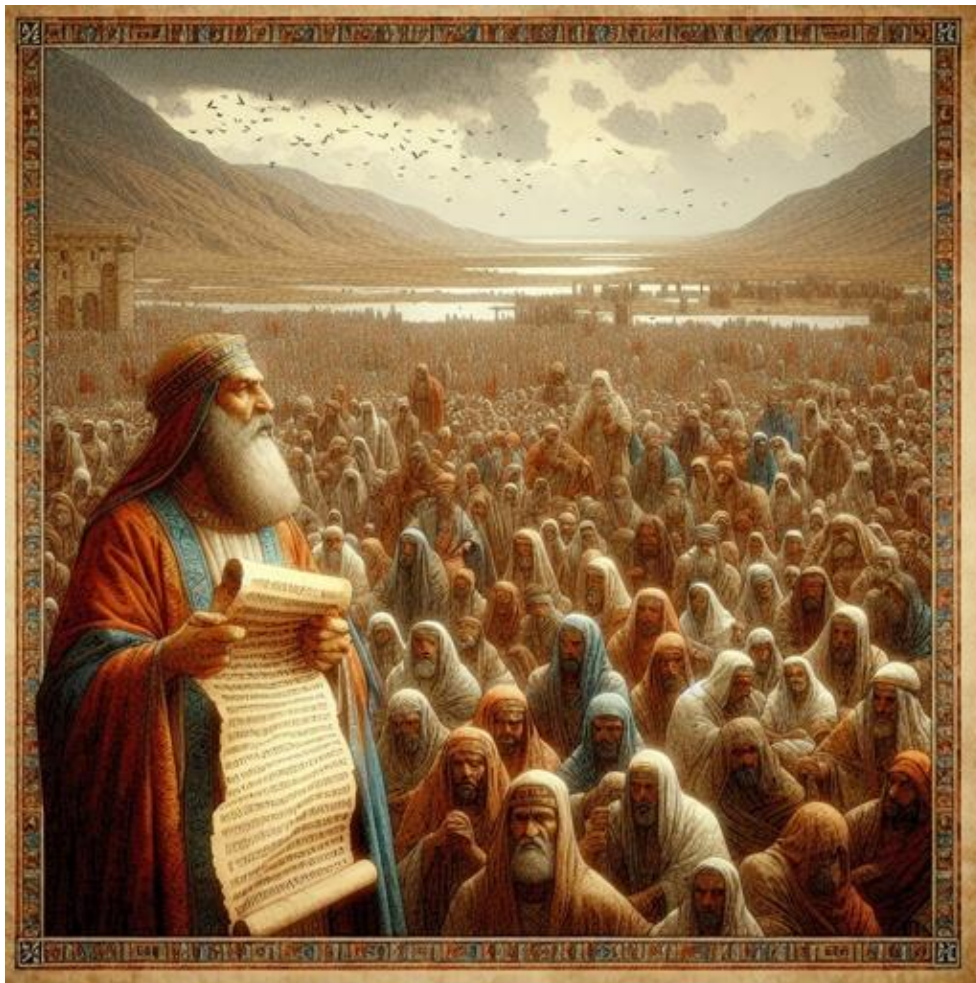




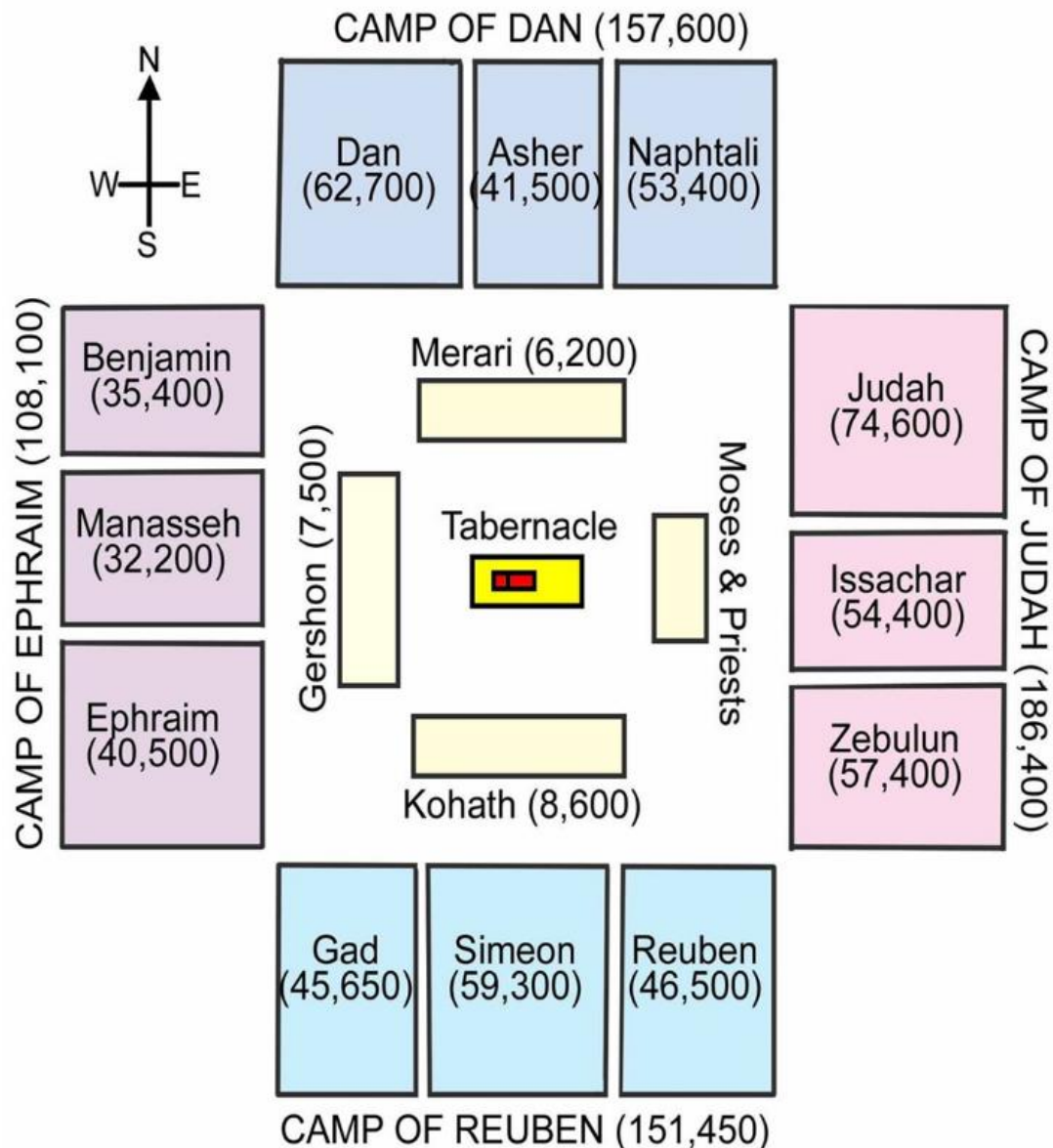
In light of the devastating plague that broke out, in the form of punishment, the population of the tribes were somewhat depleted. They had been punished because they had so soon be deceived by the teachings of Balaam and they had joined with the Midianites in their fertility rites and worship. Thus had utterly corrupted the minds and hearts of the congregation. The plague infected those who jhad joined in the sin, and served as a lesson to the rest.

God commanded Moses, to then number the people. This is not the first time Moses was asked to do this. In fact, this book being called the book of Numbers, has a lot to do with Numbering! The first time the nation was to be numbered is recorded in Exodus 30:12. The reason for this census was to help in the organisation of the religious

life of the nation. Then again they were required to be numbered, recorded in the first two chapters of Numbers, was for military reasons, whilst here, for the third time, as the nation waiting near the banks of the Jordan, they were asked to be numbered again, in order to assist in their organisation for their tribal allotments of land within the Promised Kingdom.

The people that were counted were only men of fighting age, over the age of twenty years old. Census such as these give us some idea of the size of the general population. In the counting of all these adult men of fighting age, we are given no names of those counted, except the names of the heads of the tribes. It does seem rather ironic, that in the counting of all these men, the only names we are given of those who were alive at the time, were women! See verse 33, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah, the daughters of Zelophehad which we will look at in the next law class. Also in verse 46, a lady by the name of Sarah, but which should be Serah – see 1 Chronicles 7:30, which means in Hebrew *Abundance* such a mention is unusual, we might wonder why is she mentioned in both passages?

Below is a diagram showing the census at the start of the wilderness journey, and the location of the tribes where they pitched their tents around the tabernacle



Arrangement of the Camp of Israel

Numbers 2:1-3:39

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Looking at the results of the census and comparing them with the numbering at the beginning of the wilderness journey, we can see some interesting results:

	Numbers 1,2	Numbers 26	
Tribe	Census	Census	Difference
Reuben	46500	43730	-2770
Simeon	59300	22200	-37100
Gad	45650	40500	-5150
Judah	74600	76500	1900
Issachar	54400	64300	9900
Zebulun	57400	60500	3100
Ephraim	40500	32500	-8000
Manasseh	32200	52700	20500
Benjamin	35400	45600	10200
Dan	62700	64400	1700
Asher	41500	53400	11900
Naphtali	53400	45400	-8000
Totals	603550	601730	-1820

The -2770 of the tribe of Reuben was to do with the plague which came after the rebellion of Korah, and Dathan and Abiram – who were of the tribe of Reuben

The -37100 of Simeon was to do with the recent rebellion with the joining at Baalpeor with the Midianites. The chief leader was Zimri a prince in the tribe of Simeon, evidently many men of his tribe rushed to follow his example. Fatal mistake.

The -8000 of Gad shows that this tribe seemed to follow the behaviour of their neighbours. These 3 tribes were all located to the south of the tabernacle.

In contrast all of the tribes who pitched their tents to the east of the tabernacle experienced an increase numbers. – Judah, Zebulun and Issachar. A spiritual lesson here perhaps, those who focus their life towards the Sun's Rising (Malachi 4:2) will all receive blessings as God

sees fit – Mark 10:30 *But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

With the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, we see opposite outcomes. Manasseh started out as the smaller of the two tribes, but had the largest increase of all the tribes by far, an increase of 20,500. Manasseh was the eldest of Joseph's two sons, but Joseph was informed by Jacob his father that although Manasseh would be a great tribe, Ephraim would become even greater see Genesis 48:13-20. This chapter then, is a fulfilment of the first part, Manasseh becoming great. Manasseh would be very big tribe which would be divided into half, by the river Jordan, and inherit land on both sides of the river. Eventually though Ephraim the smaller tribe, and the second born which outshine, and became the name of all the tribes in the diaspora.

Another interesting point, is that despite some tribes having enormous losses, other tribes made up for that loss in having increases. The overall number was not changed that much, showing just a 1820 loss.

A whole generation perished in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb of the generation that came out of Egypt would enter the land. This shows that God has ordained the number – the number which no man can count. 144000 is the number described in the Book of the Revelation, as being a symbolic number of the multitude without number of the redeemed. From the beginning God has written that number in the book of life. Over the generations there have been some awfully tragic losses of huge numbers as there have been so many deceived and led away in the rebellion of the teachings of false doctrines, by Balaamites etc. But God's purpose will not be overtaken by sin, and steadily, He is calling out a people for His name to make up that number. We might think we are just a number, anonymous, and unseen, unheard. But God knows each of His by name.

The numbering of Israel was showing men of fighting age – the might of Israel can be seen. But those mentioned by name – apart from the heads of the tribes were women. Their names preserved in the book of life whilst all those men of might, nameless. What became of them we might ask? Faith then is superior to the might of men. Numbers also are not important. Only 2 men conquered the wilderness probation. What is important is consistent and unwavering faith, so that our name is not blotted out of the book of life. Hosea 1:10

Brother Terry