

Numbers Chapter 26

“Verses 26:1 – 36:13: The final major section of Numbers records the renewed obedience of Israel. God continued to speak (26:1-2, 52; 27:6, 12, 18; 28:1; 31:1, 25; 33:50; 34:1, 16; 35:1, 9), and the second generation of Israel obeyed. Most of the commandments in this section related to Israel’s life after they entered the Land.

Verses 1-65: The previous census had a military purpose: to record all those men aged 20 and over who were fit for military service (1:3), and so does this census (26:2). This was appropriate since a campaign against Midian had just been announced (25:16-18), and the conquest of Canaan was imminent. But there was a more important reason for this census: to determine the relative size of the tribes, so they should each receive a proportionate share of territory in the Promised Land (verses 52-56).

Chapters 1 and 3 give the total number of men in each tribe, whereas chapter 26 gives these totals and also lists the families or clans that make up each tribe. There are extra details supplied in this census about the clans and their forefathers to help serve as a reminder that the cause of the great multiplication of the children of Israel goes back to the promise to the patriarchs in (Gen. 12:2; 26:24; and 46:3). In (verse 33), the “daughters of Zelophehad” are mentioned, and their legal problems are dealt with in (chapters 27 and 36).

Numbers 26:1 "And it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying,"

Related in the preceding chapter; how long after is not certain. Perhaps before the war with Midian, exhorted to in the latter part of the foregoing chapter. And of which an account is given (Num. 31:1).

"That the Lord spake unto Moses": Out of the tabernacle, or out of the cloud.

"And unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest": The Lord had been used to speak to Moses and to Aaron. But now Aaron being dead, and Eleazar his son succeeding him in the priesthood, is joined with Moses. And the order here given is directed to them both.

"Saying": As follows.

This plague in the last lesson, had reduced the number of people by 24,000. This seems to be the last large reduction of the people, before they went into the Promised Land. This has to do with all the people, since God speaks to Moses and Eleazar. You remember, Aaron has died and Eleazar took his place as high priest.

Numbers 26:2 "Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel."

Excepting the Levites, who were to be numbered by themselves, and at a different age. This sum was to be taken, that it might appear that all of the old generation that came out of Egypt. Of the age at which this sum was taken, were now dead, excepting two, as the Lord had threatened. And partly that as they were now about to enter the land of Canaan, it might be divided to them according to their number. As well as to show the faithfulness of God to his word and promise. That he would multiply and make them fruitful, notwithstanding all their provoking sins and transgressions.

"From twenty years old and upwards, throughout their father's house": All of that age in every tribe, house, and family.

"All that are able to go to war in Israel": For which they must prepare. Being about to enter the land of Canaan, and dispossess and drive out the inhabitants of it.

They had taken a census at the beginning of the journey over 38 years ago. Now the end of the journey is near, and they will take the census again.

Numbers 26:3 "And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho, saying,"

With the children of Israel. With the heads of them, their chief and principal, to assist in taking the number of the people. As when they were numbered thirty years ago. When a prince out of each tribe was taken to be with Aaron and Moses in doing that business. But those princes were now all dead, and another race succeeded. Who were now employed in this service. So the Targum of Jonathan says, they spoke with the rulers, and ordered them to number them.

"In the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho": Or of Jericho, as the same Targum. On the other side of Jordan to that on which Jericho stood. For as yet the children of Israel had not passed that river, nor entered into the land of Canaan, in which Jericho was. But they were now opposite it (see notes on Num. 22:1).

Then Eleazar and Moses call all the leaders of the twelve tribes together, to take a count of all the men of each tribe 20 years old and older. This is just before they go into Jericho.

Numbers 26:4 "[Take the sum of the people], from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt."

At the same age at which the sum was taken before (Num. 1:3). So that there could not be one that was more than sixty years of age, of all those that went into the land of Canaan, except Joshua and Caleb. And besides some few in the tribe of Levi, which did not come into either of these musters.

"And the Lord commanded Moses, and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt": As Moses had a command to number the people before, so he had now. The sin of David was, that he numbered the people when he had no command for it. Moses, when he brought the

people out of Egypt, had them committed to him by number. And now being about to die, he delivers them up as it were by number again, as Jarchi observes.

This count is to be taken in the very same manner as the earlier census.

Verses 5-51: The numbers for each tribe with the net gain or loss were as follows:

Reuben	43,760	verse 7	-2,770
Simeon	22,200	verse 14	-37,100
Gad	40,500	verse 18	-5,150
Judah	76,500	verse 22	+1,900
Issachar	64,300	verse 25	+9,900
Zebulun	60,500	verse 27	+3,100
Manasseh	52,700	verse 34	+20,500
Ephraim	32,500	verse 37	-8,000
Benjamin	45,600	verse 41	+10,200
Dan	64,400	verse 43	+1,700
Asher	53,400	verse 47	+11,900
Naphtali	45,400	verse 50	-8,000
Total	601,730	verse 51	-1,820

Numbers 26:5-6 "Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, [of whom cometh] the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites:" "Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites."

The number of his tribe is taken first on that account. There were four families that descended from him. The Hanochites, Palluites, Hezronites, and Carmites, and the number of men from twenty years old and upwards, fit for war, were 43,760. So that, since the last numbering, this tribe was decreased 2770. Which may in part be accounted for by the families of Dathan and Abiram being cut off for their rebellion. Who were this tribe, and whose affair is briefly related in the following verses, and it may be to point out this unto us.

Numbers 26:7 "These [are] the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty."

The principal households, which were subdivided into numerous smaller families. Reuben had suffered great diminution by Korah's conspiracy and other outbreaks (Num. 16:1).

We find the list corresponds with the sons of Reuben in the following verse.

Genesis 46:9 "And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi."

The tribe of Reuben at the end of the wilderness wanderings were 43,730 people. The earlier count had been 46,500. This is a loss of 2,770 people during the wilderness wanderings.

Numbers 26:8 "And the sons of Pallu; Eliab."

Or son, the plural for the singular. Pallu having but one son, whose name was Eliab, the father of Dathan and Abiram (Num. 26:9).

Eliab was father of Dathan and Abiram, the leaders of the revolt against Moses. Eliab had another son named Nemuel.

Numbers 26:9 "And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This [is that] Dathan and Abiram, [which were] famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD:"

"Dathan, and Abiram": These were singled out for special mention because of their part in the rebellion recorded (in 16:1-40). Mention of them was a reminder of God's judgment against rebellion.

Numbers 16:1-2 "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took [men]:" "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:"

Numbers 26:10 "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign."

Not only Dathan and Abiram, but their wives and children, their houses and tents, and all their goods (see Num. 16:32). Together with Korah; the words being thus rendered, and standing in such close connection with the preceding. Some have concluded from hence that Korah was swallowed up with them in the earth. Whereas he seems rather to have been at that time with the two hundred and fifty men that had censers at the door of the tabernacle. And was consumed by fire with them (see Num. 16:16). And, indeed, it is suggested here, for the phrase may be rendered, "and the things of Korah". What appertained unto him, his men, tents, goods, and substance, which agrees with (Num. 16:32). Or, "and as for Korah"; with respect to him. "When that company died". He was at the head of, he died also. The same death they died, by fire, as follows.

"What time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men": Which was the number his company consisted of, who took censers, and offered incense, and were consumed by fire (Num. 16:2). And with whom, in all probability, he perished.

"And they became a sign": Were made an example of, to deter others from the like practices, and particularly usurping any part of the priest's office. Some connect the words with the following, and take the sense to be, that this was the sign or miracle. That when they perished, Korah's sons died not, but were preserved.

Dathan, and Abiram were undoubtedly swallowed up with their people. Korah was swallowed up with Dathan and Abiram. The other leaders of the 250 who revolted were burned with fire. They became a sign to all the people not to commit this type sin again.

Numbers 26:11 "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not."

"The children of Korah": These sons of Korah were spared judgment because they separated themselves from their father's house (see 16:26).

The Korahites were specifically not killed.

Numbers 26:12-14 "The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites:" "Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites." "These [are] the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred."

This tribe was next numbered, not only because Simeon was next to Reuben by birth, but because his tribe was under the standard of Reuben. Two of his sons are a little differently named here than they are in (Gen. 46:10). There the eldest is called Jemuel, here Nemuel. There the youngest but one is named Zohar, here Zerah. And one of them is here omitted, namely Ohad, perhaps because he died without children, and so no family sprang from him. Wherefore the families of Simeon were but five, and the number of them were 22,200. By which it appears there was a very great decrease in this tribe since the last muster. Even 37,100 which in some measure is to be accounted for by the great number of this tribe supposed to have died of the plague. On account of fornication and idolatry, made mention of in the preceding chapter. A prince in this tribe having set a bad example.

In the first count of the tribe of Simeon, there were counted 59,300. The count here is 22,200. There is a loss of 37,100 since the first count. This possibly, is because so many of them were swallowed up when the earth opened.

Numbers 26:15 "The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites:"

Because it lay encamped with that under the standard of Reuben. There is a little variation in the names of two or three of his sons, from those by which they are called (Gen. 46:16). Instead of Ziphion, here Zephon; and for Haggai, here Haggi. And what is much wider, for Ezbon, here Ozni. Seven families sprang from Gad; whose number now was 40,500. They were diminished since their last numbering 5,150. It is probable this tribe, being a warlike tribe, suffered very much in their attempt to enter the land of Canaan contrary to the will of God. And were repulsed and defeated by the Amalekites (Num. 16:40).

Numbers 26:16-18 "Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites:" "Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites." "These [are] the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred."

The children of Gad at this second counting were numbered 40,500. The earlier count of the tribe of Gad was 45,650. Again, we see a reduction of them by 5,150.

Numbers 26:19-22 "The sons of Judah [were] Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan." "And the sons of Judah after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites." "And the sons of Pharez were; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites." "These [are] the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred."

And besides these he had Shelah, Pharez, and Zerah, from whom families sprang. But none from the two first.

"And Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan": Where they were born. And that because of their sins, as the Targum of Jonathan adds (see Gen. 38:7-10). So that there were but three families sprang from Judah. The Shelanites, Pharzites, and Zarhites. Only the family of the Pharzites was divided into two families, the Hezronites and the Hamulites. So called from two sons of Pharez. The number of these families amounted to 76,500, so that there was an increase of 1,900 since the last muster. Which answers to Jacob's blessing, that he should be a praise among his brethren (Gen. 49:8).

"Er and Onan": These two sons of Judah did not receive an inheritance in the Land because of their great evil (see Gen. 38:1-10).

Genesis 38:7 "And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him."

The following is speaking of Onan.

Genesis 38:10 "And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also."

We see that both of these sons died without leaving an heir.

Zerah and Pharez were the sons of Judah by his daughter-in-law Tamar. The others mentioned are grandsons.

The descendants of Judah at this count were 76,500. At the earlier count, there were 74,600. This means there was an increase in the number of 1,900 people.

Numbers 26:23-25 "[Of] the sons of Issachar after their families: [of] Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites:" "Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of

Shimron, the family of the Shimronites." "These [are] the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred."

This tribe was numbered next to Judah, because it was under his standard. Two of his sons are a little differently named than they are (Gen. 46:13). Instead of Phuvah one is called Pua, and instead of Job another is called here Jashub. This tribe consisted of four families, and the number of warlike men in it was 64,300. Their increase since the last numbering of them is 9,900.

Numbers 26:26-27 "[Of] the sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites." "These [are] the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred."

Zebulun is numbered next to Issachar, because it was encamped under the standard of Judah. It consisted of three families, whose numbers were 60,500. So that this tribe was increased 3,100.

The tribe of Zebulun, at this count, was 60,500. At the beginning of the march, they were numbered 57,400. We see there was an increase of 3,100 people.

Numbers 26:28-34 "The sons of Joseph after their families [were] Manasseh and Ephraim." "Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead [come] the family of the Gileadites." "These [are] the sons of Gilead: [of] Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites:" "These [are] the sons of Gilead: [of] Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites:" And [of] Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and [of] Shechem, the family of the Shechemites:" "And [of] Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and [of] Hephher, the family of the Hephherites." "And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad [were] Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah." "These [are] the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred."

Manasseh is here mentioned first, though Ephraim was preferred to him by Jacob. And the standard belonged to him. Not because he was the firstborn, but because he had now the greater increase, though he had but one son, Machir. Of whom was the family of the Machirites, and a grandson, whose name was Gilead. From whom was the family of the Gileadites, and who had six sons. Of whom were the families of the Jeezerite, Helekites, Asrielites, Shechemites, Shemidaites, and Hephherites. Hephher, of whom was the last, had a son named Zelophehad. But he had no son, only five daughters, whose names are given. The number of men in this tribe, of twenty years old and upwards, fit for war, was 52,700. So that the increase was 20,500, a large increase indeed!

Manasseh's and Ephraim's tribes had been counted separate earlier.

“Zelophehad”: The mentioning of Zelophehad having no sons, but only daughters, laid the basis for the laws of inheritance stated (in 27:1-11; 36:1-12).

Zelophehad had no sons, so his daughters are listed here. These are not just Manasseh's sons, but grandsons, as well.

The count of Manasseh's descendants at this count were 52,700. In the first count, they were numbered 32,200. They had increased greatly by 20,500 people.

Numbers 26:35-37 "These [are] the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites." "And these [are] the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites." "These [are] the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These [are] the sons of Joseph after their families."

Which were but three, the Shuthalhites, the Bachrites, and the Tahanites. Only from the former sprung another family, called the Eranites. The number of the whole was 32,500. There was a decrease in this tribe of 8,000.

Ephraim's descendants were numbered 32,500 at this count. At the earlier count, there had been 40,500. We see that Ephraim's descendants had reduced in number from the first count by 8,000.

Numbers Chapter 26 Questions

1. Who did God speak to after the plague?
2. The plague reduced the people by _____.
3. Why is Eleazar mentioned in place of Aaron?
4. What does God tell them to do?
5. How many years ago had they taken a census?
6. They camped near _____ at this time.
7. Who was the oldest son of Jacob (Israel)?
8. How many sons of Reuben are mentioned here?
9. How many fewer people did they have, then at the first count?
10. Who was Eliab the father of?
11. What terrible thing had they done?
12. How many princes were opposed to Moses?

13. What happened to them?
14. What happened to Korah's children?
15. The tribe of Simeon reduced by how many on the wilderness wanderings?
16. Why do you suppose the number to be so great?
17. How many were the tribe of Gad reduced by?
18. What happened to Er and Onan?
19. Who was their father?
20. Zerah and Pharez were sons of whom?
21. How many did the tribe of Judah increase by on the wilderness wanderings?
22. Issachar's tribe increased by how many?
23. The tribe of Zebulun increased by _____.
24. Manasseh and Ephraim were from what tribe?
25. What is unusual about them?
26. Zelophehad had no _____, so they listed his _____.
27. Manasseh's tribe increased by _____.
28. How many had Ephraim's tribe reduced by?