The Census & Camp Locations

Leviticus 27:34 - Numbers 3:39

Reading Questions

1. At what age is a man considered an independent adult?
2. Are the tribes determined by the Father's lineage, or the Mother's?
3. What was the largest tribe at that time, the smallest tribe, and what tribe was not registered with the rest and why?
4. Where did the tribes camp in relation to the dwelling place?
5. Who does the tribe of Lewi serve?
6. Whose are the Lewites and why?
7. What side of the Dwelling Place is considered to be "behind" the dwelling place? North, South, East, or West?
8. Were women numbered in the census?

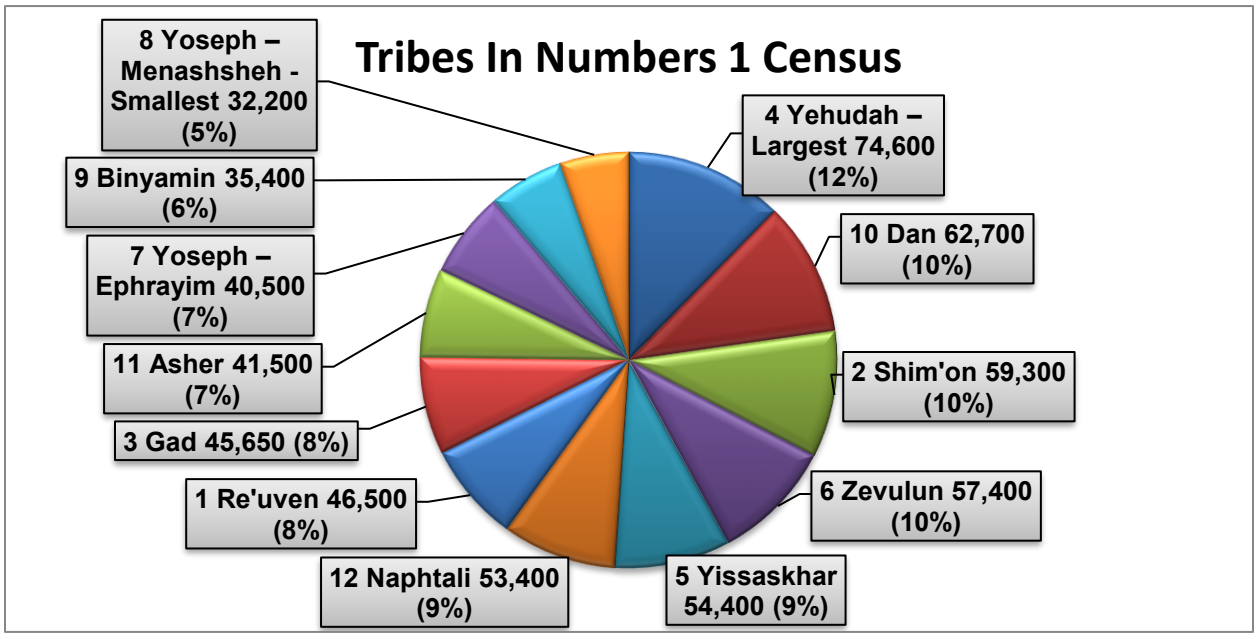
Reading Answers

1. 20 (Numbers 1:3). Although the USA has the age of 18 for an adult, and some other countries might have various other laws dictating when someone is an adult, the Scriptures clearly show a man is not considered a full adult until he is 20 years old. It was at this age it appears he would, under normal circumstances, be permitted to look for his own wife to start a family or join the military. However, I do not believe it is Yahweh's will for any man to join any military today when we are not living in a nation of Israel governed exclusively by Yahweh's laws and having direct guidance from Yahweh Himself on which wars to wage as during Biblical times.

2. The Father's. We always see tribes referred to as "their Fathers' tribes", such as in Numbers 1:16. Also, we see in Numbers 36:6 that the daughters of Tselophchad had to marry within their **Father's tribe**, not their Mother's tribe. Why? Because tribes were determined by Fathers, not Mothers. A woman automatically becomes part of whatever tribe she marries into. If her husband dies, and she remarries someone from a different tribe, she again changes to another tribe. Even Numbers 1:18 says, "they declared their ancestry by clans, by their Fathers' houses". It's very clear that lineage and ancestry is dictated by the Fathers, not the Mothers.

3. See the below table and chart created with data from Numbers 1:

Order Listed	Tribe	Number	% of Total
4	**Yehudah – Largest**	74,600	12%
10	Dan	62,700	10%
2	Shim'on	59,300	10%
6	Zevulun	57,400	10%
5	Yissaskhar	54,400	9%
12	Naphtali	53,400	9%
1	Re'uven	46,500	8%
3	Gad	45,650	8%
11	Asher	41,500	7%
7	Yoseph – Ephrayim	40,500	7%
9	Binyamin	35,400	6%
8	**Yoseph – Menashsheh - Smallest**	32,200	5%
	ALL REGISTERED ONES	603,550	100%
	Lewi - Not Registered		



The Lewites were not registered because יהוה spoke to Mosheh telling him to not register them or take a census of them, but to appoint them over the Dwelling Place, its furnishings, and all that belong to it (Numbers 1:47-51).

4. See the below table created with data from Numbers 2 and 3 and the note below it:

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3"><u>North Side – 157,600</u>
<u>Last To Depart</u>
<u>Camp of Dan</u>

Dan – 62,700
Asher – 41,500
Naphtali – 53,400</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3"><u>West Side – 108,100</u>
<u>3rd To Depart</u>
<u>Camp of Ephrayim</u>

Yoseph – Ephrayim – 40,500
Yoseph – Menashsheh – 32,200
Binyamin – 35,400</td><td colspan="3">Clans of Merari – 6,200

Boards, Bars, Columns, Sockets, Utensils, and Service of Dwelling Place

Columns, Sockets, Pegs, & Cords of Courtyard</td><td rowspan="3"><u>East Side – 186,400</u>
<u>1st To Depart</u>
<u>Camp of Yehudah</u>

Yehudah – 74,600
Yissaskhar – 54,400
Zevulun – 57,400</td></tr>
<tr><td>Gereshonites – 7,500

Dwelling Place, Tent, Covering of Door of Tent of Meeting, Courtyard, Covering Door of Courtyard</td><td><u>Middle of The Camps Camp of The Lewites</u>

<u>Dwelling Place</u>

<u>Tent of Meeting</u></td><td><u>Mosheh, Aharon, & Sons of Aharon</u>

Guarding the Duty of the Set-Apart Place</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Qehathites – 8,600

Ark, Table, Lampstand, Altar, Utensils, Covering</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3"><u>South Side – 151,450</u>
<u>2nd To Depart</u>
<u>Camp of Re’uven</u>

Re’uven – 46,500
Shim’on – 59,300
Gad – 45,650</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The numbers for the Lewites do not add up correctly in Numbers 3. The mis-match is as follows:

The Gereshonites – 7,500 (Numbers 3:21-22)
+ The Qehathites – 8,600 (Numbers 3:27-28)
+ The Clans of Merari – 6,200 (Numbers 3:33-34)
SHOULD EQUAL = 22,300

The total based upon the numbers given should equal 22,300. However, Numbers 3:39 just says the total was 22,000. Why the difference?

Well, it is possible that someone along the way has misunderstood the Hebrew letters representing numbers in the original scrolls. Some Hebrew letters look very similar and could be mistaken for each other.

In fact, it appears that may have been exactly what happened. What evidence do we have for this? We must look at Brenton's English translation of the Greek Septuagint. The Septuagint is the Greek Translation of the Tanakh (or commonly called "Old Testament"). In Brenton's English translation of this Greek document, which was written more than 2,000 years ago and is older than the Hebrew most translations use, we see in Numbers 3:34 it says:

> *"The mustering of them according to number, every male from a month old and upwards, was six thousand and fifty."*

The English translations using the Hebrew say 6,200, while this English translation of the Greek says 6,050. However, that still leaves us at 22,150 in the Greek. The Greek total in Numbers 3:39 also says 22,000 according to Brenton's translation. That's closer, only 150 off the mark, but still something is amiss. This at least, however, does give evidence that the Hebrew letters in the original manuscript may be easily misunderstood by those copying or translating from the original Scroll.

There are other explanations by learned men on the Internet, but I do not feel it is necessary to share those in these notes as I cannot verify whose explanation would be correct since I am not a language or manuscript expert.

5. Aharon and the Sons of Aharon (Numbers 3:6).

6. יהוה's because when יהוה struck all the first-born in Mitsrayim (Egypt) he set-apart all the first-born in Yisra'eyl for himself (Numbers 3:11-13).

7. West (Numbers 3:23).

8. No. Only the males were numbered (Numbers 1:20).

Reading Notes

- It is interesting to note that a census was done on the 1st day of the 2nd month (Numbers 1:1-2). This might be additional evidence showing that the New Moon Day is not equivalent to a Sabbath. I do not think they would have done this census on a Sabbath day of rest. In fact, we can prove it was not the weekly Sabbath when this census occurred because in Numbers 10:11-12 and verse 33 it shows they went on a 3 day journey spanning the 20th, 21st, and 22nd. This shows that neither the 20th, 21st, or 22nd were Sabbath days since they were on a journey on these days, seeking out a resting place. If the 22nd was not a weekly Sabbath then neither was the 1st of that same month because the 1st of every month is always on the same day of the week as the 22nd of that same month.

- The age of 20 mentioned in Numbers 1:3 is not only the age when a man becomes an adult, but also the minimum age a woman must attain in order to get married. She is not mature enough to make a wise, informed decision, or considered an adult before she is 20. It doesn't matter if someone can prove a woman in the Bible got married earlier. Actions of others documented does not prove יהוה agreed with those actions and does not mean they were wise decisions.

- See the reading notes for Week 38 of the Annual Reading Schedule for related information about censuses.

Related Verses

Census: Exodus 30:12, Numbers 4:2, 22, 26:2, 4, 1 Chronicles 27:24, 2 Chronicles 2:17