

# Numbers 2:1–2 Sermon — Every Man by His Own Standard

## Numbers 2:1–2

### TEXT

**Numbers 2:1-2** “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, **2** Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

### INTRODUCTION

Numbers 1 counted Israel by tribes, families, and fathers’ houses, especially the men able to go forth to war. When we reach Numbers 2, the question becomes, Where does everybody belong?

Exodus gave Israel the tabernacle. Leviticus gave instruction about worship, sacrifice, holiness, and approaching God. Now Numbers organizes the nation around that tabernacle and prepares them to move. Numbers 3 and 4 will deal especially with the Levites and their duties, and later in Numbers 10 Israel will leave Sinai.

So before Israel moves forward, God puts His people in order.

When you read every man by his own standard, you could misunderstand the word standard the way we often use it today. God is not telling every man to invent his own rules. The chapter shows us an organized camp where every man had a place, every family belonged somewhere, every tribe was identifiable, and God determined the arrangement.

### I. VERSE 1 — THE LORD GIVES THE ORDER

**Numbers 2:1** “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,”

Start with the first words: the LORD spoke. Moses did not design the camp according to his own preference. The tribal leaders did not vote on it. God gave the order.

Men can make rules and build systems, but biblical order gets its authority from God. Numbers 2 begins with the LORD speaking.

David learned what happens when men try to do God’s work without following God’s order.

**1 Chronicles 15:13** “For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.”

David wanted the ark brought up, but a good goal did not give him permission to ignore what God had said. Later he understood the problem: they had not sought God after the due order.

**Numbers 2:1** “And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,”

That is why this arrangement carries authority. The LORD spoke. We need order in our homes, in the church, and in the work God gives us to do, but biblical order starts with the Word of God.

## II. VERSE 2 — EVERY MAN HAS A PLACE

**Numbers 2:2** “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

To pitch means to set up camp. A standard and an ensign were visible identifying signs showing where people belonged. The Bible establishes that identifying function here, but it does not give us enough to force an exact technical difference between the two words.

The verse says every man. Every Israelite had personal responsibility, but each man was connected to his standard, his father’s house, and the larger congregation. He was an individual, but he was not independent.

Numbers 1 had already explained the arrangement.

**Numbers 1:52-53** “And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. **53** But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.”

His own standard was connected with his own camp. Numbers 2 continues by arranging the tribes under the principal camps of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan.

That settles the misunderstanding. His own standard does not mean his own truth, morality, or religion. God did not tell every man to make up his own standard. God told every man where to stand.

Now compare that with the end of Judges.

**Judges 21:25** “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Numbers 2 and Judges 21 both talk about every man. In Numbers 2, God speaks and every man takes his place. In Judges 21, every man becomes his own authority and does what is right in his own eyes.

**Numbers 2:2** “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

Who decides where you stand? Who decides what is right? God speaks, and we answer to Him. Know what God has said, know what responsibility He has given you, and be faithful there.

Korah later shows what can happen when a man despises the place God gave him.

**Numbers 16:8-10** “And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: **9** Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? **10** And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?”

Korah already had a real place of service. God had separated the Levites for work around the tabernacle, yet Korah wanted another place too.

**Numbers 2:2** “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

Do not spend your life watching somebody else’s responsibility while treating your own like it does not matter. You do not have to do everybody’s job. Be faithful in the place God has given you.

### III. VERSE 2 — EVERY MAN'S PLACE WAS PART OF THE WHOLE

**Numbers 2:2** “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

Now look at the whole camp. Judah had a place. Reuben had a place. Ephraim had a place. Dan had a place. The Levites had their place. Different families and tribes remained different, but all of those places fit together.

And the tabernacle was in the middle. Numbers 1 tells us the Levites pitched immediately around it while the other tribes were farther out. Numbers 2 says far off but gives no measurement, so we do not invent one.

Israel's whole camp was organized around the place God had established for His worship and presence among them. The things of God ought not be pushed to the edge of our lives either. Our homes, work, responsibilities, and plans ought to be ordered under what God has said.

The New Testament gives us a similar principle about different people having different places while belonging to one body.

**1 Corinthians 12:18** “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

Everybody does not have the same function, but everybody matters in the place God gives him. Different place does not mean lesser value.

**Numbers 2:2** “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

And their order was made for movement. The same people who pitched in order would later move in order. Their organization allowed them to move together.

Look at the end of the chapter.

**Numbers 2:34** “And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.”

They pitched, and they set forward. God had a place for them when they stopped and an order for them when they moved.

**Numbers 2:2** “Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

Know where you belong. Stand faithfully where God has placed you. Do not despise your responsibility because somebody else has a different one. Work with God's people, keep the things of God central, and when God says move, move forward in His order.

### CONCLUSION

Numbers 2 begins with the LORD speaking. Judges ends with every man doing what was right in his own eyes. Are you going to live under what God said, or are you going to make yourself the authority?

Every man had a place, but God determined the order. Know where you stand. Stand where God put you. Stand with God's people. Keep the things of God central. And when God says move, move forward together in His order.

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