

iv. The camp on the west side (ii.18-25). This was the camp of Ephraim, which included the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. Thus the descendants of Joseph and Benjamin, Rachel's two sons, encamped together. On the march the camp of Ephraim followed the camp of the Levites.

v. The camp on the north side (ii.26-31). This was the camp of Dan. It included the tribes of Dan, Asher and Naphtali, and came last in the march.

vi. A general summary (ii.32-34). Verse 32 gives the grand total of fighting men (already given in i.46). From this total the Levites, who did not fight, are excluded (33). Verse 34 states that the Israelites observed the prescribed order in camp and on the march. God desires His people to do things in orderly fashion. Cf. 1 Cor. xii.4-28. Each has his own task, which he should so as well as possible, without envying the task or the talent given another.

II. THE LEVITES NUMBERED AND THEIR DUTIES DESCRIBED. iii.1-iv.49

These two chapters describe the arrangements made for the care of the tabernacle, both in camp and on the march. Systematic arrangements are provided, and definite families assigned to specific tasks. God is a God of order. He desires the Christian Church, and the Christian individual, to apportion tasks and duties so that all may be performed without haste and without mistake.

Since the Israelites often marched through hostile territory, it might seem surprising that a whole tribe should be exempted from military service, not even being counted in the military census. This fact demonstrates the supreme importance of proper attention to God's requirements for worship. If a nation neglects these, it cannot expect any permanent success in other lines. God demands the first place in the life of His people. His requirements must be met, or all else is of no avail (Ps.cxxvii.1).

Th chapters contain several instances where two or three verses are repeated almost verbatim. This is because similar orders are given and carried out regarding various sections of the tribe of Levi. As a result, the modern reader is apt to lose himself in the legal phraseology of the repetitions, and to miss the significant variations.