

# The Book of Numbers

## The Second Numbering of Israel

Text: Numbers 26

### Introduction:

1. As Israel waited on the plains of Moab, God continued to prepare them for their entering into the land of Canaan.
2. Just before they left Mount Sinai, God had instructed Moses to number the Israelites by taking a census (Numbers 1 – 2).
3. In this numbering, only the males who were 20 years old or older were counted – not including those who had passed fighting age.
4. The count was as follows:

Tribe of Reuben – 46,500	Tribe of Ephraim – 40,500
Tribe of Simeon – 59,300	Tribe of Manasseh – 32,200
Tribe of Gad – 45,650	Tribe of Benjamin – 35,400
Tribe of Judah – 74,600	Tribe of Dan – 62,700
Tribe of Issachar – 54,400	Tribe of Asher – 41,500
Tribe of Zebulun – 57,400	Tribe of Naphtali – 53,400
5. The total number of soldiers was 603,550.
6. The Levites were not numbered with the nation, but were numbered themselves later.
7. Now, after the years of wandering in the wilderness and the punishment for the sin at Baal-Peor, God ordered a second numbering of Israel.

### I. The Instructions

(26:1-4)

- A. Again, the command came from God to Moses and the High Priest, Eleazar.
- B. They were to count all the males who were 20 years old and older – not including those who were past fighting age.
- C. Thus, the numbers would reflect an accurate change in population size since the time at Mount Sinai.

### II. The Results

(26:5-51, 63-65)

- A. The count was as follows:

Tribe of Reuben – 43,730	Tribe of Manasseh – 52,700
Tribe of Simeon – 22,200	Tribe of Ephraim – 32,500
Tribe of Gad – 40,500	Tribe of Benjamin – 45,600
Tribe of Judah – 76,500	Tribe of Dan – 64,400
Tribe of Issachar – 64,300	Tribe of Asher – 53,400
Tribe of Zebulun – 60,500	Tribe of Naphtali – 45,400
- B. The total number of soldiers was 601,730.
  1. The tribe of Reuben had decreased by 2,770.
  2. The tribe of Simeon had decreased by 37,100.
  3. The tribe of Gad had decreased by 5,150.
  4. The tribe of Ephraim had decreased by 8,000.
  5. The tribe of Naphtali had decreased by 8,000.
  6. The tribe of Judah had increased by 1,900.

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7. The tribe of Issachar had increased by 9,900.
  8. The tribe of Zebulun had increased by 3,100.
  9. The tribe of Manasseh had increased by 20,500.
  10. The tribe of Benjamin had increased by 10,200.
  11. The tribe of Dan had increased by 1,700.
  12. The tribe of Asher had increased by 11,900.
- C. Note the statement made in verses 9-11 concerning the children of Korah.
- D. Note the statement made in verse 33 concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, for this will come up again in 27:1ff.
- E. Note verses 64-65 – not a man from the first numbering was still alive at the second numbering, except Joshua and Caleb!
1. God keeps His promises – exactly and without fail.
  2. The wages of sin are serious.
- F. In spite of Israel's sins and God's punishments, their total population had decreased by only 1,820.
1. This is a beautiful example of the mercy and longsuffering of God.
  2. It also demonstrates his justness – one generation did not suffer and die because of the sins of their parents.
  3. It also shows that God will keep His promises in spite of man's sins and rebellion.
    - a. The first generation could have received those promises, but forfeited their right to them.
    - b. Yet, God still kept His promise.
    - c. The second generation received the inheritance because they chose to trust and obey the will of God.

## III. The Rules for Dividing the Land

(26:52-56)

- A. The land of Canaan was to be divided among the tribes based upon their population.
- B. Larger tribes would receive more land than smaller tribes.
- C. However, the land was to be divided by lot – meaning that the choice of location was left up to God, not to the members of each tribe.
- D. *{Commentators have estimated that Canaan consisted of almost 15,000,000 acres of land. This allowed over 21 ½ acres per family with nearly 2,000,000 acres left for the Levites and princes of the tribes.}*

## IV. The Numbering of the Levites

(26:57-62)

- A. Because they did not receive an inheritance of land in Canaan, the Levites were numbered separately from the rest of Israel.
- B. Also, their numbers counted all males from one month old and older.
- C. The total number of Levite males was: 23,000. *{This brings the total number of Israelite males to 624,730.}*
- D. Also, the lineage of Levi is given in this passage – including that of the High Priests Aaron and his son Eleazar.