

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story

Lesson # 22 "Preparations for the 2nd Generation to Enter the Promised Land." •HANDOUT•

► We open this study lesson with Numbers 26. This chapter marks the beginnings of preparing the Second Generation to enter the Promised Land. God requests Moses and Eleazar [Aaron's son and new High Priest] to take a special census of the second generation.

Numbers 26:1-4 • After the plague the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, "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."

So, on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar, the priest, spoke with them and said, "Take a census of the men twenty years old or more, as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt."

Q: What is significant about the chapter's opening statement that the census was to take place "after the plague?"

Q: What is ironic about the census being specifically designated for "all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel?"

Q: If all of the 1st Generation was dead, what about Moses? Didn't God tell him he would not enter the land because of his disobedience of striking the rock to get water at Meribah?

Q: If this was the second census, when was the first census taken?

Q: Surely there had to have been a sense of joy for finally accomplishing God's commands and getting to the end of this forced wandering for 40 years. But what would we expect Israel's second generation to be feeling at this time, deep down inside?

Q: When God finished his command to Moses to take this second census, He referred to the people as "the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt." What is significant about that reference?

The Result of the Census by Tribe:
The major difference between the first census and the second census is that we were only given the numbers of the men in the first census but in the second census, we are told the names of the major families of each tribe.

Tribe	1 st census	2 nd Census	Loss or Gain
Reuben	46,000 men	43,730 men	Loss: 6%
Simeon	59,300 men	22,200 men	Loss: 63%
Gad	45,650 men	40,500 men	Loss: 11%
Judah	74,600 men	76,500 men	Gain: 3%
Issachar	54,400 men	64,300 men	Gain: 18%
Zebulun	57,400 men	60,500 men	Gain: 5%
Manasseh	32,200 men	52,700 men	Gain: 64%
Ephraim	40,500 men	32,500 men	Loss: 20%
Benjamin	35,400 men	45,600 men	Gain: 29%
Dan	62,700 men	64,400 men	Gain: 3%
Asher	41,500 men	53,400 men	Gain: 29%
Naphtali	53,400 men	45,400 men	Loss 15%
TOTALS:	603,550 men	601,730 men	Overall Loss: 0.3%

Q: What tribe is missing from this list?

Q: What does comparing and reconciling the results of these two censuses tell us?

**Now, in addition to census providing a standing army
the census will also be used to distribute the Land to the people as their inheritance . . .**

Numbers 26:52-56 • The LORD said to Moses, "The land is to be allotted to them as an inheritance based on the number of names.

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.

Be sure that the land is distributed by lot. What each group inherits will be according to the names for its ancestral tribe. Each inheritance is to be distributed by lot among the larger and smaller groups."

Q: Why would God add the distribution of the land as an additional purpose of the census?

Now, to the Tribe of Levi and their inheritance . . .

Numbers 26:57-62 • 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. 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; 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. Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died when they made an offering before the LORD with unauthorized fire.)

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.

Q: God has made it clear that he was going to reward the Levites because they stood with the Lord when no one else did, but why were they not included in the census and why were they to receive no inheritance?

The Census Also Reveals a Sad Truth ...

Numbers 26:63-65 • 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. Not one of them was among those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai.

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.

Q: This passage serves as a fitting conclusion to this chapter. What are the most significant conclusions this passage highlights?

Moses must face the issues of inheritance from 5 sisters whose father had no sons. These women's actions were unprecedented, taking great courage, conviction and faith. It also opens a window to the sociology of early Israel.

Numbers 27:1-4 • The daughters of Zelophehad son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.

They approached the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly, and said, "Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons.

Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

Q: What makes the actions of these women so exceptional?

Q: Why is it important that these women specified that their father died because he was part of the doomed first generation, and not because he rebelled with Korah? [ref: Number 16]

Numbers 27:5-11 • So Moses brought their case before the LORD and the LORD said to him, "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and turn their father's inheritance over to them.

"Say to the Israelites, 'If a man dies and leaves no son, turn his inheritance over to his daughter. If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to be a legal requirement for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.' "

Q: Moses brought the case before the Lord. What was the outcome?

► Note: Numbers 36 provides an appendix to this account. That chapter will deal with the complicating factor of women who are now inheritors of the land, but who might marry outside their families and thus muddle the subsequent inheritance claims of Israel.

We will discuss this when we get there.

**► In the scripture passage which follows,
God states that it is time for a new leader to be appointed
who will take the Second Generation into the Promised Land.
This is where we will pick up this bittersweet segment next time. . .**



Next Time • Lesson #23
"Moses & Israel's New Leader"

