

# Numbers 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

## Analysis

Reuben's census, despite losing the birthright through sin (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4), demonstrates both divine justice and mercy. The tribe lost preeminence but not inclusion in Israel, showing that while sin has consequences, God's covenant faithfulness preserves His people. The genealogical record 'by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers' emphasizes that covenant identity passes through families, anticipating the principle that believers and their children are in covenant with God.

## Historical Context

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, forfeited the birthright to Joseph's sons due to defiling his father's bed. Though numbered here as Israel's 'eldest son,' the tribe never regained preeminence, settling east of the Jordan and later falling into apostasy.

## Related Passages

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does Reuben's loss of birthright yet continued inclusion in Israel illustrate both the seriousness of sin and the persistence of grace?
2. What does this teach us about God's covenant faithfulness to His people despite their failures?

## Interlinear Text

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וְלֹא־יָמְלֹךְ כִּי־יְמַלֵּךְ רְאוּבֵן בֶּן־יְהוָה יְמַלֵּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל תּוֹלְדָתָם

H1961 And the children of Reuben eldest son Israel's by their generations  
H1121 H7205 H1060 H3478 H8435

בְּמִסְפֵּר לְמִשְׁפָחָת מִבְּית אֲבָתָם לְבִתְּהָרָם אֶלְמִלְחָמָה

after their families by the house of their fathers according to the number  
H4940 H1004 H1 H4557

שְׁמוֹת כָּל לְגִלְגָּלָת מִן יְצֵא רְאוּבֵן מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־יְמִינֵי שְׁמֹרֶת

of the names by their polls every male And the children from twenty  
H8034 H1538 H3605 H2145 H1121 H6242

שְׁנָתָה שְׁלָמָה וְלֹא אָצַב אֶל יְמִינָה שְׁנָתָה צְבָא:

years and upward all that were able to go forth to war  
H8141 H4605 H3605 H3318 H6635

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