in the military census. This fact demonstrates the surpreme importance of proper attention to God's requirements for worship. If a nation neglects these, it cannot expect any permanent success in other lines. God demands the first place in the life of His people. His requirements must be met, or all else is of no avail (Psa. 127:1).

The chapters contain several instances where two or three verses are repeated almost verbatim. This is because similar orders are given and carried out regarding various sections of the tribe of Levi. As a result, the modern reader is apt to lose himself in the legal phraseology of the repetitions, and to miss the significant variations.

a. The Levites to serve the tabernacle under priestly direction (3:1-13)

These verses state the duties of the Levites in a general way, preparatory to the more detailed description that follows. Since the Levites are to be under the direction of the priests (9) the first members of the priestly family are named (1-3). It is not the purpose of the chapter to tell how the priests were selected and set apart for