

NUMBERS

Chapter 26

Census of the New Generation

After the plague, the LORD said to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron, the priest, 2 “Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers’ houses, all in Israel who are able to go to war.” 3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, 4 “Take a census of the people, from twenty years old and upward,” as the LORD commanded Moses. The people of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt were: 5 Reuben, the firstborn of Israel; the sons of Reuben: of Hanoch, the clan of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites; 6 of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the clan of the Carmites. 7 These are the clans of the Reubenites, and those listed were 43,730. 8 And the sons of Pallu: Eliab. 9 The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD 10 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a warning. 11 But the sons of Korah did not die. 12 The sons of Simeon according to their clans: of Nemuel, the clan of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the clan of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the clan of the Jachinites; 13 of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the clan of the Shaulites. 14 These are the clans of the Simeonites, 22,200. 15 The sons of Gad according to their clans: of Zephon, the clan of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the clan of the Haggites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; 16 of Ozni, the clan of the Oznites; of Eri, the clan of the Erites; 17 of Arod, the clan of the Arodites; of Areli, the clan of the Arelites. 18 These are the clans of the sons of Gad as they were listed, 40,500. 19 The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20 And the sons of Judah according to their clans were: of Shelah, the clan of the Shelanites; of Perez, the clan of the Perezites; of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites. 21 And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the clan of the Hamulites. 22 These are the clans of Judah as they were listed, 76,500. 23 The sons of Issachar according to their clans: of Tola, the clan of the Tolaites; of Puvah, the clan of the Punites; 24 of Jashub, the clan of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the clan of the Shimronites. 25 These are the clans of Issachar as they were listed, 64,300. 26 The sons of Zebulun, according to their clans: of Sered, the clan of the Seredites; of Elon, the clan of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the clan of the Jahleelites. 27 These are the clans of the Zebulunites as they were listed, 60,500. 28 The sons of Joseph according to their clans: Manasseh and Ephraim. 29 The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the clan of the Machirites; and Machir was the father of Gilead; of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites. 30 These are the sons of Gilead: of Iezer, the clan of the Iezerites; of Helek, the clan of the Helekites; 31 and of Asriel, the clan of the Asrielites; and of Shechem, the clan of the Shechemites; 32 and of Shemida, the clan of the Shemidaites; and of Hopher, the clan of the Hopherites. 33 Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters. And the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34 These are the clans of Manasseh, and those listed were 52,700. 35 These are the sons of Ephraim according to their clans: of Shuthelah, the clan of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the clan of the Becherites; of Tahan, the clan of the Tahanites. 36 And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the clan of the Eranites. 37 These are the clans of the sons of Ephraim as they were listed, 32,500. These are the sons of Joseph according to their clans. 38 The sons of Benjamin according to their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the clan of the Ashbelites; of Ahiham, the clan of the Ahihamites; 39 of Shephupham, the clan of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the clan of the Huphamites. 40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the clan of the Ardites; of Naaman, the clan of the Naamites. 41 These are the sons of Benjamin according to their clans, and

those listed were 45,600. 42 These are the sons of Dan according to their clans: of Shuham, the clan of the Shuhamites. These are the clans of Dan according to their clans. 43 All the clans of the Shuhamites, as they were listed, were 64,400. 44 The sons of Asher according to their clans: of Imnah, the clan of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the clan of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the clan of the Beriites. 45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the clan of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the clan of the Malchielites. 46 And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah. 47 These are the clans of the sons of Asher as they were listed, 53,400. 48 The sons of Naphtali according to their clans: of Jahzeel, the clan of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the clan of the Gunites; 49 of Jezer, the clan of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the clan of the Shillemites. 50 These are the clans of Naphtali according to their clans, and those listed were 45,400. 51 This was the list of the people of Israel, 601,730. 52 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 53 “Among these the land shall be divided for inheritance according to the number of names. 54 To a large tribe you shall give a large inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a small inheritance; every tribe shall be given its inheritance in proportion to its list. 55 But the land shall be divided by lot. According to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. 56 Their inheritance shall be divided according to lot between the larger and the smaller.” 57 This was the list of the Levites according to their clans: of Gershon, the clan of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites; of Merari, the clan of the Merarites. 58 These are the clans of Levi: the clan of the Libnites, the clan of the Hebronites, the clan of the Mahlites, the clan of the Mushites, the clan of the Korahites. And Kohath was the father of Amram. 59 The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. 60 And to Aaron were born Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 61 But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD. 62 And those listed were 23,000, every male from a month old and upward. For they were not listed among the people of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the people of Israel. 63 These were those listed by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who listed the people of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. 64 But among these there was not one of those listed by Moses and Aaron the priest, who had listed the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, “They shall die in the wilderness.” Not one of them was left, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the 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:

<i>Tribe</i>	<i>First Census</i>	<i>Second Census</i>
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)

26:34 *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. (CSB)

26:53 *divided ... according to the number of names.* 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)