

Numbers 26:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.

Analysis

Nearly forty years after the first census (ch 1), God commands a second: 'Take the sum of all the congregation... from twenty years old and upward.' This new count excluded the first generation who died in the wilderness due to unbelief (v.64-65), except Caleb and Joshua. The census demonstrated God's faithfulness despite judgment - Israel's population remained similar (601,730 vs. 603,550), showing God preserved His people. This numbering prepared for Canaan's conquest and land distribution. It illustrates God's justice (judging unbeliefing generation) and mercy (preserving the nation). The remnant principle continues: God always preserves a faithful remnant (Rom 11:5).

Historical Context

This census occurred on Moab's plains after the wilderness wanderings concluded. Every person from the first census (except Caleb and Joshua) had died, fulfilling God's judgment (Num 14:26-35). The new generation proved readier for Canaan's conquest. Tribal numbers shifted significantly - Simeon decreased from 59,300 to 22,200 (possibly due to Baal-Peor plague, ch 25), while Manasseh increased from 32,200 to 52,700. These changes would affect land distribution proportions (v.52-56). The census shows God's sovereign control over populations and His faithfulness to covenant promises despite human failure.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does seeing God's faithfulness to preserve Israel despite their failure encourage your confidence in His promises to you?
2. Are you preparing yourself to enter your 'Promised Land' - the calling and inheritance God has for you - or wandering in unbelief like the first generation?

Interlinear Text

בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:	מִבְּ	כָּל	רְאֵשׁ	אַתָּה	שָׁא	וְ
Take	H853	the sum	H3605	of all the congregation	of the children	in Israel
H5375		H7218		H5712	H1121	H3478
אַבְתָּם	לֹבֶת	בְּיִתְרֹם	עַלְמָה	שָׁנָה	עֶשֶׂר	יָמִים
of the children	from twenty	years	and upward	house	throughout their fathers	
H1121	H6242	H8141	H4605	H1004		H1
כָּל	אֲצָב	אֲצָב	בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:			
H3605	all that are able to go	to war	in Israel			
	H3318	H6635	H3478			

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