

## NUMBERS 3:40-51 (THE REDEMPTION MONEY)

There are some gigantic difficulties with some of the numbers found in the Bible. Some people simply ignore them, some people have shunned the reliability of Scripture because of them, some have argued against biblical inspiration because of them. Many are complicated, and most will never even be considered by a general reader of the Bible. In some regards, the phrase, "Ignorance is bliss," fits in wonderfully with such things. Once you know they are there, they can cause you to question your faith. But even if they don't do that, they can cause you to question your ability to understand what is going on.

When I first met the Lord, I read the Bible a lot. Eventually, I started reading it with a calculator next to me. I would figure out how many years it was from the creation until whatever day was mentioned. I would figure out how many days old a person was at a certain point in his life, if the number of his years were given. I would figure out how many days, weeks, months, or years it was between certain events. I would also try to figure out why the numbers recorded in Numbers were given, and what they meant. Today's passage became a giant headache for me because it contains numbers which are literally impossible to reconcile simply by the numbers given.

Others have noticed this and have given their reasons for what they think is going on. Like all of the number-related problems in Scripture, none are without some type of explanation as to how to come to a reconciliation over what is said. As far as this passage and its problems, there are quite a few rather innovative explanations, but most still leave the numbers at impossible-to-reconcile amounts. I have my own explanation, and I believe it is as good as any other to be found, well... even better. It doesn't just resolve one numerical problem, but many of them which have been seen – such as in Exodus, and others which we have seen so far in Numbers, and which will certainly arise again as we go on. My explanation could be completely wrong, but one thing I do know is that the Lord's word is

without error. This is especially so with something so obvious as that which we will review today. The very fact that these numbers are here, and that they cannot be what the surface text alone shows is correct, the more certain it is that this is exactly what the Lord intended for us to read.

That may sound wholly illogical, but with the absolute perfection of what we have seen so far in His word, why would we assume anything less? The Lord didn't take a nap during Moses' numbering of people in this chapter. In fact, as we will see, He was minutely concerned with every detail of the record. Our misunderstanding of God's word, or our inability to figure out what He is saying in His word, in no way negates the reliability of that same word. Let us have complete confidence in this.

**Text Verse:** "Those who trust in their wealth  
And boast in the multitude of their riches,  
<sup>7</sup> None of them can by any means redeem his brother,  
Nor give to God a ransom for him—  
<sup>8</sup> For the redemption of their souls is costly,  
And it shall cease forever" — Psalm 49:6-8

The psalmist said that the redemption of one's soul is costly. Today we will look at how the Lord set up things up concerning those who would tend to the religious affairs of Israel. He has already called a high priest, and established his line through his sons. He has said that He was calling the Levites to serve that priestly class. However, He has already set aside the firstborn of Israel for Himself. In order to simplify this for all of Israel, He has taken the Levites in place of the firstborn. However, there needs to be a balancing out of the two in order to demonstrate His absolute integrity in the process.

That will be realized in today's verses through a process of redemption money. The verses are short, will go by quickly, and they may seem unnecessary, but they are not. They are an integral part of establishing a highly organized structure for the maintenance of Israel's religious life.

Think of it this way – If you needed a plumber because your sewer line was backed up inside your house, how would you feel if you went to call someone from a pool of workers, and they sent the first person available, regardless if he knew anything about plumbing or not? If there was no special class who were properly licensed and trained that we call “plumbers,” you might get Moronis-Maximus who had never worked on a single plumbing call in his life. And worse, you also need an appendectomy, and he is scheduled to do that as soon as he unplugs the sewer line. The whole concept is ridiculous. As this is so, how much more important are the matters which relate to the conduct of Israel’s spiritual life, and thus its very existence!

Do you wonder why the church is in such bad shape today? It’s because there are people unschooled in the word, uneducated in sound theology, and unprepared to dissect that which is of *the highest value* of all, and who then wrongly explain it to those who desperately need it in order to be sure of their eternal destiny.

What God has placed here in Numbers is no longer tedious when you stop and say, “This is the word of my Creator, revealing His plans and purposes for me.” No matter how difficult some passages are, they are there as individual sections which form one grand whole. And cumulatively, they reveal an entire plan, formed before the creation and carried out slowly and methodically for us to grasp His great and tender care of us now, and even into eternity itself. It’s all to be found in His superior word. And so let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. Numbering the Firstborn (verses 40-43)**

**<sup>40</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses:**

The words, "Then the Lord said to Moses," are correct. So far it has said that the Lord "spoke" to Moses in verses 1, 5, 11, and 14. It will say that again in verse 44. However, a different word, translated as "said," is used here. And in fact, the word now translated as "said" is used for the first time in Numbers.

The difference was explained in Leviticus, but it is worth repeating. The Hebrew words for "spoke" and "said" carry essentially the same thought of conveying a message, but spoke is more concise. One commentary says, "You choose DABER if you only need to tell people what to do, but AMAR if the task is so complex that it requires a partnership and people working together."

There is the need for Moses to actually participate in the events of verses 40-43 to ensure that everything comes out as the Lord now says. The difference in wording is slight, but it is still important to pay attention to these little details if one wants to properly follow the course of events in a logical fashion.

If you remember, everything of the previous verses came together to form a beautiful picture for us. The Lord spoke out the instructions to ensure that this would come out exactly as He intended. The Lord now *says*, instead of *speaks*, for Moses to get involved more intimately in what He directs.

In verses 1-4, the generations of Aaron and Moses were detailed. After that, verses 5-13 gave the duties and responsibilities of the Levites in regards to the tent of meeting, and that the Levites were taken from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn. This was followed by verses 14-39 which detailed the counting of the Levites from their various houses and families.

The total of that counting equaled 22,300, but which surprisingly was recorded as 22,000 in verse 39 as we closed out those verses. The

explanation for that was given, and what I proposed was that the entire counting was that some of the people in the countings of the people included the mixed multitude who had come out with Israel, minus the three hundred of the native-born Levites who could not be counted against the whole because the firstborn already belonged to the Lord.

The idea that the mixed multitude is included in these various census takings is not one that I know of as being suggested by other scholars, but it seems it must be so because of the impossible numbers which lie ahead when today's verses are considered. There may be another explanation which is totally overlooked concerning this, but as far as I know, nothing else which is available can sufficiently rectify the situation concerning the numbers.

<sup>40</sup> (con't) **“Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above,**

The Lord now changes the counting of the children of Israel. In the first census of verse 1:3, the total number to be counted, apart from the tribe of Levi, was “from twenty years old and above.” After that, in verse 3:15, all of the Levites, from a month old and above were to be counted. A new counting from the non-Levitical tribes is now to be taken which mirrors that of the counting of the Levites in that it is all from a month old and above. However, it is only a counting of the firstborn males. The reason for this goes back to what was said in verses 3:12, 13 –

“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, <sup>13</sup> 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.”

There must be a comparison between the number of Levites counted to the number of firstborn among the other Israelites. The reason for this is forthcoming, but it is both logical and necessary.

<sup>40</sup> (con't) **and take the number of their names.**

Reading the English, you get an odd sense of what is being said in this verse. We read, “Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names.” Actually, two different words are used which are translated as “number.” The NIV makes a good distinction between the two with, “Count all the firstborn Israelite males who are a month old or more and make a list of their names.” This clears up what is otherwise a confusing translation.

<sup>41</sup> **And you shall take the Levites for Me—I *am* the Lord—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel,**

There is an emphasis here which was seen in verse 13, and which will again be seen in verse 45. In each instance, the Lord has spoken of the firstborn, and He then indicates that the Levites are taken in place of those firstborn. In each instance, He proclaims, *ani Yehovah*, “I am Yehovah.” He redeemed Israel out of Egypt, He claimed the firstborn as His own at that time, and now in place of the firstborn He claims the Levites as His own. Each time, they are reminded that He is the Lord who redeemed them. It was solely at His will, and if He had not done so, they would have remained in bondage. They were His, and He held the right to determine what He would do among them – apart from their will or choice.

<sup>41</sup> (con't) **and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel.”**

The law of the firstborn was precisely detailed in Exodus 13 –

“And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, <sup>12</sup> that you shall set apart to the Lord all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the Lord’s. <sup>13</sup> But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. <sup>14</sup> So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What *is* this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>15</sup> And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ <sup>16</sup> It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”

In those verses, the firstborn of the animals were considered holy to the Lord, and certain things were to be done to them based on the type of animal. With that in mind, this verse now seems contradictory to what will later be said later in Numbers –

“But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they *are* holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat *as* an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord.” Numbers 18:17

Here, it seems as if the firstborn of the livestock of Israel was not to be taken for sacrifice because the livestock of the Levites was taken in place of it. However, in Chapter 18, the firstborn of the livestock are said to be sacrificed as the Lord’s. There is no contradiction though. This verse now is simply speaking of all of the animals which are alive at the time of the census. The Lord is taking them instead of the firstborn of the animals which belong to Israel. However, all later firstborn, at the time of Chapter 18 and on, will still belong to the Lord.

The Lord is, at this time, granting flocks to the Levites as their own possession. As the Levites belong to the Lord, then what they possessed also belonged to the Lord, and thus would not need to be sacrificed. This is a one-time claim upon the flocks of the Levites in place of the firstborn of the flocks of the tribes of Israel.

Where some scholars look to find error or contradiction here, we actually find a precept which, if not mentioned, would have left a giant void in our understanding of the system set up for the Levites as the Lord's ministers, and who received their livelihood from their work for the Lord.

**<sup>42</sup> So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the children of Israel,**

This is the number of firstborn who are from one month old and above from among the children of Israel. Nothing is said beyond this such as, "since they left Egypt," or anything such as that. It is a tally of the children of Israel's firstborn. What number should Moses arrive at? We know that he obeyed the command, and we know that he did it as stated because of the next words...

**<sup>42</sup> (con't) as the Lord commanded him.**

The Lord directed, and Moses did as the Lord directed. What is the result then...?

**<sup>43</sup> And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above, of those who were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.**

The impossibility of this number stems from the number of those counted in Chapter 1 in the census of the tribes. The total arrived at was 603,550



men, twenty and above, who were prepared for war. If there were 22,273 firstborn in Israel, and only those in the census were counted, the ratio would be 27.09 children for every firstborn.

That would be a bunch of really productive women, and a lot of mouths to feed in every house. But that is *only* a ratio based on those males 20 and above. If the total number were figured, say only three times that because of those 19 and younger, and all the women who were not counted, the total number of people might be 1,810,650 people. Dividing that by 22,273 would be an average family size of 81.29 per firstborn. That would be some hugely productive ladies. And that is still figuring a low number. The congregation would probably be closer to three million. If correct, the women would be born pregnant, and have a baby every year of their 100-year old lives. Oh! Washing diapers takes on a whole new meaning.

Because of this obvious problem, some have tried to say that the number of firstborn must only be those who were born since the time of the exodus. But that is wrong for two reasons. First, nothing is said about that. And secondly, that would then not correspond to the number of Levites, *all* of whom were counted, not just those born since the exodus. It is for this reason that the logical conclusion is that this census of the firstborn is only speaking of those who were firstborn of native Israelites, not of the mixed multitude who came out with Egypt, and who were counted in the mustering of the 12 tribes for war in Chapter 1.

In taking this into consideration, it would reduce the number of actual Israelites down to a reasonable number for their 215-year stay in Egypt – from the original 70 recorded. They would have been a sizable group, but the majority of those who left with them were not, in fact, native Israelites. They, however, were then incorporated into the people as natives from this point on.

Why is it important to have such an explanation? Because only an idiot would compile such a record with such obvious impossibilities without

there being a reasonable explanation for them. Moses was no idiot, nor were those who faithfully retained the writings of Moses, for thousands of years, while maybe not understanding why these numbers didn't make sense. Whether this is the correct reason or not, it does explain much concerning what are otherwise very complicated listings in Exodus and Numbers.

*This Lamb has taken my place  
His life was given instead of mine  
But because of this, I can look upon God's face  
In a heavenly land, ever so sublime*

*What a cost, what a high price indeed  
That God would pay with the Lamb's shed blood  
O God, from the foundation of the earth it was decreed  
That I would be a part of that cleansing flood*

*Redeemed! Saved and on the heavenly highway  
Where that Lamb I shall finally see  
Through His death, my pardon He did pay  
And through the resurrection, there is joy eternally*

## **II. The Redemption Money (Verses 44-51)**

**<sup>44</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**

A new section is now introduced with these words. The more common word "spoke" is once again used. Moses is given commands that are to simply be

carried out, without the complications of the previous short section we just went through.

**<sup>45</sup> “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock.**

This is in accord with verse 41, and it will be according to the number of those counted and recorded in verse 43. It is noticeable that the number of firstborn of the livestock are not given. Rather than trying to determine that which only the Lord Himself could actually determine, He simply equates the firstborn of the livestock of Israel to the total number of livestock of the Levites. Each verse carefully and methodically builds upon the next. One step at a time has been taken to accomplish a task which is obviously extremely important to the Lord. Precision is necessary, because...

**<sup>45</sup> (con’t) The Levites shall be Mine: I *am* the Lord.**

Again, the Lord makes His proclamation. He had redeemed Israel and claimed their firstborn at that time, whereas He had killed the firstborn of Egypt. In that act, He had made a distinction between Israel and Egypt. From that time on, the firstborn was to be set apart to reflect that distinction. Now, in order to provide a cohesion between the people of Israel, based on a single religion, ministered by a single group of people from within the body, He claimed the Levites as His own. Levi means “attached,” and that gives the sense of adhesion. It is they who will provide adhesion between the various parts, and adhesion between the Lord and them. He has determined, and – as He says, *ani Yehovah*; “I am Yehovah.”

**<sup>46</sup> And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites,**

A new word in Scripture is seen here, *paduii*. It is a noun which speaks of a ransom for those who are redeemed. It will be seen four times before the end of this chapter, and never again. Here in this verse, we have the disparity between the counting of the firstborn, and the census of the Levites. There were actually 22300 Levites counted, but there are 22000 who are considered in the numbering, as explained in the previous sermon. In our verses today, there were 22,273 firstborn counted. That leaves a difference of 273 which must be accounted for before the Lord. The Lord will now explain how the difference is to be handled...

**<sup>47</sup> you shall take five shekels for each one individually;**

Nothing is said of who this was required from, or how it was to be acquired. Albert Barnes surmises that it would be exacted from the parents of the youngest children; they being the last born, and so they would be the extra, over and above, the Levites that existed. Jewish tradition says that names of the 22,000 Levites were written on slips of paper along with 273 receipts which said "five shekels." From there all who drew the "five shekels" slip had to pay a fine. As Adam Clarke correctly says of that, it is a "stupid and silly tale, for such a mode of settlement never could have been resorted to by an intelligent people." However the difference was collected, it would have totaled 1365 shekels of silver. That silver was to be evaluated against a known standard...

**<sup>47 (con't)</sup> you shall take *them* in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary,**

There was a set standard by which all others would be compared. This was to ensure that nobody would cheat another, or be cheated by another. *b'shekel ha'qodesh*, or "the shekel of the sanctuary," or even more literally, "the shekel, the holy," was that standard, and it was based on an even more precise standard...

**<sup>47 (con't)</sup> the shekel of twenty gerahs.**

The shekel is defined as twenty *gerahs*. *Gerah* comes from *garar* which means “to drag away.” The *gerah* literally means “a bean” or “a kernel” which is round, as if scraped. Thus, it is a portion of a shekel which has been taken away. This is the same idea as our use of “grain” when speaking of money, gunpowder, etc. The reason for including this statement is to ensure that the sanctuary shekel, which was the standard, was to be used, and the silver was to be according to that 20-*gerah* standard. The number 20 in Scripture signifies “expectancy.” There was to always to be the expectancy that the shekel used was appropriate to the standard.

**<sup>48</sup> And you shall give the money, with which the excess number of them is redeemed, to Aaron and his sons.”**

Everything here follows logically. The priesthood had been given to Aaron and his sons. The Levites had been given to them to assist in the service of the sanctuary in place of the firstborn. As there was a deficiency between the Levites in relation to the firstborn of Israel, there must be a fair redemption value paid for them from Israel to make up that deficiency. That is to be paid not to the Levites, but to Aaron and his sons to whom the Levites were given.

Just reading these verses for one’s daily Bible reading may be dry or even mind-numbing. However, when they are considered as they should be, they are astonishingly precise and carefully laid out. Not a single *gerah*, one-twentieth of a shekel, is missing from the redemption process because the redemption money is compared to the exacting holy standard.

What we are reading here is a carefully detailed account of redemption which shows exacting precision. If this much care and detail has been provided for what we are reading here, even to the smallest grain of silver, how much more comforted should we be then in the fact that God has put *the same exacting care and precision into our own redemption!* The chances of one redeemed by the Lord being lost are greater than the chances of God ending the existence of the universe itself. It is unimaginable that He would

err in what He determined before He spoke a single atom into existence. John Lange says of this redemption money –

“Money cannot measure the value of spiritual things, but it can express that they have value. It cannot pay the debt we owe to God, but it can express that we do owe Him much. Five shekels, paid under the conditions here specified, could express that the payer owed himself to God’s service, and that the payee accepted the position of substitute.” John Lange

As the number five in the Bible signifies “grace,” and as twenty signifies “expectancy,” then there is the expectancy of grace pictured in each act of redemption. We do owe a debt to God, and it is a great debt, but Christ paid that debt in our stead. That is explicitly stated by Peter in the most moving way –

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; <sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:17-19

Whereas those in Israel were redeemed with silver, we have been redeemed in a far more precious way, a way which the silver only pictured. The blood of Christ is what brought us to where we are in Christ, and it is what will ensure we remain in Him for all eternity.

**<sup>49</sup> So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those who were redeemed by the Levites.**

Again, as said earlier, it isn’t known how Moses obtained this, or from who it was obtained. All we have is the statement that it was accomplished. As

Moses is specifically named here, rather than simply saying, “he,” it is certain that we are being shown, as at times before, that Moses is the Lord’s instrument in redemption. Moses, or He Who Draws Out, is specifically the one to draw out those over and above the Levites, in order to obtain the money of their redemption. 22,000 had been redeemed by a Levite, meaning they had been freed from the redemption price by a Levite, but 273 had not. It is they who are noted here now in order to ensure full redemption is realized.

In this verse, we have a word used for the last time in the Bible, *adaph*, meaning “excess.” It is that which is over and above. The first time it was seen was in Exodus 16 when it was found that those who gathered the manna had nothing left over, even though some gathered much, and some gathered little. Now, after nine uses, it is retired. Any further uses of it would be “over and above” what the Lord determine for His perfect word.

**<sup>50</sup> From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five *shekels*, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.**

These words show that the money is definitely applied to the firstborn. The word used can be translated as “of,” “from,” or even “for.” Whether it was obtained from the youngest, from a lottery, or from a general fund, Moses obtained it, he obtained the full amount, and he obtained it according to the set standard.

**<sup>51</sup> And Moses gave their redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the Lord,**

The redemption money, drawn out by Moses from the excess of the firstborn of Israel, is now passed on to Aaron and his sons as was spoken out by the Lord. Not a single grain was left unattended to, and the full redemption of the firstborn was realized. From this time forward, the

Levites would stand in place of the firstborn in Israel for the particular purposes which the Lord had called them. For those who are the Lord's, every detail is perfectly met, and nothing is overlooked concerning their redemption. We don't just have a hope in Christ, we have a sure and blessed hope in Christ. In the words of this verse is the last use of the term *paduui*, or the ransom for those who are redeemed. It was introduced in verse 46, and it goes out along with the chapter, never to be used again.

**\*51 (fin) as the Lord commanded Moses.**

As has been seen at other times with matters of the utmost importance, these words conclude the chapter. It shows faithful and full commitment to the word of the Lord. He directed, and Moses did as commanded. Not a word of the Lord was allowed to fall throughout the entire process of numbering the tribes, arranging them according to their armies, setting aside the Levites, counting the Levites, and taking the Levites in place of the firstborn of Israel. Everything necessary to establish them, and bring them near through His set guidelines has been faithfully tended to.

It was good news for Israel, and there is good news for us based on what we have read today. The Levites were selected to minister before the Lord concerning the Law of Moses. It was a law which was good – so we know – but sin, though the law, produced death. This isn't just a possibility; it is a universal fact. By law is the knowledge of sin, and the wages of sin is death. However, the law didn't just bring death to the sinful, it brought death to all, including the sinless One, Jesus. Not because He sinned, but because only through His sinless death, in fulfillment of the law, could we be forgiven of our sins.

Therefore, law has truly and honestly brought death to all. However, through law also has come life. Because Christ died in fulfillment of the law, not sinning under it, the law is annulled through Him. And because He died without sin, He rose again. With the law annulled through Him, He can no longer die. For those who accept this premise, and who by faith receive this



work of the Lord, we are imputed the righteousness of Christ. In God's eyes, it is as if we have perfectly lived out this same law that once brought death.

As you can see, though the Levites ministered under a law which brought death to us because of sin's power, they also ministered under a law which, when properly understood, and rightly lived out, would destroy that exact same power of sin leading to death.

The selection of the Levites to minister before the Lord is that important. Their ministrations kept the gears functioning properly until Christ would come and accomplish His marvelous work. Let us remember this as we read the Bible. Everything written is so penned to lead us to Him, our glorious Jesus.

**Closing Verse:** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup> having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup> that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him." Ephesians 1:7-10

**Next Week:** Numbers 4:1-20 *What we should always direct our eyes toward...* (The Holiness of the Lord) (7<sup>th</sup> Numbers Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It may seem at times as if you are lost in a desert, wandering aimlessly. But the Lord is there, carefully leading you to the Land of Promise. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## **The Levites Shall Be Mine**

Then the Lord said to Moses:

“Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel

From a month old and above

And take the number of their names; so to you I tell

And you shall take the Levites for Me—I am the Lord—

Instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel

And the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn

Among the livestock of the children of Israel as well

So Moses numbered all the firstborn

Among the children of Israel

As the Lord commanded him

As the Lord to him did tell

And all the firstborn males

According to the number of names from a month old and above

-----so we see

Of those who were numbered of them

Were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

These are the words He was then relaying

“Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn

Among the children of Israel

And the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock

The Levites shall be Mine: I am the Lord; so to you I do tell  
And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three  
Of the firstborn of the children of Israel  
Who are more than the number of the Levites  
You shall do as I now tell  
You shall take five shekels for each one individually  
You shall take them in the currency  
Of the shekel of the sanctuary  
The shekel of twenty gerahs, as directed by Me

And you shall give the money  
With which the excess number of them is redeemed  
To Aaron and his sons  
This is appropriate as I have so deemed  
So Moses took the redemption money  
From those who were over and above  
Those who were redeemed by the Levites  
So he took it from those thereof

From the firstborn of the children of Israel  
He took the money, you see  
One thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels  
According to the shekel of the sanctuary  
And Moses gave their redemption money  
To Aaron and his sons, as the Lord did say  
According to the word of the Lord

As the Lord commanded Moses that day  
Lord God, we are even now in a wilderness  
And we are wanting to be led by You  
Without You to direct, our lives would be a mess  
And so be our guide, O God; You who are faithful and true

We long for the water in this barren land  
May it flow forth from the Rock, our souls to satisfy  
Give us this refreshing, spiritual hand  
And may we take it, and to our lives daily it apply

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to you for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...