

# Numbers 26:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

## Analysis

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**Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward** (מִבְּנֵי עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְעַלְיָהּ)—the census counts military-age men capable of warfare, the same criterion used in Numbers 1:3. The phrase **as the LORD commanded Moses** emphasizes divine initiative: God orders the census for His purposes.

The reference to **the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt** is ironic—this new generation never experienced Egyptian bondage firsthand. Yet they inherit the identity and calling of the Exodus generation. The census serves multiple purposes: military preparation for conquest (Joshua's campaigns), tribal organization for land distribution (Numbers 26:52-56), and theological testimony to God's covenant faithfulness despite a generation's unbelief.

## Historical Context

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The first census (Numbers 1) counted 603,550 fighting men; the second census (Numbers 26:51) counted 601,730—a slight decrease reflecting divine judgment on the wilderness generation. The twenty-year threshold marked the age of military conscription and legal accountability in ancient Israel. This census would determine land allotment proportions in Canaan.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does inheriting spiritual identity from previous generations ('which went forth out of Egypt') shape your understanding of covenant community?
2. What does it mean that God counts and knows His people individually, even as they number in the hundreds of thousands?
3. In what ways does God prepare His people practically (military census) for the spiritual battles they must fight?

## Interlinear Text

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וּבְנֵי י	עֲשֹׂה יָמִים	וְעַלֶּה שָׁנָה	
and the children	Take the sum of the people from twenty	years	and upward
H1121	H6242	H8141	H4605
כָּאֲשֶׁר	צִוָּה	יְהוָה	אֶת מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי י יִשְׂרָאֵל ל
H834	commanded	as the LORD	Moses and the children of Israel
	H6680	H3068	H4872 H1121 H3478
הַיֵּצֵא יָמִים	מֵאֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם:	
which went forth	out of the land	of Egypt	
H3318	H776	H4714	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 1:1** (References Lord): And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

