NUMBERS

Chapter 26

*The Second Census*

**After the plague the Lord said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, 2 “Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families—all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel.” 3 So on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them and said, 4 “Take a census of the men twenty years old or more, as the Lord commanded Moses.”**

**These were the Israelites who came out of Egypt:**

**5 The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were:**

**through Hanoch, the Hanochite clan;**

**through Pallu, the Palluite clan;**

**6 through Hezron, the Hezronite clan;**

**through Carmi, the Carmite clan.**

**7 These were the clans of Reuben; those numbered were 43,730.**

**8 The son of Pallu was Eliab, 9 and the sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. The same Dathan and Abiram were the community officials who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were among Korah’s followers when they rebelled against the Lord. 10 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them along with Korah, whose followers died when the fire devoured the 250 men. And they served as a warning sign. 11 The line of Korah, however, did not die out.**

**12 The descendants of Simeon by their clans were:**

**through Nemuel, the Nemuelite clan;**

**through Jamin, the Jaminite clan;**

**through Jakin, the Jakinite clan;**

**13 through Zerah, the Zerahite clan;**

**through Shaul, the Shaulite clan.**

**14 These were the clans of Simeon; there were 22,200 men.**

**15 The descendants of Gad by their clans were:**

**through Zephon, the Zephonite clan;**

**through Haggi, the Haggite clan;**

**through Shuni, the Shunite clan;**

**16 through Ozni, the Oznite clan;**

**through Eri, the Erite clan;**

**17 through Arodi, the Arodite clan;**

**through Areli, the Arelite clan.**

**18 These were the clans of Gad; those numbered were 40,500.**

**19 Er and Onan were sons of Judah, but they died in Canaan.**

**20 The descendants of Judah by their clans were:**

**through Shelah, the Shelanite clan;**

**through Perez, the Perezite clan;**

**through Zerah, the Zerahite clan.**

**21 The descendants of Perez were:**

**through Hezron, the Hezronite clan;**

**through Hamul, the Hamulite clan.**

**22 These were the clans of Judah; those numbered were 76,500.**

**23 The descendants of Issachar by their clans were:**

**through Tola, the Tolaite clan;**

**through Puah, the Puite clan;**

**24 through Jashub, the Jashubite clan;**

**through Shimron, the Shimronite clan.**

**25 These were the clans of Issachar; those numbered were 64,300.**

**26 The descendants of Zebulun by their clans were:**

**through Sered, the Seredite clan;**

**through Elon, the Elonite clan;**

**through Jahleel, the Jahleelite clan.**

**27 These were the clans of Zebulun; those numbered were 60,500.**

**28 The descendants of Joseph by their clans through Manasseh and Ephraim were:**

**29 The descendants of Manasseh:**

**through Makir, the Makirite clan (Makir was the father of Gilead);**

**through Gilead, the Gileadite clan.**

**30 These were the descendants of Gilead:**

**through Iezer, the Iezerite clan;**

**through Helek, the Helekite clan;**

**31 through Asriel, the Asrielite clan;**

**through Shechem, the Shechemite clan;**

**32 through Shemida, the Shemidaite clan;**

**through Hepher, the Hepherite clan.**

**33 (Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons; he had only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.)**

**34 These were the clans of Manasseh; those numbered were 52,700.**

**35 These were the descendants of Ephraim by their clans:**

**through Shuthelah, the Shuthelahite clan;**

**through Beker, the Bekerite clan;**

**through Tahan, the Tahanite clan.**

**36 These were the descendants of Shuthelah:**

**through Eran, the Eranite clan.**

**37 These were the clans of Ephraim; those numbered were 32,500.**

**These were the descendants of Joseph by their clans.**

**38 The descendants of Benjamin by their clans were:**

**through Bela, the Belaite clan;**

**through Ashbel, the Ashbelite clan;**

**through Ahiram, the Ahiramite clan;**

**39 through Shupham, the Shuphamite clan;**

**through Hupham, the Huphamite clan.**

**40 The descendants of Bela through Ard and Naaman were:**

**through Ard, the Ardite clan;**

**through Naaman, the Naamite clan.**

**41 These were the clans of Benjamin; those numbered were 45,600.**

**42 These were the descendants of Dan by their clans:**

**through Shuham, the Shuhamite clan.**

**These were the clans of Dan: 43 All of them were Shuhamite clans; and those numbered were 64,400.**

**44 The descendants of Asher by their clans were:**

**through Imnah, the Imnite clan;**

**through Ishvi, the Ishvite clan;**

**through Beriah, the Beriite clan;**

**45 and through the descendants of Beriah:**

**through Heber, the Heberite clan;**

**through Malkiel, the Malkielite clan.**

**46 (Asher had a daughter named Serah.)**

**47 These were the clans of Asher; those numbered were 53,400.**

**48 The descendants of Naphtali by their clans were:**

**through Jahzeel, the Jahzeelite clan;**

**through Guni, the Gunite clan;**

**49 through Jezer, the Jezerite clan;**

**through Shillem, the Shillemite clan.**

**50 These were the clans of Naphtali; those numbered were 45,400.**

**51 The total number of the men of Israel was 601,730.**

**52 The Lord said to Moses, 53 “The land is to be allotted to them as an inheritance based on the number of names. 54 To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one; each is to receive its inheritance according to the number of those listed. 55 Be sure that the land is distributed by lot. What each group inherits will be according to the names for its ancestral tribe. 56 Each inheritance is to be distributed by lot among the larger and smaller groups.”**

**57 These were the Levites who were counted by their clans:**

**through Gershon, the Gershonite clan;**

**through Kohath, the Kohathite clan;**

**through Merari, the Merarite clan.**

**58 These also were Levite clans:**

**the Libnite clan,**

**the Hebronite clan,**

**the Mahlite clan,**

**the Mushite clan,**

**the Korahite clan.**

**(Kohath was the forefather of Amram; 59 the name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, who was born to the Levites in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam. 60 Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61 But Nadab and Abihu died when they made an offering before the Lord with unauthorized fire.)**

**62 All the male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000. They were not counted along with the other Israelites because they received no inheritance among them.**

**63 These are the ones counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. 64 Not one of them was among those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai. 65 For the Lord had told those Israelites they would surely die in the desert, and not one of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.**

**26:1–51** The first census of those who were mustered for the war of conquest had been taken over 38 years earlier. That first generation of men 20 years old or more had nearly all died. It was now time for the new generation to be numbered and mustered for the campaign that awaited them. The aged Moses was joined in the task this time by his nephew Eleazar; Aaron was dead (see 20:28). In this second census the prominent clans of each tribe are listed. The numbers of most of the tribes increase. Reuben is one of the tribes that shows a decline. It is possible that the slight reduction of the families of Reuben was brought about by the judgment on their members during the rebellion of Korah and his Reubenite allies (see note on v. 9). In the intervening years the family of Reuben had nearly caught up with its former numbers (see note on v. 14). Note the comparison of the numbers of each tribe from the first census to the second:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Tribe* | *First Census* | *Second Census* |
| Reuben | 46,500 | 43,730 |
| Simeon | 59,300 | 22,200 |
| Gad | 45,650 | 40,500 |
| Judah | 74,600 | 76,500 |
| Issachar | 54,400 | 64,300 |
| Zebulun | 57,400 | 60,500 |
| Ephraim | 40,500 | 32,500 |
| Manasseh | 32,200 | 52,700 |
| Benjamin | 35,400 | 45,600 |
| Dan | 62,700 | 64,400 |
| Ahser | 41,500 | 53,400 |
| Naphtali | 53,400 | 45,400 |
|  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Total | 603,550 | 601,730 |

**Ch 26** Census showed increase in Manasseh (possible in two generations). A decrease in Simeon is explainable if most of the 24,000 killed by the plague at Shittim were Simeonites (25:1, 9, 14). The small number of Levites is understandable; by David’s time, there were still only 38,000 over the age of 30 (1Ch 23:3). (TLSB)

**26:2** In view of the impending conquest of Canaan by force of arms, Moses was to make another tabulation of Israel’s military forces. (TLSB)

**26:5–51** In the following list, the numbers in parentheses are from ch 1, allowing easy comparison of the changes Israel experienced during the wilderness wanderings. Reuben, 43,730 (46,500); Simeon, 22,200 (59,300); Gad, 40,500 (45,650); Judah, 76,500 (74,600); Issachar, 64,300 (54,400); Zebulun, 60,500 (57,400); Manasseh, 52,700 (32,200); Ephraim, 32,500 (40,500); Benjamin, 45,600 (35,400); Dan/Shuham, 64,400 (62,700); Asher, 53,400 (41,500); Naphtali, 45,400 (53,400); all of Israel, 601,730 (603,550). Despite living in the wilderness and the experience of several plagues (chs 11; 14; 16; 25), Israel’s population had dropped only 0.3 percent. However, the tribe of Simeon suffered great loss, 62.5 percent of their male population. This was likely due to persistent unfaithfulness, as specifically described in the idolatry of Baal of Peor (25:4). The tribe of Ephraim suffered great losses (19.8 percent), but their brother-tribe, Manasseh, experienced the greatest growth (64 percent). Judah remained the strongest tribe. (TLSB)

**26:9** *Dathan and Abiram.* The listing of Reuben’s families becomes an occasion to remind the reader of the part that certain of their number had in Korah’s rebellion (see 16:1; cf. Jude 11). (CSB)

**26:14** *22,200.* The greatest loss was in the tribe of Simeon (down from 59,300). Zimri was from the house of Simeon (25:14). Perhaps most of the 24,000 who died in the plague of that time were from Simeon. The judgment was so recent that the tribe had not had time to recover, as had the tribe of Reuben (see note on vv. 1–51). (CSB)

**26:19** *Er and Onan.* The names of the evil sons of Judah had not been forgotten, but they had no heritage (see Ge 38:1–10). (CSB)

**26:20** *Perez.* The line of David and Jesus would be traced through him (Ru 4:18–22; Mt 1:1–3). (CSB)

**26:29, 35** *Manasseh … Ephraim.* The order of the tribes is the same as in ch. 1, except for the inversion of Ephraim and Manasseh. (CSB)

**26:33** *Zelophehad … daughters.* See 27:1–11; 36. (CSB)

**26:34** *52,700.* The greatest gain was in the tribe of Manasseh (up from 32,200). The reason for this increase is not known. (CSB)

**26:46** *daughter named Serah.* The listing of this solitary daughter is striking. (CSB)

**26:51** *601,730.* Despite all that the people had been through during the years of desert experience, their total number was nearly the same as that of those who were first numbered. This remarkable fact is to be regarded as the blessing of the Lord, in fulfillment of his many promises to give numerical strength to the people descended from Abraham through Jacob (see note on Ge 12:2–3). This grand total and its parts are in accord with the general pattern of the numbers in the book (see note on 1:46). (CSB)

**26:53** *allotted … based on the number.* Larger tribes would receive larger shares, but decisions of place would be made by lot (v. 65). (CSB)

**26:54** *inheritance in proportion*. First purpose of the census was military preparedness (cf vv 1–4). However, Israel would also need to possess the regions it conquered. Therefore, notes are added here regarding tribal inheritance, a great theme of the conquest in Jsh. (TLSB)

**26:57–62** Cf chs 3–4. Genealogy is incomplete, breaking off in v 58 to focus on the ancestry of Aaron and Moses. These brothers were descendants of Kohath. Cf ch 3 for other families mentioned (v 58). (TLSB)

**26:57** *Levites.* As in the first census (ch. 3), the Levites were counted separately. (CSB)

**26:62** *every male*. Since the Levites were exempt from military duty, there was no point in establishing how many had reached the age of 20 (v 2). In their case, all male members who had survived the critical 30 days after birth were to be counted (cf 3:43). The Levites were the smallest tribe. (TLSB)

**26:63** *listed by Moses and Eleazar the priest*. Eleazar worked with Moses to record the census, indicating that more than one author was involved in developing the Books of Moses. (TLSB)

**Ch 26** Opposite the Jordan River and Jericho, the Lord commands another census. The records show God’s faithfulness in preserving His people. Today, pray that God’s Word and heritage will be maintained in your family. His abiding love can see you through every plague and trouble. • Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who comforts us in all our afflictions. Amen. (TLSB)