

**Exegetical Notes, Numbers 4:21-49**  
**“The Gershonites and the Merarites”**

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**Numbers 4:21-49**

**Verse 21-23**

*YHWH said to Moses, "Take a census also of the Gershonites by their families and clans. Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the Tent of Meeting."*

- This part of the text will zero in on the tribe of Gershon, the oldest son of Levi.

**Verse 24-28**

*“This is the service of the Gershonite clans as they work and carry burdens: They are to carry the curtains of the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, its covering and outer covering of hides of sea cows, the curtains for the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the curtains of the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle and altar, the curtain for the entrance, the ropes and all the equipment used in its service. The Gershonites are to do all that needs to be done with these things. All their service, whether carrying or doing other work, is to be done under the direction of Aaron and his sons. You shall assign to them as their responsibility all they are to carry. This is the service of the Gershonite clans at the Tent of Meeting. Their duties are to be under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.”*

- After the Kohathites have taken care of the furniture inside the Tent of Meeting, the Gershonites are to take charge of the Tent itself. The work of the Gershonites is under the direction of the High Priest, Aaron, but his son Ithamar is in direct control of the work of the Gershonites.

### **Verse 29-30**

***"Count the Merarites by their clans and families. Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work at the Tent of Meeting."***

- This part of the text will zero in on the tribe of Merari, the youngest of Levi's sons.

### **Verse 31-33**

***"This is their duty as they perform service at the Tent of Meeting: to carry the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, posts, and bases, as well as the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs, ropes, all their equipment and everything related to their use. Assign to each man the specific things he is to carry. This is the service of the Merarite clans as they work at the Tent of Meeting under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron, the priest."***

- The Merarites are to care for the frames which support the tent and the outer wall which encloses the tent. They do their work under the direction supervision of Ithamar, the priest.

### **Verse 34-49**

***Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the community counted the Kohathites by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to serve in the work in the Tent of Meeting, counted by clans, were 2,750. This was the total of all those in the Kohathite clans who served in the Tent of Meeting. Moses and Aaron counted them according to YHWH's command through Moses.***

***The Gershonites were counted by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to serve in the work at the Tent of Meeting, counted by their clans and families, were 2,630. This was the total of those in the Gershonite clans who served at the Tent of Meeting. Moses and Aaron counted them according to YHWH's command through Moses.***

***The Merarites were counted by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to serve in the work at the Tent of Meeting, counted by their clans, were 3,200. This was the total of those in the Merarite clans. Moses and Aaron counted them according to YHWH's command through Moses.***

***So Moses, Aaron and the leaders of Israel counted all the Levites by their clans and families. All the men from thirty to fifty years of age who came to do the work of serving and carrying the Tent of Meeting numbered 8,580. At YHWH's command through Moses, each was assigned his work and told what to carry. Thus they were counted as YHWH commanded Moses***

- They were 2,750 Kohathites.
- They were 2,630 Gershonites.
- They were 3,200 Merarites.
- The total number of individuals involved in relocating and carrying the Tent of Meeting was 8,580 men. Organizing this many men was no easy task!
- Note that everything was done according to the command of God which came through the prophet, Moses.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The Gershonites and the Merarites*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen*. They are used here by permission.)