

First Census of the Twelve Tribes (1 Iyyar [April/May] 1445 BC)

Numbers 1

Historical/Chronological Setting

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

Instructions for the Military Conscription Census

2 “Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head

3 from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to* go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

4 With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father’s household.

5 These then are the names of the men who shall stand with you: of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur;

6 of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai;

7 of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab;

8 of Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar;

9 of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon;

10 of the sons of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur;

11 of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni;

12 of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai;

13 of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran;

14 of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel;

15 of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan.

16 These are they who were called of the congregation, the leaders of their fathers’ tribes; they were the heads of divisions of Israel.”

Moses Directs the Census

17 So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name,

18 and they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month. Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head,

19 just as the LORD had commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

Census Results by Tribe (excluding Levi)

20 Now the sons of Reuben, Israel’s firstborn, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

21 their numbered men of the tribe of Reuben *were* 46,500.

22 Of the sons of Simeon, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, their numbered men, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

23 their numbered men of the tribe of Simeon *were* 59,300.

24 Of the sons of Gad, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

25 their numbered men of the tribe of Gad *were* 45,650.

26 Of the sons of Judah, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

27 their numbered men of the tribe of Judah *were* 74,600.

28 Of the sons of Issachar, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

29 their numbered men of the tribe of Issachar *were* 54,400.

30 Of the sons of Zebulun, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

31 their numbered men of the tribe of Zebulun *were* 57,400.

32 Of the sons of Joseph, *namely*, of the sons of Ephraim, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

33 their numbered men of the tribe of Ephraim *were* 40,500.

34 Of the sons of Manasseh, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war,

35 their numbered men of the tribe of Manasseh *were* 32,200.

36 Of the sons of Benjamin, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers’ households, according to the number of

names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*,
37 their numbered men of the tribe of Benjamin *were* 35,400.

38 Of the sons of Dan, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*,

39 their numbered men of the tribe of Dan *were* 62,700.

40 Of the sons of Asher, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*,

41 their numbered men of the tribe of Asher *were* 41,500.

42 Of the sons of Naphtali, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*,

43 their numbered men of the tribe of Naphtali *were* 53,400.

Census Summary and Total

44 These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each of whom was of his father's household.

45 So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war* in Israel,

46 even all the numbered men were 603,550.

Uncounted Levites Dedicated to Tabernacle Service

47 The Levites, however, were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe.

48 For the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying,

49 "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel.

50 But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle.

51 So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death.

52 The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies.

53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony."

Census Conclusion: Faithful Obedience

54 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all which the LORD had commanded Moses, so they did.

Organization of the Camp (c. 1 Iyyar [April/May] 1445 BC)

Numbers 2

Introduction

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

2 "The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance.

East Side—Judah, Issachar, Zebulun

3 Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise *shall be* of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab,

4 and his army, even their numbered men, 74,600.

5 Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar, and the leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel the son of Zuar,

6 and his army, even their numbered men, 54,400.

7 *Then comes* the tribe of Zebulun, and the leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon,

8 and his army, even his numbered men, 57,400.

9 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400, by their armies. They shall set out first.

South Side—Reuben, Simeon, Gad

10 "On the south side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Reuben by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben: Elizur the son of Shedeur,

11 and his army, even their numbered men, 46,500.

12 Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai,

13 and his army, even their numbered men, 59,300.

14 Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph the son of Deuel,

15 and his army, even their numbered men, 45,650.

16 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Reuben: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second.

The Tabernacle

17 “Then the tent of meeting shall set out *with* the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards.

West Side—Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin

18 “On the west side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud,

19 and his army, even their numbered men, 40,500.

20 Next to him *shall be* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the sons of Manasseh: Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur,

21 and his army, even their numbered men, 32,200.

22 Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideoni,

23 and his army, even their numbered men, 35,400.

24 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: 108,100, by their armies. And they shall set out third.

North Side—Dan, Asher, Naphtali

25 “On the north side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Dan by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai,

26 and his army, even their numbered men, 62,700.

27 Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiel the son of Ochran,

28 and his army, even their numbered men, 41,500.

29 Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan,

30 and his army, even their numbered men, 53,400.

31 The total of the numbered men of the camp of Dan *was* 157,600. They shall set out last by their standards.”

Summary and Total

32 These are the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers’ households; the total of the numbered men of the camps by their armies, 603,550.

33 The Levites, however, were not numbered among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Conclusion: Faithful Obedience

34 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, every one by his family according to his father’s household.

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