



The Levites were chosen by God for the purpose of entrusting to them the care and administration of holy things. They were to preserve the law of Jehovah in all its integrity and purity, to see that the requirements were duly complied with, to dispense justice in accordance with its enactments, and to transmit it to posterity. They served from 30 to 50 years of age except for the high priest who served until his death.

Aaron was high priest, and his sons, Eleazer and Ithamar, would succeed him. Their duties were to perform the sacrificial services and to provide supervision of all duties assigned to the Levites.

The Kohathites' duty was to have charge of the Ark, the table of the bread of the Presence, the lampstands, the altars of burnt offering and of incense, the sacred vessels used in the service, and the veil. They numbered 8,600 men with 2,700 qualified for active service.

The Gershonites' duty was to have charge of curtains, the tent (above the planks), the coverings and the hanging for the door of the Tabernacle, the hangings of the court and the court entrance, their cords and instruments of service, also the work of taking down and setting these up. They numbered 7,500 men with 2,630 qualified for active service.

The Merarites' duty was to have charge of the frames, bars, pillars and sockets of the Tabernacle; also the pillars of the court, their sockets, pegs, cords and tools pertaining thereto. Owing to the heavy nature of the materials they had to carry, four wagons and the eight oxen were assigned to them. They traveled ahead of the Kohathites so that they could set up first. They numbered 6,200 with 3,200 qualified for service.