

Intro & Numbers 1.

I. Introduction.

As recorded in the Book of Exodus, Israel escaped slavery in Egypt - God miraculously set them free from hundreds of years of bondage. They came through the Red Sea and saw God provide through the desert wilderness. They came to Mount Sinai where God appeared to them in a spectacular way; where Moses went up on the mountain to meet with God and receive the law. At Mount Sinai Israel also embraced an idolatrous image of a golden calf and was corrected by the Lord.

Encamped at Mount Sinai, Israel built a Tabernacle of meeting and established a Priesthood, receiving God's plan for the priests and the nation at large in Leviticus. At the end of the Book of Leviticus, they have been out of Egypt for a little more than a year.

Exodus covered a year; Leviticus only a month - but the Book of Numbers encompasses more than 38 years; how they get there, how God deals with them in the wilderness, and how He brings them out of the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

Theme: **Prepare For Battle.**

Theme Verse: **Numbers 6:24-26** - *“The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.”*

II. 1-3: The First Census.

As Moses met with the LORD in the tabernacle, God commanded him to **take a census of the congregation of the children of Israel** - but only counting **all who are able to go to war in Israel**. God wanted the count made **by their families** because the strength of Israel was determined by looking at the strength of individual families.

i. 4-19: 12 Tribal heads

Israel was organized according to the tribes that descended from the original twelve sons of Jacob (later renamed *Israel* by God). Each of these twelve tribes designated one who was **the head of his father's house**, who was to **stand with** Moses and stand for their whole tribe.

Twelve tribes are mentioned, but not the tribe of Levi. Yet the number twelve is maintained because from Jacob's son Joseph, two tribes came (Ephraim and Manasseh).

Nahshon: This was the head of the house of Judah, and is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:4.

ii. 20-54: Tribal Census.

The Tribe of Reuben: 46,500 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Simeon: 59,300 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Gad: 45,650 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Judah: 74,600 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Issachar: 54,400 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Zebulun: 57,400 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Ephraim: 40,500 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Manasseh: 32,200 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Benjamin: 35,400 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Dan: 62,700 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Asher: 41,500 potential soldiers.

The Tribe of Naphtali: 53,400 potential soldiers.

Summary of the tribes: 603,550 potential soldiers in Israel.

Nations go to war for economic gain, **territorial gain**, religion, nationalism, revenge, civil **strife**, revolutionary, **defensive war**.

The special case of the tribe of Levi: Because this was a census of potential soldiers, the Tribe of Levi was not counted. They alone among the tribes did not go to war because they had special responsibility to God for the priestly duties of Israel.

Exodus 15:3 - *The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name.*

Exodus 14:14 - *“The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”*

2 Samuel 23:8-11 – *These are the names of the mighty men whom David had; Josheb, Basshebeth...He was called Adino the Eznite, because he killed eight hundred men at one time. And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahonite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck on the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned to him only to plunder.*

Joel 3:9 - *Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for **war!** Wake up the mighty **men**, Let all the **men of war** draw near, Let them come up.*

Offensive war weapons in the wilderness were; spears, axes, scrapers, horses, bows and arrows, daggers and swords.

We're to fight, to work and to be priests.

October 25th 1415, the British and French have been fighting for 100 years, one more battle, and the British King, Henry V speaks to his exhausted and outnumbered troops wishing they had ten thousand more or just one more Briton enrolling to fight..."the fewer men, the greater share of honor." "From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered; We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he to-day that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother...and gentlemen in England now a-bed shall think of themselves accursed they were not here, and hold their manhoods cheap..."

1 Peter 5:8-11 - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Ephesians 6:17-18 - *And take the helmet of salvation, and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**; praying always with all **prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—*