

# Numbers 4:21-28

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/num/num-4/numbers-421-28/>

*Verses 21-28 cover the responsibilities given to the Gershonites. They were charged with transporting the curtains, coverings, and related items that comprised the tabernacle and the outer court.*

Having described the duties of the Kohathites, one of the three sons of Levi, again *the Lord spoke to Moses* regarding the sons of *Gershon*, another son of Levi (v. 21). Verses 22-23 are almost an exact copy of verses 2-3. The LORD said to Moses to *take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' households, by their families* (v. 22). Like the Kohathites, Moses was to count the number of males *from thirty years and upward to fifty years old, you shall number them* (v. 23). He was to count *all who enter to perform the service to do the work in the tent of meeting* (v. 23). The males in this age range (from *thirty to fifty*) were designated to serve in the tabernacle.

Verses 24-26 contain the description of *the service of the families of the Gershonites* (v. 24). Their responsibilities were *in serving and in carrying*:

- *The curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting* (v. 25) (Exodus 26:1-13; 36:8-17)
- *Its covering and the covering of porpoise skin that is on top of it* (Exodus 26:14; 36:19)
- *The screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting* (Exodus 26:36; 36:37)
- *The hangings of the court* (v. 26) (Exodus 27:9, 11, 12, 13, 14; 38:9, 11, 12, 13)
- *The screen for the doorway of the gate of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar* (Exodus 26:1-13, 36:8-17)
- *Their cords and all the equipment for their service* (Exodus 35:18)

For an explanation of each item, see our commentary for [Exodus 26](#), [Exodus 27](#), [Exodus 35](#), and [Exodus 36](#).

So, for *all that is to be done, they shall perform*. This implies that these instructions must be obeyed explicitly.

In verse 27, the LORD declared that *all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their loads and in all their work, shall be performed at the command of Aaron and his sons* (v. 27). Their “loads” seems to refer to their carrying the assigned parts of the tabernacle when they journeyed in the wilderness, when relocating their camp. And their “work” probably refers to the assembly and maintenance of the tabernacle’s parts when camped. All their work was considered “service.” Those who did the labor of transport were in service to God just as much as the priests were.

The LORD then tasked Moses to *assign to them as a duty all their loads*. Moses was to delegate to each family group what items they were to carry in the wilderness. In making this assignment, God was creating clear lines of authority to create order, that the work might be done effectively.

Verse 28 summarizes *the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting* (v. 28). All of *their duties shall be under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest*. Again, only certain men in the priestly line of Aaron could handle the holy items related to the tabernacle, the LORD's dwelling place amongst His people. *Ithamar* was assigned the task of directing the duties of the *Gershonites*. Their *work* was in the *service* of the worship of the *tent of meeting*.

#### **Biblical Text:**

<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>22</sup> “Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers’ households, by their families; <sup>23</sup> from thirty years and upward to fifty years old, you shall number them; all who enter to perform the service to do the work in the tent of meeting. <sup>24</sup> This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and in carrying: <sup>25</sup> they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting *with* its covering and the covering of porpoise skin that is on top of it, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting, <sup>26</sup> and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the gate of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords and all the equipment for their service; and all that is to be done, they shall perform. <sup>27</sup> All the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their loads and in all their work, shall be *performed* at the command of Aaron and his sons; and you shall assign to them as a duty all their loads. <sup>28</sup> This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting, and their duties *shall be* under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.