

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
1-26-22
Numbers 26

The Command To Take The Second Census – Verses 1-4

¹ 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:

26:1-2 Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel: Some 38 years earlier, at the beginning of the Book of Numbers, while Israel still camped at Mount Sinai, God commanded them to take a census. The first census was primarily for military organization. If they were to enter into and take possession of the Promised Land, they had to know how many troops they had, and how they should best be organized.

26:4 All who are able to go to war in Israel: The purpose of the second census was also made clear. They were to count those able to fight on behalf of Israel. This accounting, 38 years later, was again for military organization. 38 years before Israel was organized enough; they just did not have enough faith to take the Promised Land. Organization is good, and the work of God can suffer from a lack of it; but the best organization can never replace bold trust in God.

The Tribe Of Reuben – Verses 5-11

⁵ The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were: through Hanok, the Hanokite clan; through Pallu, the Palluite clan; ⁶ through Hezron, the Hezronite clan; through Karmi, the Karmite 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.

26:15-9 The children of Reuben were: In the first census, Reuben counted 46,500 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 43,730 - a loss of 2,770 men (6%). These are the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of the congregation, who contended against Moses: Notable in the tribe of Reuben were Dathan and Abiram, who were co-leaders with Korah in the rebellion against the LORD and Moses described in Numbers 16. Perhaps one reason Dathan and Abiram resented Moses' leadership was because they were from the tribe of Israel's firstborn son (Reuben); yet Moses, descended from Levi (a younger son) was the leader of the nation.

26:10-11 And they became a warning sign: God's judgment of Dathan, Abiram, Korah and their followers in Numbers 16 surely was a sign, both to the generation in the wilderness and beyond.

The Tribe Of Simeon – Verses 12-14

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; those numbered were 22,200.

26:12-14 The sons of Simeon: In the first census, the tribe of Simeon counted 59,300 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 22,200. This was a staggering loss of 37,100 men for this once-great tribe (a loss of 63%).

The Tribe Of Gad – Verses 15-18

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.

26:15-18 The sons of Gad: In the first census, the tribe of Gad counted 45,650 men ready for war; 38 years later, they count 40,500. This was a loss of 5,150 fighting men (11%).

The Tribe Of Judah – Verses 19-22

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.

26:19-22 The sons of Judah: In the first census, the tribe of Judah counted 74,600 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 76,500. This was a gain of 1,900 (3%).

The Tribe Of Issachar - Verses 23-25

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.

26:19-22 The sons of Issachar: In the first census, the tribe of Issachar counted 54,400 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 64,300. This was a gain of 9,900 (18%).

The Tribe Of Zebulun – Verses 26-27

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.

26:26-27 The sons of Zebulun: In the first census, the tribe of Zebulun counted 57,400 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 60,500. This was a gain of 3,100 (5%).

The Tribe Of Manasseh – Verses 28-34

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 Hephher, the Hephherite clan. ³³ (Zelophehad son of Hephher had no sons; he had only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah.) ³⁴ These were the clans of Manasseh; those numbered were 52,700.

26:28-34 The sons of Manasseh: In the first census, the tribe of Manasseh counted 32,200 ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 52,700. This was a remarkable gain of 20,500 (64%).

The Tribe Of Ephraim – Verses 35-37

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.

26:35-37 These are the sons of Ephraim: In the first census, the tribe of Ephraim counted 40,500 ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 32,500. This was a loss of 8,000 men (20%).

The Tribe Of Benjamin – Verses 38-41

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.

26:38-41 The sons of Benjamin: In the first census, the tribe of Benjamin counted 35,400 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 45,600. This was a gain of 10,200 men (29%).

The Tribe Of Dan – Verses 42-43

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.

26:42-43 These are the sons of Dan: In the first census, the tribe of Dan counted 62,700 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 64,400. This was a gain of 1,700 men (3%).

The Tribe Of Asher – Verses 44-47

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.

26:44-47 The sons of Asher: In the first census, the tribe of Asher counted 41,500 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 53,400 men. This was a gain of 11,900 (29%).

The Tribe Of Naphtali – Verses 48-50

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.**

26:48-50 The sons of Naphtali: In the first census, the tribe of Naphtali counted 53,400 men ready for war; 38 years later, they counted 45,400 men. This was a loss of 8,000 (15%). These are those who were numbered: In the first census, Israel counted 603,550 men ready for war; 38 years later, they count 601,730 men - a loss of 1,820 men (.3%).

26:51 Six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty: So, the total number of men ready for war during the wilderness stayed virtually the same over the 38 year period, when the generation of unbelief died in the wilderness.

The stagnation of population is reflective of Israel's spiritual state during these 38 years - we should have expected them to grow, as is normal in the course of generations. Instead, they simply stayed where they were. The 38 years in the wilderness were years of no growth, no advance - just going in circles until the generation of unbelief had died and a generation of faith had arisen, a generation bold enough to take the Promised Land.

26:51 Numbered of the children of Israel: During this period, certain tribes suffered significant gains, and certain tribes suffered significant losses. Of these twelve tribes of Israel, five suffered loss, and seven gained men. Half of the tribes had gains or losses 15% or less; but Simeon lost 63% of their population, and Manasseh gained 64%. God was blessing or cursing particular tribes, no doubt related to their abiding with Him.

Larger Tribes Receive Larger Portions Of Land – Verses 52-56

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.”**

26:54 To a tribe more numerous, and consisting of more and larger families, a greater part of the land was to be given to them to possess. And to a smaller tribe, and of the fewer families and persons in them, a lesser share of it. This direction is given to Moses, but is not designed for him personally. For he never entered the land, but died before Israel went into it. But for the chief ruler that would be then in being, namely, Joshua, his successor.

26:55 **“Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.”** That the division might appear to be according to the determination and will of God. And not left to the judgment and discretion of the chief magistrate, though bound by the above rule.

The Tribe Of Levi And Their Inheritance – Verses 57-62

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.

26:557-62 For they were not numbered among the other children of Israel: The Levites were not numbered in either the first or second census, because the men of their tribe were not to go to war. Because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel: As well, they were to receive no inheritance of land as the other tribes; their inheritance was greater than property - the LORD Himself (Numbers 18:20).

The Old Generation Has No Inheritance – Verses 63-65

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 wilderness, and not one of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

26:64 None of those counted in the first census were counted in the second. That was the old generation, the generation of unbelief, who perished in the wilderness. They obviously had no inheritance in the Promised Land (except of Caleb and Joshua).

26:64 A new census for a new generation. Thirty-eight years had elapsed since the first great census recorded in Numbers (see 1:1–2:33). During that time, every Israelite man and woman over 20 years of age—except Caleb, Joshua, and Moses—had died, and yet God's laws and the spiritual character of the nation were still intact. Numbers records some dramatic miracles. This is a quiet but powerful miracle often overlooked: A whole nation moved from one land to another, lost its entire adult population, yet managed to maintain its spiritual direction. Sometimes it may feel like God isn't working dramatic miracles in our lives. But God often works in quiet ways to bring about his long-range purposes.