

Num. 8:5

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 6 Take the Levites from among the Israelites and cleanse them... 13 You shall place the Levites in attendance upon Aaron and his sons, and designate them as an elevation offering to the Lord. 14 Thus you shall set the Levites apart from the Israelites, and the Levites shall be Mine. 15 Thereafter the Levites shall be qualified for the service of the Tent of Meeting, once you have cleansed them and designated them as an elevation offering. 16 For they are formally assigned to Me from among the Israelites: I have taken them for Myself in place of all the first issue of the womb, of all the first-born of the Israelites. 17 For every first-born among the Israelites, man as well as beast, is Mine; I consecrated them to Myself at the time that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt. 18 Now I take the Levites instead of every first-born of the Israelites; 19 and from among the Israelites I formally assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons, to perform the service for the Israelites in the Tent of Meeting and to make expiation for the Israelites, so that no plague may afflict the Israelites for coming too near the sanctuary.

Num. 1:1 [On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying ...](#)

Num. 7:1 [On the day that Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle ...](#)

Ex. 40:17 [In the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, the Tabernacle was set up.](#)

<http://thetorah.com/the-message-of-the-non-chronological-opening-of-numbers/> [Jonathan Grossman] Based on these three features—inverted dates, the order of the tribes, and the split treatment of the Levites—Janson Condren of Sydney Missionary and Bible College suggests that the opening passages of Numbers are composed of two parallel blocks [*JSOT* 37 (2013), 423-452]. The parallel between the blocks of text emerges when they are placed side-by-side:

	Block 1 (Chapters 1-6)	Block 2 (Chapters 7-10)
A. Tribes	Tribes arranged around the camp (Judah first)	Offerings on behalf of the tribes (Judah first)
B. Levites	Levites arranged around the Tabernacle	Preparation of Levites to serve in the Tabernacle
C. Laws	Begins with removal of impure people, ends with the priests' benediction.	Begins with the make-up Passover sacrifice for the impure (<i>Pesach Sheni</i>), ends with the priest's blowing of trumpets.

Ex. 13:2 [“Consecrate to Me every first-born; man and beast, the first issue of every womb among the Israelites is Mine.”](#)

Ex. 34:19 [Every first issue of the womb is Mine, from all your livestock that drop a male as firstling, whether cattle or sheep.](#)

Num. 8:16 For [the Levites] are formally assigned to Me from among the Israelites: I have taken them for Myself in place of all the first issue of the womb, of all the first-born of the Israelites. 17 For [every first-born among the Israelites, man as well as beast, is Mine](#); I consecrated them to Myself at the time that I smote every first-born in the land of Egypt. 18 [Now I take the Levites instead of every first-born of the Israelites.](#)

e-mail: torah-talk@earthlink.net

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