

In The Wilderness

Numbers 26:1-65

- In **Ezra 9:13**- Ezra said “You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve” also David wrote in **Ps 103:10** “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities”. This is so true as we saw last week when Israel sinned greatly by committing idolatry and sexual immorality with the Moabite and Midianite women causing a plague to break out within the camp and kill twenty four thousand people.

V1-65

- As Israel lingers in the plains of Moab we are going to see The Lord move from judgment to mercy and from punishment to promise, as the Lord speaks to Moses and Eleazer on how they are to prepare the people to move forward and not stay still. **V1-4** earlier at the beginning of the Book of Numbers while Israel camped at Mt. Sinai, God had commanded them to take a census, now thirty eight years later they are told to do the same thing.
- This census has a twofold purpose > **1st** for warfare- in order for Israel to take possession of the land God required them to fight for the land, and by knowing the size of their army and then facing armies that are larger and coming out victorious, reminded them that it was God Who gave them the victory, **2nd** Welfare- after these battles have been won it was important for them to know the size of each tribe in order to divide the land equally amongst them.
- **V5-11** the census only was to include men who are twenty years and older, and the first tribe that was numbered was **Reuben** and it numbered 43,730, a loss of 6% or 2,770 from the first census, and were told that this occurred because both Dathan and Abiram who came from the tribe of Reuben led a rebellion against Moses and his leadership that displeased the Lord and caused Him to open up the earth and swallow up those who participated in it.
- **V12-14** next was the tribe of **Simeon** who only numbered 22,000, which was down a remarkable 63% from the last census, a fact explained by their involvement with the Baal worship and idolatry of the last chapter in 25:14. I’m going to go through the rest of the tribes and their specific numbers, I can hear a sigh from some of you, but it will be very quick and then we’ll see the total number of this census and compare it to the last census.
- **V15-18** the tribe of Gad 40,500 a loss of 11%, **V19-22** tribe of Judah 76,500 a gain of 3%, **V23-25** tribe of Issachar 64,300 a gain of 18%, **V26-27** tribe of Zebulun 60,500 a gain of 5%, **V28-34** tribe of Manasseh 52,700 a gain of 64%, **V35-37** tribe of Ephraim 32,500 a loss of 20%, **V38-41** tribe of Benjamin 45,600 a gain of 29%, **V42-43** tribe of Dan 64,400 a gain of 3%, **V44-47** tribe of Asher 53,400 gain of 29%, **V48-50** tribe of Naphtali 45,400 a loss of 15%

- **V51** after all the counting was done there was **601,730** men ready for war, in comparison to the first census which numbered **603,550** men, that meant a loss of **1,820** men or **3%** loss. That may have alarmed some people who know something about census and upward and downward trends of populations, but when you consider that every man had now been replaced who had died during the previous thirty eight years except for only **1,820** men, this number is amazing, especially since all this happened in a wilderness > **Deut 8:4**.
- Despite the threat of disease, lack of water, food, and shelter, Israel was still able to maintain their health, and repopulate their numbers regardless of the lack of basic human needs at their disposal if they lived in a city or town instead of in the wilderness, amazing! So when you add it up of the twelve tribes five suffered loss and seven gained men, and half of the tribes had gains and losses of 15% or less, largest loss was Simeon and the largest gain was Manasseh, so God was blessing and adding and chastening and subtracting.
- **V52-56** this goes back to the why the census and how it benefitted the welfare of the people, as the larger tribes receive a larger inheritance of the land, while the smaller tribes receive a smaller inheritance. **V57-62** but the tribe Levi were not numbered in the first or second census because the men of their tribe was not to go to war as well as receiving no inheritance of land as the other tribes, for their inheritance was greater than property, for it was The Lord Himself > **Num 18:20**.
- **V63-65** finally in closing the Lord is True to His Word, as none of the old generation except for Caleb and Joshua received any inheritance in the Promised Land. None of those who were counted in the first census are counted in the second, for the original generation, the generation of unbelief all perished in the wilderness before any inheritances are given out.
- **Numb 14:1-4** they cried all night wanting to go back to Egypt and fearing that their families and children would be taken as captive as slaves. **Numb 14:29-35** this very word God fulfilled it as we see none of those who first entered into the wilderness, who saw the miracles of Egypt, the Red Sea part, the lightning and thunder hit Mt. Sinai, the water come miraculously out of a Rock, the manna first fall from the sky, all of them died for unbelief.