

'and' in the margin. Yet it should be noted that 'even' does not necessarily imply that all the members of the tribe of Levi were priests, as is done if the phrase 'that is' is inserted.

Throughout the book of Numbers the priests and the Levites are sharply distinguished and the position of the Levites is represented as one of great dignity. This does not accord with the critical view, according to which the distinction originated in post-exilic times, and the Levites actually were only degraded priests. Furthermore, the proportion of priests to Levites here is very different from that in Ez. 2:36-40.

b. The Levites numbered and the duties of their various families assigned (3:14-39)

The command is given that all Levite males over a month old be numbered according to their families (15). Levi's three sons are named (17), and the families descended from each son are listed (18-20).. Next the three main divisions of the Levites, mentioned in verse 17, are taken up in turn, their numbers given, and their duties ~~in turn~~ assigned. The sons of Gershon are treated first (21-26), next the sons of Kohath (27-32), then the sons of Merari (33-37).

In each case, the first verse (21, 27 and 33) repeats the names of the subdivisions, corresponding to the family names already listed (18-20). The next verse defines the age limit of the present census (one month and upward, already stated in the command in verse 15), and gives the number in each main division: Gershon 7,500 (22), Kohath 8,600 (28), Merari 6,200 (34); the third verse states where each is to encamp; Gershon to the west of the tabernacle (23), Kohath to the south (29), Merari to the north (35b). Then the chief of each division is named (24, 30 and 35a).