

BAMIDBAR - NUMBERS

- In the Desert -

Dan Stolebarger - Holy Ground Explorations
Chapters 1-4:20

INTRODUCTION



PARASHAT BAMIDBAR

INTRO

The Torah tells the story of our pilgrimage to ZION, the mountain of the LORD that one day will fill the whole earth.... GENESIS describes our creation and fall; EXODUS describes our bondage and deliverance; LEVITICUS describes our walk of holiness; and NUMBERS describes the test and refinement of our faith ... RU READY?

Why does God bring His people into the desert? The Hebrew word *midbar* ("desert") shares the same root as the word *davar* which means "word." When God spoke the Torah to Moses, it was from a nondescript mountain (Sinai) – a place of emptiness, brokenness and need – which therefore suggests the word of *humility*. Indeed, another word for Sinai is *Chorev*, a word that refers to the dryness and desolation. That is the starting point – not the lush places of future promise. We receive Torah "bamidbar" (in the desert) because we can only hear God's *davar* in a place of humility and inner quiet. God brings us to an arid place – inhospitable, and dangerous – to reveal our need for Him. This is a necessary excursion to prepare us to look for the greater hope of Zion.

INTRO

Numbers marks the end of the historical narrative of the Torah, since it briefly describes the Israelites arrival at the end of their journey, the impending death of Moses, and the appointment of Joshua as the new leader of the people (Deuteronomy presents Moses' final sermon before he dies).

So, the Torah leaves us in the desert, waiting for a new generation under the leadership of Joshua (another name for Yeshua) to lead the people into their inheritance.

In what ways have you crossed the Jordan and defeated the "giants" in your life? Are you dwelling in the Land of Promise or are you still in the desert?

1

Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first *day* 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 children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names

The Hebrew word Pakod does not only mean "to count" but it means also to to make sure that nothing or nobody is missing. It is more than counting "what is"; it is about ensuring that all that needs to be there is accounted for as well. Hashem is telling Moshe, in this Torah portion, not only to count his people but to account for them all as well. Hashem is intent that no one is left out. He wants Moshe to make sure that none go missing. Each individual , even in the midst of wilderness, his own or the communal wilderness is a unique and powerful component of the whole . Each individual a shining and beloved star.

Rashi asks why must the Torah tells us that Hashem makes a point of counting His people again and again? He explains that this was so because of " G-d's great love for His people, He counts them all the time." Just as one who counts his prized possessions again and again out of affection.



More Background - at the age of five, the study of Scripture begins, studying the Mishnah begins at thirteen, the obligation to observe the mitzvot at fifteen, the study of the Talmud at eighteen and marriage at twenty begins the pursuit of life. Avot 5:24

⁵⁴ Thus the children of Israel did; according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so they did.

HMMM - Let's count how often this is true throughout this Book! :-)

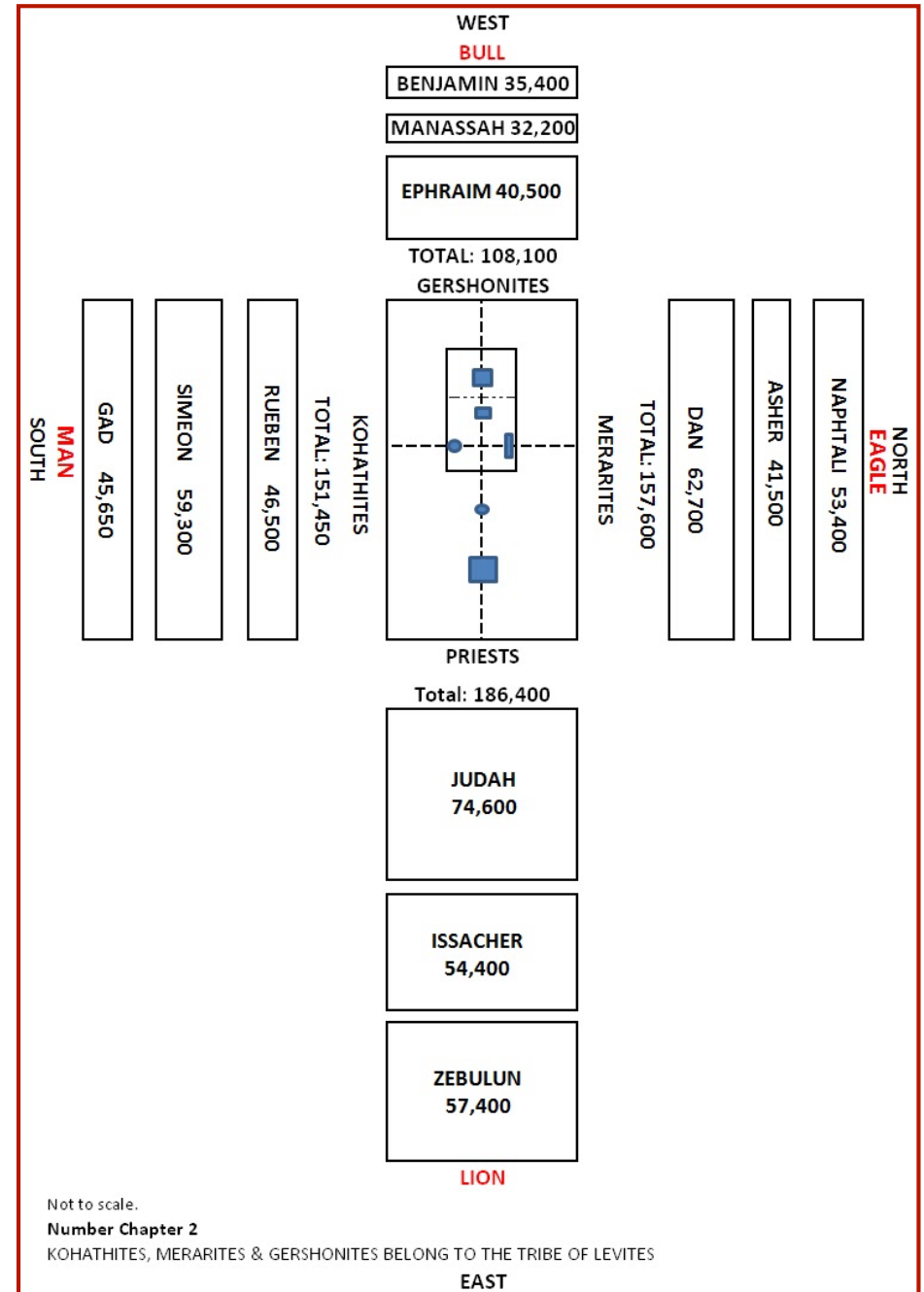
2

And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ² "Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting.

How were the 12 tribes arranged around the Tabernacle?

Each tribe camped in the same positions as the sons of Jacob stood when they came before him for the blessing.

Which tribe faced the gate to the Tabernacle? The Tribe of Judah, from which would come the Messiah Yeshua (the "Shiloh" prophecy).



North



Manasseh



Naphtali



Dan



Asher



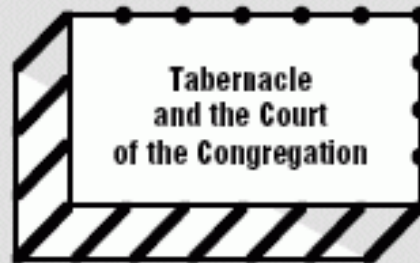
Zebulun



Levi
Sons of Merari



Levi
Sons of
Gershon



Tabernacle
and the Court
of the Congregation



Moses
Aaron



Levi
Sons of Kohath



Simeon



Reuben



Gad



Issachar

East



Judah

West



Ephraim



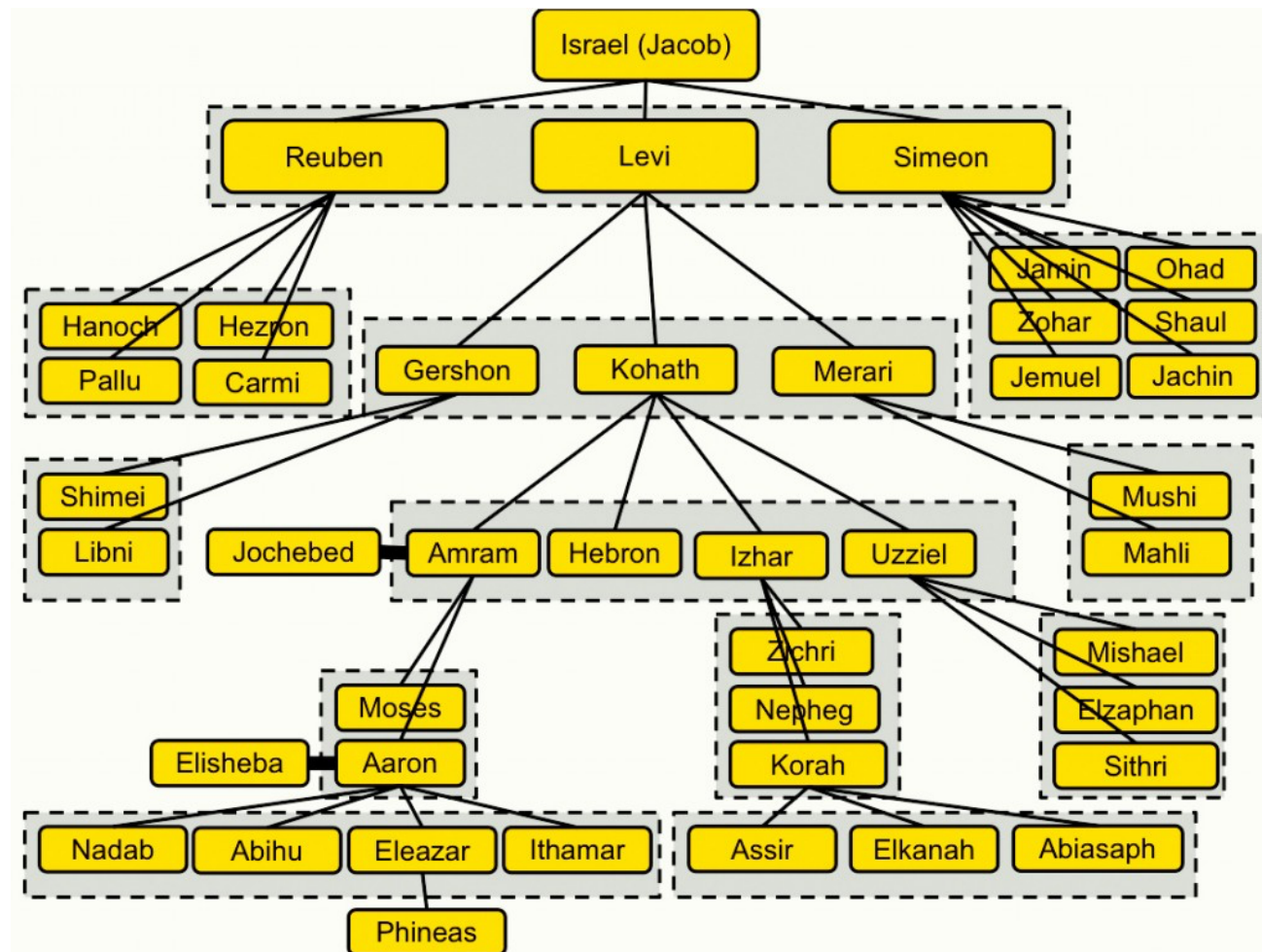
Benjamin

South

¹¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹² "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, ¹³ because all the firstborn *are* Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I *am* the Lord."

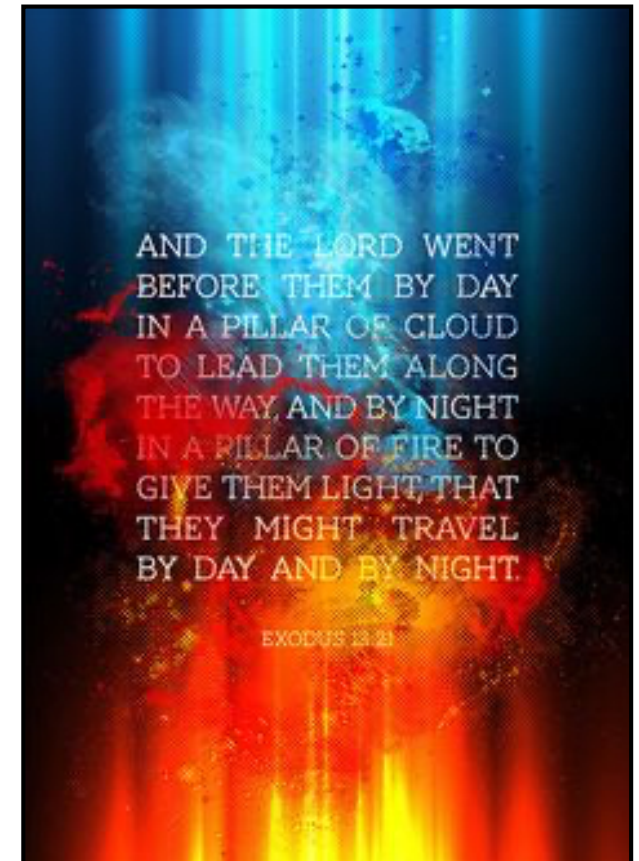
LEVITIES

Remember, that originally all firstborn sons of Israel were to serve as priests for their families, but that all changed because of the sins of the golden calf. Because the Levities did not participate and came to the side of Moses they were chosen instead



4

4 "This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, *relating to the* most holy things: 5 When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. 6 Then they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over *that* a cloth entirely of blue; and they shall insert its poles.



LEVITIES

- The clan of **Gershon** was responsible for the woven materials of the Tabernacle, the clan of **Merari** handled the wooden framework as well as the courtyard and its sockets, and the clan of **Kohath** was responsible for carrying the sacred furnishings themselves.
- Note that *Aaron and his two sons* (i.e., Eleazar and Ithamar) were part of the Kohathite clan, though they alone were separated for special service. The Kohathites were warned not to directly touch any of the sacred objects, however, and only Aaron and his sons were permitted to insert the carrying poles and cover the objects before they could be moved.



COUNTING THE OMER



COUNTING THE OMER

As the holiday of Shavuot became associated with the giving of the Torah, and not only with a celebration of agricultural bounty, the omer period began to symbolize the thematic link between Passover and Shavuot.

While Passover celebrates the initial liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, Shavuot marks the culmination of the process of liberation, when the Jews became an autonomous community with their own laws and standards. **Counting up to Shavuot reminds us of this process of moving from a slave mentality to a more liberated one.**

COUNTING THE OMER

With the mitzvah of counting the 49 days, known as Sefirat Ha'Omer, the Torah invites us on a journey into the human psyche, into the soul. There are seven basic emotions that make up the spectrum of human experience. At the root of all forms of enslavement, is a distortion of these emotions. Each of the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot is dedicated to examining and refining one of them.

The seven emotional attributes are:

Chesed — Loving-kindness (W1-7)

Gevurah — Justice and discipline (W8-14)

Tiferet — Harmony, compassion (W15-21)

Netzach — Endurance (W22-28)

Hod — Humility (W29-35)

Yesod — Bonding (W36-42)

Malchut — Sovereignty, leadership (W43-49)

LEADERSHIP

The last week of counting the Omer the theme to meditate on is called *malchut*. *Malchut* contains two completely opposite qualities, called *hitnasut*, meaning "exaltedness," and its opposite *shiflut*, meaning "humility".

As Believers in Yeshua how can we not picture out KING coming into Jerusalem not on a regal horse but on a lowly donkey. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many!