

Numbers 26

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Date: 25 July 2021

[0 : 00] Numbers chapter 26 says this, Then it came about after the plague. That plague is the plague as a result of the Midianite and the Moabite women and their worship of Baal of Peor. If you remember in the chapters that followed this, in which 24,000 people fell.

Then it came about after the plague that the Lord spoke to Moses and to Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saying, Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel from 20 years old and upward by their father's households, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel.

So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, Take a census of the people from 20 years old and upward as the Lord has commanded Moses. Now the sons of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt were Reuben, Israel's firstborn, the son of Reuben, of Hanak, the family of the Hanakites, of Pelu, the family of the Pulites, of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites, of Carmi, the family of the Carminites.

These are the families of the Reubenites, and those who were numbered with them were 43,730. The son of Pelu, Eliab, the sons of Eliab, Nemeul, and Dathan, and Iberium.

These are the Dathan and Iberium who were called by the congregation who contended against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah when they contended against the Lord.

[1 : 15] And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah when that company died when the fire devoured 250 men so that they became a warning. The sons of Korah, however, did not die.

The sons of Simeon, according to their families of Nemeul, the family of the Nemeulites, of Jemen, the family of the Jemenites, of Jachan, the family of the Jachanites, of Zerah, the family of the Zerathites, of Shul, the family of the Shulites.

These are the families of the Simeonites, 22,200. The sons of Gad, according to their families, of Zephon, the family of the Zephanites, of Haggai, the family of the Haggites, of Shunai, the family of the Shunites, of Osni, the family of the Osnites, of Eri, the family of the Rites, of Erod, the family of the Errodites, of Eriol, the family of the Erolites.

These are the families of the sons of Gad, according to those who were numbered of them, 40,500. The sons of Judah were Ur and Onan, but Ur and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

The sons of Judah, according to their families, were of Shaloh, the family of the Shalonites, of Perez, the family of the Perizzites, of Zer, the family of the Zerites, the sons of Perez, were of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites, of Hamul, the family of the Humalites.

[2 : 23] These are the families of Judah, according to those who were numbered, of them, 76,500. The sons of Issachar, according to their families, of Tola, the family of the Tolites, of Puvah, the family of the Punites, of Jeshold, the family of the Jesholdites, of Shemron, the family of the Shemronites, These are the families of Issachar, according to those who were numbered, of them 64,300.

The sons of Zebulun, according to their families of Sered, the family of the Seredites, of Elan, the family of the Elanites, of Jehalil, the family of the Jehalites. These are the family of the Zebulunites, according to those who were numbered, of them 60,500.

The sons of Joseph, according to their families, Manasseh and Ephraim. The sons of Manasseh, of Machir, the family of the Michalites, of Machir, the family of Galid, of Galid, the family of the Galites. These are the sons of Galid, of Izzar, the family of the Israelites, of Helec, the family of the Helikites, and of Asriel, the family of the Israelites, and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites, and of Shemada, the family of the Shemite, and of Hefer, the family of the Hephaites.

Now, Zeliphad, the son of Hefer, had no sons, but only daughters. And the names of the daughters of Zeliphad were Mahalel, Noah, Hogla, Milcah, and Terzah. These are the families of Manasseh, and those who were numbered of them were 52,700.

[3 : 38] These are the sons of Ephraim. According to their families of Shuthalah, the family of the Shuthalites, of Betzer, the family of the Betzerites, of Tehan, the family of the Tehanites. These are the sons of Shuthal of Aaron, the family of the Aaronites.

These are the families of the sons of Ephraim. According to those who were numbered of them, 32,500. These are the sons of Joseph. According to their families. The sons of Benjamin, according to their families of Bela, the family of the Belites, of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites, of Ithram, the family of the Ithramites, of Shephufem, the family of the Shuthamites, of Hufem, the family of the Hufamites, and the sons of Bela, Ard, and Naaman, the family of the Ardites, of Naaman, the family of the Namites.

These are the sons of Benjamin, according to their families, and those who were numbered of them, were 45,600. These are the sons of Dan, according to their families, of Shuhem, the family of the Shumites.

These are the families of Dan, according to their families, all the families of the Shumites, according to those who were numbered, of them, were 64,400. The sons of Asher according to their families of Emnah, the family of the Emnites, of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites, of Bariah, the family of the Berites, of the sons of Bariah of Heber, the family of the Hebrites, of Machil, the family of the Machelites.

The name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah. These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were numbered of them 53,400. The sons of Naphtali according to the families of Jehazil, the family of the Jehazites, of Gunan, the family of the Gunites, of Jezir, the family of the Jezrites, of Shilam, the family of the Shilamites.

[5 : 15] These are the families of Naphtali according to their families and those who were numbered of them 45,400. These are those who were numbered of the sons of Israel 601,730.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of the names. To the larger group, you shall increase their inheritance, and the smaller group, you shall diminish their inheritance.

Each shall be given their inheritance according to those who were numbered of them, but the land shall be divided by lot. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers, according to the selection, by lot.

Their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller groups. These are those who were numbered of the Levites, according to their families, of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites, of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites, of Merari, the family of the Marites.

these are the families of Levi the family of the Libnites the family of the Hebronites the family of the Mahalites the family of the Mushnites the family of the Korites Kohath became the father of Amram and the name of Amram's wife was Jochbed the daughter of Levi who was born to Levi in Egypt and she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam to Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu Eleazar and Ithamar but Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord those who were numbered of them were 23,000 every male from a month old and upward for they were not numbered among the sons of Israel since no inheritance was given to them among the sons of Israel these are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priests who numbered the sons of Israel on the plains of Moab by the Jordan and Jericho but among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priests who numbered the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai for the Lord has said of them they shall surely die in the wilderness and not a man was left of them except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun

[7 : 04] Numbers chapter 26 the temptation is always just to skip over the names and that is a really big temptation of mine because I know I butcher these names and I know I butcher them really to the utmost of my ability and I know it's got to be almost unbearable to hear me pronounce them but I also know this beyond a shadow of a fact God so ordained that their names would be written in his book and these are not just vague nameless people these are people that God chose to remember by recording them in Holy Writ so we wanted to understand that so let's pray God I thank you for this day I thank you for this word and I thank you as we've had the opportunity to read it Lord that now we can come hopefully to an application and understanding of it Lord may the truth of your word resonate within our hearts and minds and may we as your people be moved to live more like you for your glory and honor and we ask it all in Jesus name I want you to see from Numbers chapter 26 the reminders of a fresh start the reminders of a fresh start the whole reason

Numbers chapter 26 is here because Numbers chapter 26 serves as the book end to Numbers chapter 1 between Numbers 1 and Numbers 26 which are the two countings of God's people we have what are referred to as the wilderness wandering of the nation of Israel in the wilderness wandering we see God not only preserving and sustaining but also emoting and shaping and conforming his people we see this as we have referred to as the sanctification process it took God a moment to get them out of Egypt it took him as some have said 40 years to get Egypt out of them and he is sanctifying them in the wilderness that is he is setting them apart sanctification is nothing other than being set apart for holy service and he is setting them apart throughout this time and the two countings of God's people serve as bookends

God commanded Moses to count them in the wilderness of Sinai right after they came out of Egypt and that is the numbering of Numbers chapter 1 God again commands Moses to count them as they are there in the plains of Moab right before they go into the promised land crossing the Jordan River here in Numbers 26 and what God is doing here is he is signifying a fresh start no longer are they the rebellious people of the wilderness now they are going to be the victorious people of battle because God is signifying a fresh start he is showing him that what he has planned to do what he was intending to do he is about to do and he is doing it with this if you remember if you remember the first numbering of God's people in Numbers chapter 1 this word military or battle or warriors was always repeated it was always about those who could fight those who could fight those who could fight those men who were old enough to go to battle this is the same age group at least men 20 years old and upward that are counted here but there is no longer such a reference for battle or preparation as it is about inheritance or what God is going to do we will see that in just a moment but what we see is God is signifying they are no longer those people that were counted now they are a new people right

God is about to do something with this group of people but there are three things that we see in this fresh start that are very very vivid reminders to us and the first one is very striking and that is why we read the names the first one is we see that there is a reminder of the severe consequences of sin and rebellion there is a reminder of the severe consequences of sin and rebellion the whole reason Moses had to count the people was because he needed to know how many warriors were in the land he was counting them as God says take a census for those 20 years old and upper who are able to go to war in Israel they needed to understand before they crossed the Jordan River before they went in to fight the battle of Jericho before they went in to fight the battle of every city and every people that they would encounter they needed the affirmation that God had equipped them with enough troops or enough soldiers he was planning to do something amazing through them we'll get to that in just a moment but what he was doing is he is showing them how many people he had fit to fight right but the whole reason he had to count them is because every other warrior had died those warriors that had been counted in Numbers chapter 1 were no longer around each and every one of them had died in the wilderness those that were 20 years old and upper except for two

Caleb and Joshua every one of them had died everyone that was fit to battle at the beginning of the book of Numbers is no longer there these are the children that they said that the giants of the land will squash and take our children because we are like grasshoppers in their sight right these are the children of those who have died these are the children of those who had went ahead and when we see this we are reminded that there is a very very very severe price for sin and rebellion the whole reason they had to be recounted was because there was this removal of the old there was the removal of those who refused to go in those who had been numbered before were no longer there those who had been numbered before were no longer present and even in the listing of this genealogy and again this is why we read it it is if God is reminding us over and over and over again these are a sinful and rebellious people in the very first listing of people we are introduced to Reuben

Reuben is the firstborn we understand that Reuben does not get the primary place inheritance because of his wickedness and because of some of the things that he does in the book of Genesis we'd have to go back and look at that but what we also see is in Reuben there are these two people Dathan and Iberium and the author here writes for us that Dathan and Iberium Moses writes according to the leading of the spirit of God that Dathan and Iberium are those who rose up and spoke against Moses and Aaron there were those who were there during Korah's rebellion right they were there those who were there during that time when the 250 men with the fire pans were

consumed and all this in the presence of God and the ground opened up and it swallowed Korah so we see Dathan and Iberium they were sinful we see Korah he was sinful he died he passed away we go on and we see name after name after name of those who failed probably one of the most striking is when we are introduced into the tribe of Judah during this counting now Judah is always prominent I don't know if you realize that

[13 : 51] I know I've told you that over and over again in the Old Testament Judah always has the most people the greatest size the most land always has a place of prominence he's always there Judah also has a lot of problems but the reason Judah is brought to prominence is because it is a line from the tribe of Judah who is our Lord and Savior right so again the consistency of scripture we just stand and go oh wow that is so cool right because Reuben's failures and because others failures Judah was lifted up and Judah being lifted up rightfully so because that is the lineage of Christ but look when he introduces Judah to us he says now the sons of Judah were Ur and Onan now Ur and Onan were the first born of Judah way before the nation of Israel went into captivity in Egypt and it says and they died in the land of Canaan now these are the ones that get Judah in a little bit of trouble because you remember Ur all we know about Ur it says that he was desperately wicked and God killed him now what a testimony right and then Onan was supposed to fulfill his brotherly responsibilities and take the widow of Ur and give the offspring to her because I mean

I don't understand I know sometimes man that's just so contrary to our culture and I get that it's not for us to understand it's just for us to say that's what God had ordained that they would do right and Onan said I'm not going to do that because that would be considered my brother's son so he was selfish and it says so God killed him right and then Judah says well I'm not giving her my third son because all the other ones are dying so Judah says well maybe sometime I will give you my third son and he puts her away and forgets about it and you remember she disguised herself as a temple prostitute and Judah goes and fathers a child with her so all of a sudden at the mentioning of these two names which really have no other application to the descendants of the people who came out of Egypt because they didn't even make it to Egypt we are reminded this is a sinful people all the way back to the first time that they were in the land of Canaan Ur and Onan they died there right and then we keep going on and on and on and we are introduced to the sons of Aaron who died because they offered strange fire so over and over again through this listing we are reminded of the severe the very very severe consequences of sin and rebellion this is why he had to count them again because the wages of sin is death and those who had rebelled and sinned guess what they died they died if you want to know exactly how many men died all you have to do is go back to Numbers chapter 1 how many men died because of their sin and rebellion

I'll tell you exactly how many men fit for battle 603,550 men died not counting the others some estimates are over 1.2 million people died all because of sin and rebellion and we are reminded that you say where did I get that number it's actually not 603,550 it would be 603,548 because of the two right Caleb and Joshua those men that were counted in Numbers chapter 1 who were fit for battle every one of them died so now we need to count again so there's this reminder while this is a fresh start the whole reason we're counting is because sin has consequences and for 40 years the nation had been paying those consequences number two we are reminded of the faithfulness of God at all times not only are we reminded of the severe consequences of sin and rebellion we are reminded of the faithfulness of God at all times the very fact that they had to number them shows them that they couldn't just look out there and go oh we have a few now think about this we get lost in this sometimes 603,548 warriors have died in the wilderness over a span of 40 years actually it's 38 years along with a multitude of other people and we know that probably well over a million people have died in this journey and some have said

Moses led the longest death march that has ever been led in history for 38 years he was leading people who were dying and he was burying them probably each and every day and each and every day there is this vivid reminder of the price of sin but yet here at this point God is giving them a fresh start and he is showing them that he has been faithful even in the midst of their unfaithfulness in the wilderness wondering there is this failure repentance return failure repentance return it's the same thing we see throughout the whole Bible right especially in the book of Judges where there is this downward spiral of sin rebellion being enslaved redemption sin rebellion being enslaved redemption there is this cycle that man tends to get caught in and we see this in the wilderness that they fail they sin they rebel God gets their attention and then they repent and they return and then they do it again then they do it again then they do it again in the midst of all of this God has been

faithful and the reason we know he has been faithful is because the number is 601,730 to put it exactly they were only 1,820 people short of what they were when they came out of Egypt very small

God had blessed them even while he was judging them there is this great passage in the Old Testament I have referenced it before one of the major prophets which makes this declaration it says that while striking yet healing God deals with his people he strikes yet heals here we see his hand of judgment was upon the sinner but his hand of blessing was upon their offspring God had promised Abraham that his descendants will be a multitude right and God's faithfulness resonates that even though he is judging a multitude of the descendants of Abraham yet the seed of Abraham continues to multiply and to grow and to grow and to grow and here there is sufficient number to do exactly everything God had called them to do his people were still prepared to go into battle his people still had sufficient numbers to fight and his people still had sufficient numbers to look up and go oh wow as many funerals as we have had we are still a great multitude and what this tells us is that God is so faithful at all times if there was a season in history in which I could say it would almost be excusable for God not to bless his people it would probably have been in the wilderness this was a time of trials physically emotionally and spiritually and we don't get the weight of all of it right because it tells us over and over again it says it in the book of Psalms it says it again in the New Testament it references as well that the whole time they were in the wilderness they were involved in paganistic worship of

[21 : 11] Egyptian gods this isn't just like a random practice but yet God's blessing them God's blessing them and the reason he is blessing them is because he is faithful to his word over and over again and when we think about this just as our brother shared God is always faithful to his word and to his people often times in spite of his people there's so many reasons throughout history in which you could say the church has failed and the church was not what it should be yet what we have found resonate in history is God's faithfulness to his people is so much greater than their faithfulness to him and every time we stop and we recollect and we count we go oh wow look God is still doing something there are a number of people who will paint for you a bleak picture across American Christianity they will tell you that our baptism numbers are down they will tell you that our church attendance is down they'll tell you that our discipleship numbers are down they'll tell you all these numbers are down and they can paint a very very dark picture and that goes across every denomination and every spectrum of faith throughout

American Christianity but one thing that I seem to find is that every time I get all these statistics and people tell me I look around and see God doing otherwise among his people is that we may not always be able to numerically count how God is working but we can see that God is faithful at all times to his people and we see this in this listing of names and probably the greatest and I knew I'd be a little bit shorter tonight that's why I asked the questions leading into it probably the greatest of this we are reminded not only of the severe consequences of sin and rebellion not only the faithfulness of God at all times probably one of the greatest aspects of this passage and one of the central reasons it is here there's about to be one more battle right in number chapter 31 Moses will lead this group of people these 601,730 people to go fight the Midianites and to wreak God's judgment upon the Midianites because of the sin of Balaam and

Bale of Peor right and they will completely annihilate them they won't touch the Moabites because they're supposed to leave the Moabites alone because they're descendants of Lot but they will wreak havoc upon the Midianites and that is a battle they will face they will be God's instrument of judgment upon them but these are the people that God is ordaining that would go into the promised land that one battle would be over here on the other side of the Jordan and they're going across the Jordan and fight the battle over there but what we see now take account where they're at they're in the plains of Moab have not even put a foot inside the Jordan River yet they haven't went into the promised land but what we see is this a reminder of the certainty it is a reminder number three of the certainty of that which God has promised Moses says the reason I've counted them look at what it says verse 52 then the Lord spoke to Moses saying God says I not only had you count them so you know how many warriors you had here's the second reason you've counted them then the Lord spoke to Moses saying among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of the names according to the number of the names put it out of the way

God says I wanted you to see how big each group was that way when you have the land it's not an if right in the economy of God it's never an if when you have the land you will know who gets more

land than the other you're going to know that Judah is the biggest therefore Judah gets the greatest allotment of land you're going to know that Simeon is the smallest allotment of land by the way one thing we notice in the counting of God's people some tribes or some groups suffered great loss as in Simeon's case Simeon his numbers depreciated by 37,100 now let's let me take stock right here okay there are three tribes that really depreciated and they are all the ones who were camped on the western side of the tabernacle around Simeon Simeon may seem to be a bad influence you remember last week when I told you that there was a man who was a prince among the Simeonites who brought a woman into the camp that he shouldn't have ah you think it's coincidental that they lost 37,100 men in the numbering no it's because they were not influencers for good on the other side of that

Manasseh gained 20,500 you know who Manasseh was camped around Manasseh was camped on the eastern side of the tabernacle with Judah all those who camped on the eastern side increased all those who camped on the western side decreased right because of the influence of who you camp around the applications there be careful where you pitch your tent right and be careful whose tent you camp you know whose camp you hang out in because you don't hang out around the Simeonites hang out around the Manasseites right so we see that but anyway just a side note but what we see here is God is saying the reason I want you to count them is so that when you get the land you know how to distribute the land this is living with a certainty of that which God has already promised he said you're going to go into the land and you're going to cast lots now to us casting lots seems a little much like magic or sorcery or chance but to the Jewish people they never believed in chance right they said that the man cast lots but the lot belonged to the

[26 : 46] Lord the Lord was the determiner of the cast lots right that God in his omniscient control had control of where the lot fell or how the straw was drawn or they gave all that to him so ultimately what they're saying is God gets to determine when a nation or a group gets to pick their land but the numbering of the people determines how much land they get and we see when Joshua divides it up there are some who are happy there are some who are mad there are some who are okay with it there are some who are not okay with it you know the tribe of Dan don't think they're ever happy I think they're always mad and they tend to push in a little bit further and they do things which they shouldn't do but that's okay we'll get to that later when we get through the Old Testament but what we're seeing here is that God told him to count them here long before it isn't like he said oh since y'all have won some battles and since it looks like you're going to inherit the land let's go ahead and figure out who gets what no God says before you fight the first battle let's go ahead and determine that because it is living today as if what God has promised tomorrow is already taking place it is living in the here and now as if what God says will be is already a reality

Moses says now you know how to divide the land see in Moses' eyes he wasn't even going to get to go into the land but in his eyes because the Lord had told him so there was no doubt whether or not they would get the land there was no doubt it was living with a certainty that which God has promised and living in a daily reality you could almost see Moses hearing a word from the Lord and Moses going and telling the liaisar and Joshua so Joshua so when y'all go there we want to make sure you know how to divide the land so we're going to go ahead and count the people and Joshua was like well there's a lot of battles to be fought still but yes but when you get there and after you've won all the battles let's go ahead and determine how you can divide the land because it's a certainty Joshua you will inhabit the land and these are reminders that come from a fresh start when God calls his people back and he is calling them to the renewal that he is still working and he is still leading sure there are severe consequences for sin he is faithful at all times but there is a certainty of those things he has promised and they will come to pass let's pray

Lord thank you so much thank you for your faithfulness oh God thank you for all that you have done thank you for the words that you have spoken and God may our lives be dictated and lived according to them and we ask it all in Christ's name Amen so asked I asked Thank you.

Thank you.

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[31 : 51] Thank you.

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[34 : 21] Thank you.

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