

after all, limited to males of twenty and upward, able to go to war. The full total would be far greater. Since the firstborn who were living at the departure from Egypt had been passed over by the destroying angel when he killed all the firstborn Egyptians (Ex. 13:13-15), the principle had been established that the firstborn belong to God (Num. 3:13). Our present numbering probably included only those firstborn males who were born subsequent to the departure from Egypt.

The Levites and their cattle were taken by the Lord in place of 22,000 of the Israelite firstborn (45) and the remaining 273 were redeemed with money (46-51). It is to be noted that the Lord took all the cattle of the Levites in place of the firstborn of the cattle of Israel (41 and 45; cf. Ex. 12:29).

d. The mature Levites numbered and their service described in detail (4:1-33)

The numbering already described was for the purpose of settling the entire tribe of Levi apart for the service of the tabernacle. Now the Lord commands another numbering, this time limited to those individuals who are ready for actual service. Each of the three divisions of the tribe is taken in turn, but not in the same order as in chapter 3. Instead, the sons of Kohath, the division from which Moses and Aaron came, are placed first. This is logical, since the Kohathites are to have charge of the most important things in the tabernacle.

The three divisions are discussed in closely parallel fashion, with much repetition of phraseology. In each case a specific command to make a census is given first (2, 22, 29). Then the age limits of this particular census are stated (3, 23, 30). Next the service of each division is stated. The charge of Kohath describes in full the