

Numbers 2 - Thursday, May 6th, 2010

- We're continuing our study through the Bible starting in the book of Genesis. Last week we began our study of the book of Numbers.
- Genesis is Abraham waiting, Exodus is Moses watching, Leviticus is Israel Worshipping, and Numbers is Israel wandering and warring.
- The numbering was an inventory of the tribes by families so as to prepare them for battle which caused them to murmur and wander.
- Tonight we'll look at a most interesting chapter that once again would seem at first glance to be not only monotonous, but repetitious.
- We're about to see a prophetic "scripture picture" as I like to call it, that is painted on the canvass of a seemingly uninteresting chapter.
- 12 tribes are camped in 4 groups of 3 with the Tabernacle in the center as the elected leader would fly their banner over the 3 tribes.

1 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. 3 On the east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be the leader of the children of Judah." 4 And his army was numbered at seventy-four thousand six hundred. 5 "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar, and Nethanel the son of Zuar shall be the leader of the children of Issachar." 6 And his army was numbered at fifty-four thousand four hundred. 7 "Then comes the tribe of Zebulun, and Eliab the son of Helon shall be the leader of the children of Zebulun." 8 And his army was numbered at fifty-seven thousand four hundred. 9 "All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Judah, one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred -- these shall break camp first.

- They're to group Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun together with Judah being at the head, and the number of those tribes totals 186,400.
- This first grouping of these three tribes of Israelites was to camp to the East of the Tabernacle, is at the center of all their camps.

10 "On the south side shall be the standard of the forces with Reuben according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur." 11 And his army was numbered at forty-six thousand five hundred. 12 "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai." 13 And his army was numbered at fifty-nine thousand three hundred. 14 "Then comes the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the children of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel." 15 And his army was numbered at forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty. 16 "All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Reuben, one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty -- they shall be the second to break camp.

- They're to group Reuben, Simeon, and Gad together with Reuben being at the head, and the number of those tribes totals 151,450.
- As we'll see, this second grouping of three tribes was to camp to the South of the Tabernacle, with Judah's standard at the front.

17 "And the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps; as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their standards.

- Here we have the mention of the tribe of Levi who are camped in the middle closest in proximity to the Tabernacle as the priestly tribe.
- Not only is this the way they were to camp, it was also the way they were to march when they would take the land the Lord gave them.

18 "On the west side shall be the standard of the forces with Ephraim according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud." 19 And his army was numbered at forty thousand five hundred. 20 "Next to him comes the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur." 21 And his army was numbered at thirty-two thousand two hundred. 22 "Then comes the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the children of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideon." 23 And his army was numbered at thirty-five thousand four hundred. 24 "All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Ephraim, one hundred and eight thousand one hundred -- they shall be the third to break camp.

- They're to group Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin together with Ephraim at the head, and the number of those tribes totals 108,100.
- This third grouping of these three tribes of Israelites was to camp to the West with the tribe of Ephraim's standard at the front.

25 "The standard of the forces with Dan shall be on the north side according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai." 26 And his army was numbered at sixty-two thousand seven hundred. 27 "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ocran." 28 And his army was numbered at forty-one thousand five hundred. 29 "Then comes the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan." 30 And his army was numbered at fifty-three thousand four hundred. 31 "All who were numbered of the forces with Dan, one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred -- they shall break camp last, with their standards."

- They're to group Dan, Asher, and Naphtali together with Dan being at the head, and the number of those tribes totals 157,600.
- This fourth grouping of these three tribes of Israelites was to camp to the North with the tribe of Dan's standard at the front.

32 These are the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. 33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 34 Thus the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses; so they camped by their standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.

- These are the totals of all the tribes except the Levites who were numbered according to their armies, and it comes in at 603,550.
- Again, it's important that we understand the configuration of these camps in these numbers with the standards of four tribes at the front.

JUDAH TO THE EAST – 186,400 (VERSES 1-9)	EPHRAIM TO THE WEST – 108,100 (VERSES 18-24)
REUBEN TO THE SOUTH – 151,450 (VERSES 10-17)	DAN TO THE NORTH – 157,600 (VERSES 25-34)

- Here we have a fascinating picture that is ever so beautifully woven into the fabric of Revelation where we have the heavenly scene.

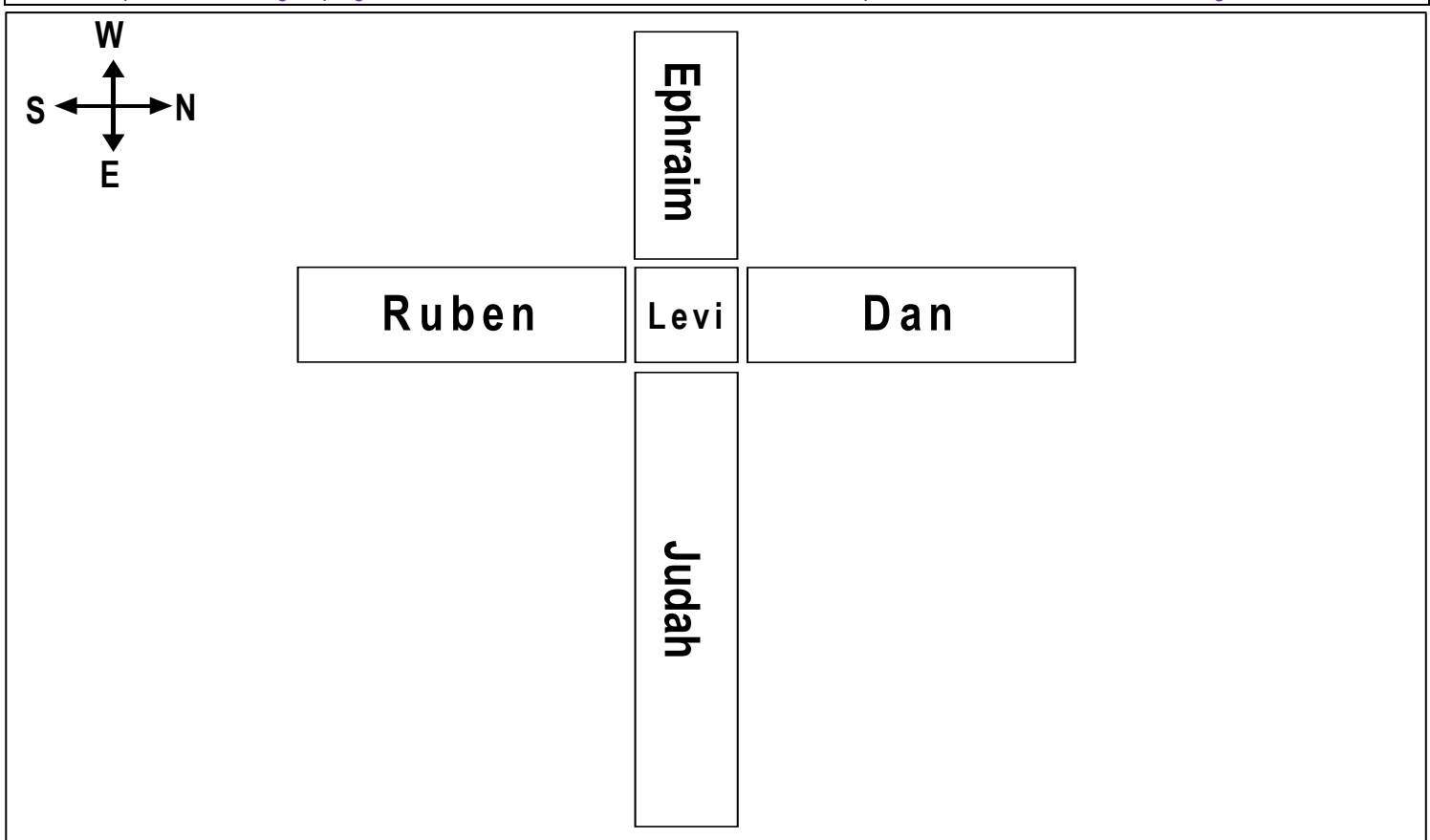
Revelation 4:6-7 In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

- Consider these comparisons between the scene that we have here with the Israelites in Numbers, and what we have in Revelation.

NUMBERS	REVELATION
The Tabernacle is at the center	The Throne is at the center
Four groups of three tribes from front to back	Four living creations with eyes in front and back
The first is led by Judah whose standard was a lion	The first creature was like a lion
The tribe of Ephraim had a standard with an ox	The second creature was like an ox
The tribe of Reuben had a standard with a man	The third creature had a face like a man
The fourth group is led by Dan whose standard was an eagle	The fourth creature was like a flying eagle

	JUDAH	EPHRAIM	REUBEN	DAN
CAMP	East	West	South	North
FACE	Lion	Ox	Man	Eagle
GOSPEL	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
JESUS	Messiah – Said	Servant – Did	Son of Man – Felt	Son of God - Was
WRITTEN TO	Jew	Roman	Greek	Church

- This is where it gets really exciting; this scene here in Numbers and the scene in Revelation point to Christ's finished work on the cross.
- The camp of these four groupings of three tribes each would have formed the shape of a cross with the tabernacle right in the center.



- Turn a few pages to chapter 24 here in this boring book of Numbers please, as we fill in some blanks and connect some typology dots.
- Let me set the stage with the backdrop. Balak, who's threatened by the "numbers" of Israelites, hires Balaam to put a curse on them.
- Every one of Balaam's attempts are met with failure, as only blessings were pronounced upon them instead a curse being put on them.
- This infuriates Balak, who finally takes him to a higher elevation so that he can see all the tribes camped instead of just a part of them.

Numbers 24:1-3 1 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not resort to sorcery as at other times, but turned his face toward the desert. 2 When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him 3 and he uttered his oracle: NIV

- The reason that Balaam could not bring a curse upon the Israelites "encamped tribe by tribe" was because it foreshadowed the cross.
- In other words, because Jesus Christ took upon Himself the curse of all our sin on the cross, we are no long under the curse of the law.

Galatians 3:10-14 10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." NIV

- There's a very important life lesson here that we'd be remiss to not take just a moment to look at with regards to what happens next.
- Balak ultimately succeeds in his goal to have the Israelites cursed but Balaam doesn't bring it upon them, they bring it upon themselves.

Numbers 25:1-3 1 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, 2 who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. 3 So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them. NIV

- I find it interesting that in His letter to the church of Pergamum, Jesus has John write about how Balaam taught Balak to do this.

Revelation 2:14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. NIV

- It's been said that knowledge is information, but wisdom is the application of that information, and this is a good example of just that.
- In other words, we have this information here in Numbers, but unless we have the application to our own lives, we're wasting our time.
- Having said that; I would like to close our time together this evening with the application of the information in our study this boring book.

1. Everything around me (North-South-East-West) must center on Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross.
2. I must take an inventory as a family and as a church family as to when, how, and where the Lord is moving in my life.
3. When God begins moving in my midst, it's very costly to begin murmuring in the midst of the battle and warfare.
4. God moves with order not disorder. He arranges and organizes our circumstances His way and it's under His control.

"God orders things according to His wisdom, not ours. In the arrangement of the tribes, He did not place the largest tribes closest to the tabernacle (as if bigger was always better); Ephraim, the closest westward tribe, is the third smallest tribe. Nor did He place all the large tribes on the outward perimeter for greatest protection (Benjamin, the second smallest tribe, is on the outer perimeter). God always has order and organization, but it may not make sense to us."

David Guzik, Calvary Chapel Siegen Germany

The body of Christ is an organism because of God's order and the organization of the body of Christ on the cross.
 God may not get me out, but He will get me through the desert wandering and into the promised Oasis.
 Everyone is measured, counted, and positioned, in relationship to the Lord (Tabernacle) not others.
 The more I serve the Lord, the closer I'll be to the Lord like the tribe of Levi camped around the Tabernacle.
 The more I complain, and rebel in the midst of my circumstances, the more I delay the promises (Land) of God.
 God speaks more than 150 times and in 20 different ways, (as with Moses in Numbers) even through a stubborn old mule.