

# Numbers

THE Book of Numbers recounts incidents in the wilderness, following Israel's faithless failure, which prevented them from entering the Promised Land.

It is called 'Numbers' because it records two 'numberings' of the Israelites:

1. At Sinai – 1:1–3 – the population who left Egypt to begin the journey to the Promised Land
2. Near to Canaan – chapter 26 – the population who would enter the land.

## Forty long years

The twelve spies sent to reconnoitre in the Promised Land (chapter 13) reported that the Canaanite cities were highly fortified and their armies powerful. Presented with this news, Israel lost faith in God's promise to give them the Land.

So for another thirty-eight years they had to wander in the wilderness. Their journeys, especially during the final years, are related in chapters 21–36. All the generation which left Egypt (from twenty years old and upwards) died in the wilderness, except some of the faithful Levites, and Joshua and Caleb – the only two spies who showed faith in God.

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### Numbers according to tribe (ch. 1) (Men over 20 and excluding Levi)

Reuben	46,500	Ephraim	40,500
Simeon	59,300	Manasseh	32,200
Gad	45,650	Benjamin	35,400
Judah	74,600	Dan	62,700
Issachar	54,500	Asher	41,500
Zebulun	57,400	Naphthali	53,400

**Total: 603,550**

### Some interesting links with other parts of the Bible

Numbers 14:21 – see Isaiah 11:9;  
Habakkuk 2:14.

Numbers 21:8, 9 – see John 3:14,  
15; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Numbers 24:17 – see Genesis  
49:10; Psalm 110:2.



## Chapter Summary of Numbers

First census	Chapter 1	
The camp	Chapter 2	
Levites	Chapter 4	
Nazarites	Chapter 6	
Princes	Chapter 8	
Order of marching	Chapter 10	
LACK OF FAITH	Failures at Taberah	Chapter 11
	Miriam's revolt	Chapter 12
	Spies' report	Chapter 13
	Korah's revolt	Chapter 16
	Water from the rock	Chapter 20
	Fiery serpents	Chapter 21
Balaam's prophecy	Chapters 22–24	
Second census	Chapter 26	
Various laws and feasts	Chapters 28–30	
List of journeys	Chapters 33–34	

This graphic shows how the twelve tribes were organised into four groups of three, each with a 'standard'. They camped around the Tabernacle and the priests who worked in it, during the wilderness journeys. This is described in Numbers chapter 2.

