

## 12.24 Passover, Numbering, Organization (Numbers 9:1–14; 1:1–54; 2:1–31; 3:11–51; 8:1–22)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- “The Tabernacle” Flash-a-Cards from A Beka Book and/or pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Nancy Ganz’s treatment of this story is excellent in *Numbers: A Commentary for Children*, published by Shepherd Press, 2006.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Tips and terms are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *census*: counting of people

### Scripture: (NASB)

Numbers 9:1 Thus the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 “Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. 3 On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.” 4 So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. 5 They observed the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did.” . . .

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a dead person, or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the LORD. 11 In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12 They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it. 13 But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the LORD at its appointed time. That man will bear his sin. 14 If an alien sojourns among you and observes the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its ordinance, so he shall do; you shall have one statute, both for the alien and for the native of the land.’”

1:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 “Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head 3 from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to* go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies. 4 With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father’s household. 5 These then are the names of the men who shall stand with you: [the names follow] . . . 16 These are they who were called of the congregation, the leaders of their fathers’ tribes; they were the heads of divisions of Israel.”

17 So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name, 18 and they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month. Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head, 19 just as the LORD had commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

20 Now the sons of Reuben, Israel’s firstborn, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war. . . . 22 Of the sons of Simeon, . . . Gad, . . . Judah, . . . Issachar, . . .

Zebulun, . . . the sons of Joseph, *namely*, of the sons of Ephraim, . . . Manasseh, . . . Benjamin, . . . Dan, . . . Asher, . . . Naphtali. . . 44 These are the ones who were numbered . . . 46 even all the numbered men were 603,550.

47 The Levites, however, were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe. 48 For the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying, 49 "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel. 50 But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle. 51 So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death. 52 The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies. 53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony." 54 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all which the LORD had commanded Moses, so they did.

2:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 "The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. 3 Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: . . . 74,600. 5 Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar . . . 54,400. 7 Then comes the tribe of Zebulun . . . 57,400. 9 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400, by their armies. They shall set out first.

10 "On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben . . . 46,500. 12 Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon . . . 59,300. 14 Then comes the tribe of Gad . . . 45,650. 16 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Reuben: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second.

17 "Then the tent of meeting shall set out with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards.

18 "On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their armies . . . 40,500. 20 Next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh . . . 32,200. 22 Then comes the tribe of Benjamin . . . 35,400. 24 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: 108,100, by their armies. And they shall set out third.

25 "On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their armies . . . 62,700. 27 Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher . . . 41,500. 29 Then comes the tribe of Naphtali . . . 53,400. 31 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Dan was 157,600. They shall set out last by their standards."

32 These are the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households; the total of the numbered men of the camps by their armies, 603,550. 33 The Levites, however, were not numbered among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 34 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, every one by his family according to his father's household.

3:11 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine. 13 For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD."

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, 15 "Number the sons of Levi by their fathers' households, by their families; every male from a month old and upward you shall number." 16 So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, just as he had been commanded. 17 These then are the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari. . . .

21 Of Gershon . . . in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, even their numbered men were 7,500. 23 The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward. . . .

25 Now the duties of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting involved the tabernacle and the tent, its covering, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting, 26 and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords, according to all the service concerning them.

27 Of Kohath . . . in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, there were 8,600, performing the duties of the sanctuary. 29 The families of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the southward side of the tabernacle. . . . 31 Now their duties involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary with which they minister, and the screen, and all the service concerning them; 32 and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was the chief of the leaders of Levi, and had the oversight of those who perform the duties of the sanctuary.

33 Of Merari . . . in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, were 6,200. 35 . . . They were to camp on the northward side of the tabernacle. 36 Now the appointed duties of the sons of Merari involved the frames of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, all its equipment, and the service concerning them, 37 and the pillars around the court with their sockets and their pegs and their cords.

38 Now those who were to camp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, are Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but the layman coming near was to be put to death. 39 All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of the LORD by their families, every male from a month old and upward, were 22,000.

40 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Number every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names. 41 You shall take the Levites for Me, I am the LORD, instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel.” 42 So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded him; 43 and all the firstborn males by the number of names from a month old and upward, for their numbered men were 22,273.

44 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am the LORD. 46 For the ransom of the 273 of the firstborn of the sons of Israel who are in excess beyond the Levites, 47 you shall take five shekels apiece, per head; you shall take them in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), 48 and give the money, the ransom of those who are in excess among them, to Aaron and to his sons.” 49 So Moses took the ransom money from those who were in excess, beyond those ransomed by the Levites; 50 from the firstborn of the sons of Israel he took the money in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary, 1,365. 51 Then Moses gave the ransom money to Aaron and to his sons, at the command of the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

8:5 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 “Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them. 7 Thus you shall do to them, for their cleansing: sprinkle purifying water on them, and let them use a razor over their whole body and wash their clothes, and they will be clean. 8 Then let them take a bull with its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil; and a second bull you shall take for a sin offering. 9 So you shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, 10 and present the Levites before the LORD; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. 11 Aaron then shall present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, that they may qualify to perform the service of the LORD. . . .

14 “Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. 15 Then after that the Levites may go in to serve the tent of meeting. But you shall cleanse them and present them as a wave offering; 16 for they are wholly given to Me from among the sons of Israel. I have taken them for Myself instead of every first issue of the womb, the firstborn of all the sons of Israel. . . .”

## **Introduction/Review:**

Moses, at God's specific instruction, had charged Bezalel and Aholiab to construct the tabernacle and its furnishings. [Teacher, refer to the calendar below for the month Abib.] On the first day of the first month of the second year after the Israelites had left Egypt, Moses and the Levites had set up the tabernacle. On or near the eighth day of the first month, called Abib, after Aaron and his sons had gone through the ritual cleansing and preparation to be priests, God's fire had come down to burn up the sacrifice on the bronze altar. Soon after or perhaps on the same day, the older two sons of Aaron sinned by worshiping in a way not authorized by God. What were the names of those two older sons? [Nadab and Abihu.] What wrong thing did these two priests do? [Offered strange fire.] What was their punishment? [Fire from God slew them.] Who took them out to be buried? [Cousins.] What was God's strange command to Aaron about showing grief for the death of his sons? [Not to mourn while serving as priest.]

## **Story:**

### ***Passover***

Another week (about six days) passed. The fourteenth day of the first month, Abib, on the Israelite calendar was a special one-year anniversary. It was the anniversary of Passover. What had happened just one year before on this day? [The death angel had passed over the houses where blood had been sprinkled on the doorposts; Israel had left Egypt.]

Now God said, "Keep the Passover just as you did a year ago." And they did; they celebrated their first festival/feast in their journey to the Promised Land.

### ***General census***

Sixteen or so days later on the first day of the second month, God gave a new charge: "Take a census of the people; count the men who are twenty years old and over, men who are able to serve in the army."

First of all, counting all these men was too big a task for a single person; so God named one man from each tribe to count his own tribe.

Second, this is a different kind of census. In the United States of America, a census occurs every ten years. In 2020, for example, was a census. When would the next one have been? [2030.] Every single person living in the U. S. A. is counted, even the babies who are days old. But God wanted Moses to count only the men, only the men 20 years old and over, only men 20 years and over who were able to serve in the army. Why was God having Moses take a census? [To show the size of Israel's army.]

Because the Levites were in charge of taking care of the tabernacle, which included defending it against robbers or enemies, the Levites were not to be included in this particular census. They were not to go off as soldiers but were to stay at the tabernacle and protect it.

The other twelve tribes totaled 603,550 men—a fairly large army!

### ***Organization of tribes***

Third, "The next instruction from God was how the Israelite army was to camp and how they were to march. . . . In the centre of Israel's camp was the LORD's tabernacle. Surrounding the Tabernacle were the tents of the Levites. . . . Then the rest of Israel, tribe by tribe, camped around the Tabernacle, like spokes radiating from the hub of a wheel. Except for the tribe of Levi, who was camped right next to the Tabernacle, all the other tribes were equally close to the LORD. Each tribe had its own flag, which fluttered proudly in its own section of the camp. We do not know what those tribal banners looked like. Perhaps the flags were different colours with different symbols, Perhaps each flag had a different animal on it, such as a lion on Judah's flag, a donkey on Issachar's flag, a serpent on Dan's flag, a deer on Naphtali's flag or a wolf on Benjamin's flag—according to the blessings that Jacob gave his sons before he died.

“. . . God also arranged the tribes into four main divisions, like the four main points on a compass. There

could be no grumbling or quarrelling about who should go first or who should go last, who should camp east or who should camp west—for God assigned to each tribe its own position” (Ganz). [See image at the end of this lesson for the arrangement of the tribes.]

### *Census of Levites*

Fourth, “God commanded Moses to take another census, just for the tribe of Levi. There in the Desert of Sinai the LORD said, ‘Count the Levites by their families and clans. Count every male a month old or more’ (Numbers 3:15). . . . Levi had three sons—Gershon, Kohath, and Merari—who became the three main clans in the tribe of Levi . . . The total number of Levites counted at the LORD’s command was 22,000” (Ganz).

### *Census of firstborn*

Fifth, “Then the LORD commanded Moses to take another census. God said, ‘Count all the firstborn Israelite males who are a month old or more and make a list of their names. Take the Levites for Me in place of all the firstborn of the Israelites . . . (Numbers 3:40, 41). . . . There were 22,273 firstborn males. It was almost an even trade! . . . [T]he Lord said they [the extra 273 men/boys from the other tribes] could be redeemed or bought back with money, which would then be given to the priests” (Ganz).

### *Census of working Levites*

Sixth, one more census was taken for each of the clans of Levi, this time from ages 30 to 50. These would be the ones to serve the tabernacle. Each clan had a particular task in transporting and caring for the tabernacle. [See chart at the end of this lesson and review the tasks.] Before the tabernacle furniture could be carried by the Kohathites, the priests had to cover everything, first with blue, scarlet, or purple cloth and then with skins. Then the priests inserted poles into the rings on the furniture or placed the items on carrying frames (as in the case of the lamp stand) so that the Kohathites could carry them. However, the curtains, posts, sockets, etc., were transported by six wagons each of which was drawn by two oxen. These wagons had been given by the census takers of each tribe.

### *Consecration of Levites*

Before the Levites could perform their duties for the tabernacle, they had to be sanctified just as the tabernacle and the priests had been sanctified earlier—by washing their bodies and clothes in water, by being presented to the congregation and having the Israelite men lay hands on them, by sacrificing two young bulls, and by having the blood of those sacrifices sprinkled on them. “Without the shedding of blood there can be no purification from sin.”

Thus, we see the Levites separated unto the work of God. He had said, “Every firstborn male in Israel, whether man or animal, is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for Myself. And I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel. Of all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of the Israelites to make atonement for them, so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the Sanctuary” (Numbers 8:5-19).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:  
Rather than being a firstborn son who needed to be redeemed, Jesus Christ redeemed all those who come to Him by faith.
- Romans 12:1 and 2 states, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Can you be a modern-day Levite, serving the Lord?

## Activities:

- Play dough: tents, wagons, oxen
- Snack: Have small portions of some of the Passover Seder items such as boiled egg, parsley, lamb, matzah.
- Review the names of the twelve tribes of Israel by singing stanza 4 of “Jacob” found on the “Songs” page at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org).
- Review questions: (Game: Print, back with paper towel, and cut out the four groups of tribes and the four Levite families. With the printed page available for reference, students will correctly place the groups and Levites with each correct answer.)
  1. What festival was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month? [Passover.]
  2. Who was included in the general census of Israel? [Males over 20 years old who could be soldiers.]
  3. Who took the census? [Leaders of the tribes.]
  4. What was the approximate total of men who were 20 years old or more who could go to war? [600,000; or exactly 603,550.]
  5. Rather than go to war, what was the responsibility of the Levites? [To assemble and disassemble and to carry the tabernacle and its furnishings.]
  6. How could each tribe be identified? What item showed each tribe’s identity? [A banner or flag.]
  7. Who would redeem the firstborn? [The Levites.]
  8. What would be done to redeem the 273 extra firstborn? [They would be redeemed by money given to Aaron and his sons.]

## Memory Verse[s]:

- Finish up Exodus 20:1–17. An enlarged copy of the words, the “Exodus 20:1–17” song sheet, and motions are in Lesson 12.15 or on the “Lessons” and “Songs” pages at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org).

## Handwork:

- Color the Passover coloring page found below.

census

## ABIB (year 2)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		Tabernacle set up				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		?Fire from God	?Nadab and Abihu			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Passover					
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	20
					Census of the People	The People Moved



# First Census of Israel's Soldiers

Reuben	46500
Simeon	59300
Gad	45650
Judah	74600
Issachar	54400
Zebulun	57400
Ephraim	40500
Manasseh	32200
Benjamin	35400
Dan	62700
Asher	41500
Naphtali	<u>53400</u>
	603550

A photograph of a Seder plate with various symbolic foods. In the center is a silver chalice filled with red wine. To the left is a glass bowl of Charoseth, a hard-boiled egg, and a Matzah. To the right is a glass bowl of bitter herbs (horseradish) and a piece of roasted lamb. In the background, there are two framed pictures: one of a silver chalice and another of a Seder table setting. The entire scene is set against a white wall with a small polka-dot pattern.

**Elijah's Cup  
Wine**

Charoseth

Karpar

Celery, parsley, greens

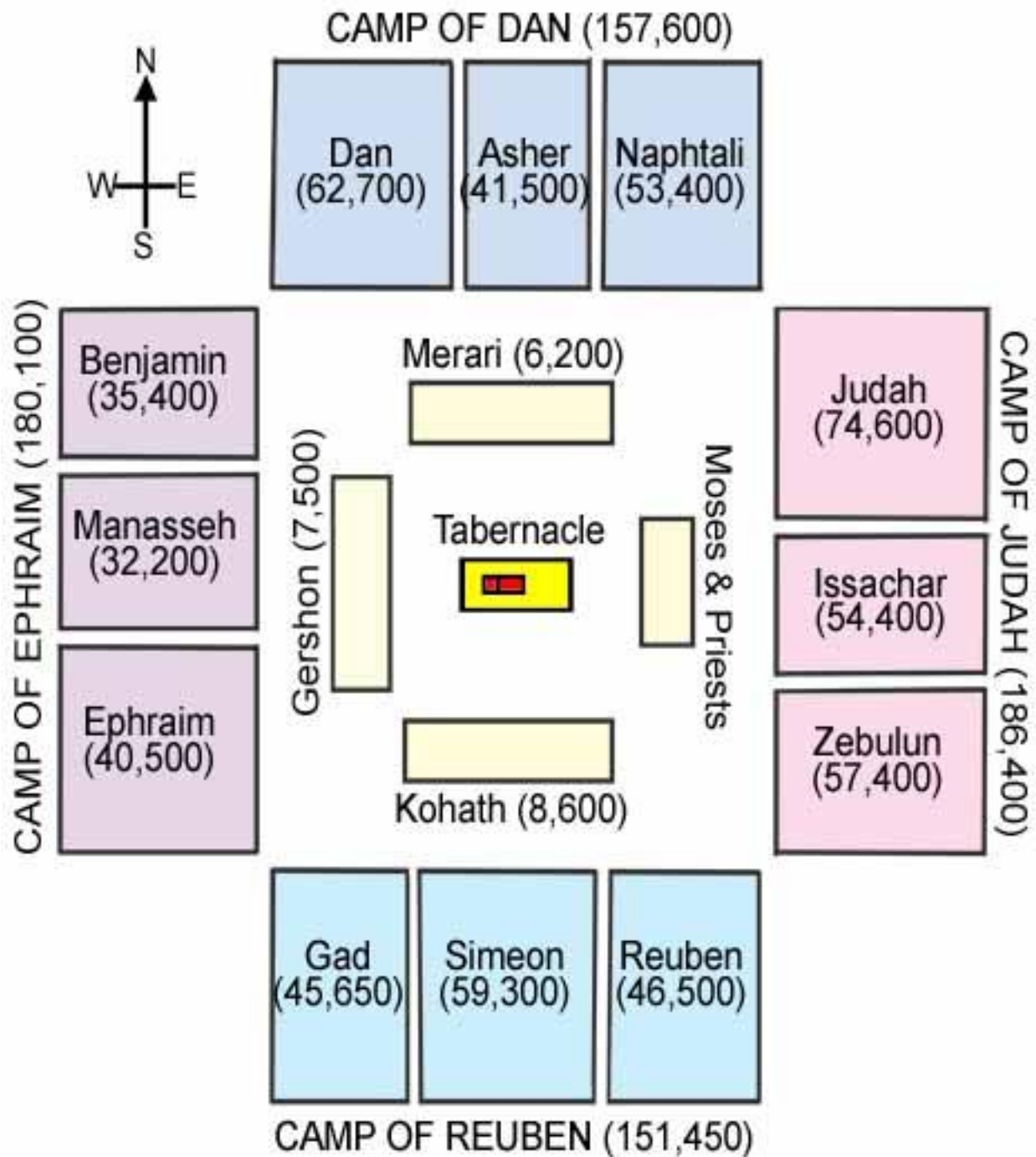
Maror

Egg

bitter herbs  
(horseradish)

Matzah

Roasted  
Lamb



## Arrangement of the Camp of Israel

### Numbers 2:1-3:39

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Clan	Total Count	30-50 Year Olds	Location Around Tabernacle	Prince	Carried	Overseer
Gershon Livni Shimi	7,500	2,630	West	Eliasaf son of Lael	Tapestry-cover , cover of goat skin, cover of ram and <i>tachash</i> skins, entrance Screen, curtains and screen of the Courtyard, ropes for these curtains	Itamar
Kehat Amram Yitzhar Hebron Uziel	8,600	2,750	South	Elitzafan son of Uziel	Ark of the Testimony, show-bread Table, Candelabrum, Inner and Outer Altars, utensils, dividing screen	Eleazar
Merari Machli Mushi	6,200	3,200	North	Tzuriel son of Avichail	Planks, bars, pillars, sockets, and utensils of the Tabernacle; pillars, sockets, stakes, and ropes of the Courtyard	Itamar
Total	22,300	8,580				
(Moses, Aaron and his sons)			East			

Figure 1: The Second Levite Census

copied from <http://chongsoonkim.blogspot.com/2014/01/let-us-then-approach-gods-throne-of.html>

HAPPY PASSOVER

