

**Exegetical Notes, Numbers 10:11-36**  
**“The First March”**

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**Numbers 10:11-36**

**Verses 11-13**

*On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the covenant law. <sup>12</sup> Then the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. <sup>13</sup> They set out, this first time, at the LORD’s command through Moses.*

- The process for moving the camp is first laid out in Numbers 9:15-23. Whenever the cloud that covered the tent lifted from over the tent this was the command of God for the nation to move.
- This was the first time that the cloud actually lifted from over the tent. God was commanding the whole Hebrew nation to begin their march to the promised land.

**Verses 14-28**

*<sup>14</sup> The divisions of the camp of Judah went first, under their standard. Nahshon son of Amminadab was in command. <sup>15</sup> Nethanel son of Zuar was over the division of the tribe of Issachar, <sup>16</sup> and Eliab son of Helon was over the division of the tribe of Zebulun. <sup>17</sup> Then the tabernacle was taken down, and the Gershonites and Merarites, who carried it, set out.*

*<sup>18</sup> The divisions of the camp of Reuben went next, under their standard. Elizur son of Shedeur was in command. <sup>19</sup> Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was over the division of the tribe of Simeon, <sup>20</sup> and Eliasaph son of Deuel was over the division of the tribe of Gad. <sup>21</sup> Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. The tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived.*

*<sup>22</sup> The divisions of the camp of Ephraim went next, under their standard. Elishama son of Ammihud was in command. <sup>23</sup> Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was over the division of the tribe of Manasseh, <sup>24</sup> and Abidan son of Gideoni was over the division of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>25</sup> Finally, as the rear guard for all the units, the divisions of the camp of Dan set out under*

*their standard. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was in command.<sup>26</sup> Pagiel son of Ocran was over the division of the tribe of Asher,<sup>27</sup> and Ahira son of Enan was over the division of the tribe of Naphtali.<sup>28</sup> This was the order of march for the Israelite divisions as they set out.*

- The order of march is followed as set out in Numbers 2.

### **Verses 29-36**

*<sup>29</sup> Now Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place about which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."*

*<sup>30</sup> He answered, "No, I will not go; I am going back to my own land and my own people."*

*<sup>31</sup> But Moses said, "Please do not leave us. You know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. <sup>32</sup> If you come with us, we will share with you whatever good things the LORD gives us."*

*<sup>33</sup> So they set out from the mountain of the LORD and traveled for three days. The ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them during those three days to find them a place to rest. <sup>34</sup> The cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp.*

*<sup>35</sup> Whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Rise up, LORD!*

*May your enemies be scattered;  
may your foes flee before you."*

*<sup>36</sup> Whenever it came to rest, he said,*

*"Return, LORD,  
to the countless thousands of Israel."*

- Moses requested that his brother-in-law accompany the movement of the nation to give them benefit of his knowledge of the land. Why Moses requested this help when he was clearly being led by God in the cloud, is uncertain. Perhaps things were not as certain for Moses as they seem to us.
- At first Hobab did not agree to go. But he did eventually go with the Hebrews.
- Moses thanked God for the success of the camp's movement when it set out and when it settled down.

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