

## Numbers 4:1-49 The Priests, The Levites and The Tabernacle

YeHoVaH gave Commandments and responsibilities to every Israelite from the least to the greatest. **He declared Israel as His peculiar treasure**; this acknowledged their value to Him.

The Priests' and Levites' value and responsibilities were to perform specific service to Him and to His Tabernacle.

In this portion of Numbers, **each Levitical family was assigned distinct duties and responsibilities** pertaining to the movement of the Tabernacle when the Israelites moved from camp to camp.

When we talk about the Feasts, we talk about the **responsibilities of the people** and the **responsibilities of the Priests**.

This portion of Numbers reveals some of the responsibilities of the Levites.

Nu 4:1 And **YeHoVaH spake** unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

**YeHoVaH spoke, Moses wrote.**

Responsibilities of the Kohathites:

Nu 4:2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers,

Nu 4:3 **From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old**, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

There are three distinct age groups that are recorded in the numbering of the Levites.

Chapter 3 listed all males **over the age of one month**.

Nu 3:15 Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them.

Chapter 4 lists those Levites who were of the age to serve in the Tabernacle from **thirty years to fifty years**.

In Numbers 8, the age is **twenty-five to fifty**.

Nu 8:24 This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:

Nu 8:25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more:

Nu 8:26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge. The retirement age for Levites was fifty years old.

NU 8:25 "But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more. (NASB)

Nu 4:4 This *shall be* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, *about* the most holy things:

Aaron and his sons would be responsible for preparing the Tabernacle for moving from camp to camp.

The Levite families were assigned certain items of the Tabernacle to carry from camp to camp.

First, Aaron and his sons had to pack and prepare the items to be carried by the Kohathites.

At this point, Aaron only had two sons according to Chapter 3.

Nu 3:1 These also *are* the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day *that* **YeHoVaH spake** with Moses in mount Sinai.

### **YeHoVaH spoke, Moses wrote.**

Nu 3:2 And these *are* the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Nu 3:3 These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.

Nu 3:4 And Nadab and Abihu died before YeHoVaH, when they offered strange fire before YeHoVaH, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

Eleazar was the elder of the two sons that remained. He would become the next High Priest according to Numbers 20.

Nu 20:23 And **YeHoVaH spake** unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

### **YeHoVaH spoke, Moses wrote.**

Nu 20:24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

Nu 20:25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:

Nu 20:26 And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered *unto his people*, and shall die there.

Nu 20:27 And Moses did as YeHoVaH commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

Nu 20:28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

Nu 20:29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, *even* all the house of Israel.

Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar had to pack and prepare the items to be carried by the Kohathites.

Nu 4:5 And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it:

Nu 4:6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over *it* a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.

Nu 4:7 And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon:

Nu 4:8 And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof.

Nu 4:9 And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it:

Nu 4:10 And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put *it* upon a bar.

Nu 4:11 And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof:

Nu 4:12 And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put *them* in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put *them* on a bar:

The Priests were responsible for taking away the ashes from the altar.

Nu 4:13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon:

Nu 4:14 And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, *even* the censers, the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it.

The Kohathites carried the items after they had been prepared by Aaron and his sons.

Nu 4:15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear *it*: **but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.** These *things* are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

The Kohathites were forbidden to **touch any holy thing, lest they die.**

And later in Verse 19, we will see they were forbidden to see the Holy things.

When David went to bring up the Ark of YeHoVaH, a man named Uzzah was killed by YeHoVaH for touching the Ark.

2Sa 6:2 And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of YeHoVaH of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubims.

2Sa 6:3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

2Sa 6:4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

2Sa 6:5 And David and all the house of Israel played before YeHoVaH on all manner of *instruments made of fir wood*, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

2Sa 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*.

2Sa 6:7 And the anger of YeHoVaH was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God.

2Sa 6:8 And David was displeased, because YeHoVaH had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

Eleazar, the future High Priest, would be responsible for supervising all the furnishings and items of the Holy and Most Holy Place.

Nu 4:16 And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *pertaineth* the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, *and* the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein *is*, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof.

Nu 4:17 And **YeHoVaH spake** unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

**YeHoVaH spoke, Moses wrote.**

Nu 4:18 **Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites** from among the Levites: For the sole preservation of the Kohathites, YeHoVaH was very specific in His Instructions to Moses to pass on to Aaron, His sons, and the Kohathite families, who would serve in the Tabernacle.

Nu 4:19 But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden:

Nu 4:20 But they shall not go in **to see** when the holy things are covered, **lest they die**.

All the work of the Kohathites had to be strictly supervised by Aaron and his sons. Only the Priests were able to touch and look at the unveiled Holy things.

**Following YeHoVaH's Instructions was a matter of life and death.**

Responsibilities of the Gershonites  
Aaron's son, Ithamar, would oversee the Gershonites.

Nu 4:21 And **YeHoVaH spake** unto Moses, saying,

**YeHoVaH spoke, Moses wrote.**

Nu 4:22 Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families;

Nu 4:23 From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Nu 4:24 This *is* the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens:

Nu 4:25 And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that *is* above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,

Nu 4:26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which *is* by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve.

Nu 4:27 At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens.

Nu 4:28 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge *shall be* under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Responsibilities of the Merarites

Aaron's son, Ithamar, would oversee the Merarites.

Nu 4:29 As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers;

Nu 4:30 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Nu 4:31 And this *is* the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof,

Nu 4:32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden.

Nu 4:33 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Nu 4:34 And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

Nu 4:35 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation:

The number of Kohathites, thirty years old to fifty years old, was 2,750.

Nu 4:36 And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty.

Nu 4:37 These *were* they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of YeHoVaH by the hand of Moses.

Nu 4:38 And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers,

Nu 4:39 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

The number of Gershonites, thirty years old to fifty years old, was 2,630.

Nu 4:40 Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty.

Nu 4:41 These *are* they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of YeHoVaH.

Nu 4:42 And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers,

Nu 4:43 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

The number of Mararites, thirty years old to fifty years old, was 3,200.

Nu 4:44 Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred.

Nu 4:45 These *be* those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of YeHoVaH by the hand of Moses.

Nu 4:46 All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

Nu 4:47 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation,

8,580 Levites were numbered to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them in the Tabernacle.

Nu 4:48 Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore.

Nu 4:49 **According to the commandment of YeHoVaH** they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, **as YeHoVaH commanded Moses**.

**YeHoVaH spoke, Moses wrote.**