

Faulkner University

A Christian University

Census-Numbers 1

603,550 Men of War

Not including:

- women
- children (<20)
- Levites

Approx. total population: 2-2.5 million

Organization – Numbers 2 & 3

Notice the careful organization given by God.

Each tribe was given a place to camp, NSEW.

Tabernacle is at the center of the camp.

Notice the prominent place of Judah.

Numbers 10:13-14

Organization - Numbers 2&3

The precise organization extends to the Levites

Aaron was the High Priest, Eleazar and Ithamar were his sons with special duties.

Each of the Levite families was tasked with a specific responsibility (cont'd chap. 4).

Firstborn Redemption

- The Israelites owed everything to God
 - Deliverance from Egypt
 - Protection and feeding in the wilderness
 - Adoption as “my people.”

Firstborn Redemption

- Appropriately, God could claim the firstborn of all people, all cattle, all harvest.
 - Exodus 13:2
- God accepted the Levites as redemption or payment for the firstborn of all the people. (Numbers 3:40-51)
- However, not enough Levites to substitute for all the people. 273 too many. They were redeemed by money.

Various Laws & Ordinances (5)

- Health
 - Requiring removal from the camp.
 - Leprosy?
 - STD's
 - Dead Bodies
 - Purpose was two fold
 - Hygienic
 - Holy

Various Laws & Ordinances (5)

- Restitution
 - Repayment + 20%
 - Must provide a ram for atonement
 - Payment to God in the absence of a victim.
 - Leviticus 24:19
 - fracture for fracture
 - eye for eye
 - tooth for tooth...
 - A single standard for all men (Leviticus 24:22)

Various Laws & Ordinances (5)

- Adultery
 - Marital faithfulness is essential to the well-being of society.
 - The penalty for adultery was death for men and women (Leviticus 20:10)
 - This provides for a careful review of guilt when there is no witness and no clear evidence of sin.
 - The jealous husband brought his wife to the priest
 - The priest demanded a vow of innocence from the woman who then drank holy water mingled with Tabernacle dust.
 - Guilt would bring permanent illness
 - Innocence would bring cleanness and purity
 - There was no penalty for the husband even if he was wrong.

Nazarite Vows (chap. 6)

- The duties of the Levites are specified.
- A common person could dedicate themselves entirely to God as well.
- They would take a "Nazarite Vow."
 - note: not "Nazarene"
- The vow separates a person from a common way of life to one that is holy
- Notable Nazarites: Samson, Samuel

Passover (chap. 9)

- One of the holy feasts, first observed in Egypt (Ex. 12)
 - In preparation for rapid movement out of Egypt
 - When God "passed over" the houses properly adorned with blood and slew the firstborn of Egypt.
 - This was the official institution of the feast for the Jews and is still celebrated by them today.

The Cloud (9)

- God led the children of Israel via a cloud over the tabernacle
 - First saw the cloud at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19)
- Israel only moved when the cloud moved.
- Notice the extent to which we are told of Israel's respect of this system (vs. 22)

Move Out! (10)

- Before their move, trumpets are made to communicate with the people.
 - For movement
 - For alarm
 - For battle
 - For sacrifices
- The people leave from Sinai on 2/20/2
 - Judah moves first, remainder of camp follows.
 - The people travel three days from Sinai

The Israelite people are frequently complaining about their circumstances. Such complaints will become a hallmark of their journey's.

Taberah (11)

- A fire, from God was sent against the people because of their complaints.
 - People complained about the manna
 - Likely instigated by a small group "rabble"
 - Described as "greedy"
 - People wanted meat
 - Already received some meat (quail – Exodus 16)
 - Had become "nostalgic" of their time in Egypt.
 - God promises Moses that he will provide meat to eat.
 - God needed to deal with a second problem too.

Taberah (11)

- Issue is not the feeding
 - People are well fed and watered although perhaps not to their demands
 - God is certainly able to provide them with any food he desires.
 - Some people are troublemakers and will not be content.
- God provides an over abundance of quail
 - 10 homers = about 60 bushels
 - Fed quail for a month until it "comes out of their nostrils" (vs. 20)
 - In addition, a plague was sent by God that destroyed the people who created the dissension.
- God needed to deal with a second problem too.

Taberah (11)

- Moses was becoming overwhelmed by his responsibilities. (vs. 10ff)
 - Many duties
 - Spiritual leader – lawgiver
 - Civil leader – President & Chief Judge
 - Fellow traveler
 - Exodus 18, Jethro urges Moses to find help.
 - People were appointed to assist in settling disputes among the people.
 - Moses remain the chief judge of the people.

Taberah (11)

- Moses was becoming overwhelmed by his responsibilities. (vs. 10ff)
 - Recent Crisis's had brought him low
 - Transmission of the law to all the people
 - First move of the nation from Sinai
 - Plague of fire
 - Now, the people are heard complaining and crying throughout the camp.
 - "the anger of the Lord blazed hotly..."
 - "Moses was displeased..."

Taberah (11)

- Moses was becoming overwhelmed by his responsibilities. (vs. 10ff)
 - Moses loses his perspective, his faith
 - He blames God for the situation and declares his own inability to deal with the people.
 - His "collapse" is real and is not built on personal greed or arrogance
 - "I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me"
 - One should consider that we all have certain "breaking points" beyond which we cannot go.

Taberah (11)

- God's Solution to Moses' Problem (vs. 16).
 - Seventy "elders" are chosen from among the people.
 - Not by tribe
 - Would be older men, respected and revered by the people, men of credibility
 - Could be the beginning of the Sanhedrin council, so claimed by Jewish historians.
 - This council was declining in power during the time of Christ but still influential.
 - This was the council involved with the crucifixion of Jesus.

Taberah (11)

- God's Solution to Moses' Problem (vs. 16).
 - Seventy "elders" are chosen from among the people.
 - These were to meet God, with Moses, and some of the burden would be shifted to them.
 - The men gathered with Moses and received of Moses' spirit.
 - They prophesied briefly and then stopped.
 - » foretelling and forth-telling
 - » purpose was to confirm in an obvious way, that they were specially chosen servants as well.
 - Two more, not with the first group but chosen, were found prophesying in the camp.

Taberah (11)

- God's Solution to Moses' Problem (vs. 16).
 - Two more, not with the first group but chosen, were found prophesying in the camp.
 - » reason for absence unclear, perhaps health
 - » prophesied at the same time but in the camp indicating they too were approved.
 - Joshua became jealous for Moses and asked that the men be restrained.
 - There is no further report of the work of this committee of elders.

Aaron & Miriam Complain (12)

- This conflict arose not because of the difficult march and journey
- This was about leadership
 - Miriam was a prophetess and held above all the women of Israel
 - Aaron was the spiritual head of the nation.
 - But Moses was preeminent in his unique relationship with God.

Aaron & Miriam Complain (12)

- The conflict at Kibroth (11) had elevated Moses position among the people and before God.
- Miriam instigated this revolt and Aaron did not resist.
- The allegations of a "Cushite" wife were only a pretext.
 - unclear if Zipporah is indicted or another, however this is only a pretext. Envy is the reason.

Aaron & Miriam Complain (12)

- The real issue is revealed by their charges that Moses was taking all the credit for the messages from God. (c.f. vs. 2)
- The Lord heard their taunts and ordered the three of them to meet with him.
- Moses is parenthetically described as a "meek" man.
 - Would not be guilty of the charges they bring
 - Would not bring charges against the two but would absorb the criticism.

Aaron & Miriam Complain (12)

- The Lord reminds Aaron & Miriam that his relationship with Moses is unique.
 - Not in dreams
 - Not in visions
 - Mouth to mouth
 - Openly
- The Lord rebukes them for speaking against Moses and then he leaves.
- Miriam is left with a condition of leprosy.
 - Aaron not so punished because of his position as High Priest.

Aaron & Miriam Complain (12)

- Miriam is left with a condition of leprosy.
 - Aaron not so punished because of his position as High Priest.
 - If he were struck with leprosy, all the nation would be deprived of a High Priest.
- Aaron intercedes to Moses and it is Moses who goes to God.
- Miriam is forced outside the camp for a week and then she is healed.