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# Numbers 3:16

NIV *So Moses counted them, as he was commanded by the word of the LORD.*

KJV *And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.*

Amplified *So Moses numbered them as he was commanded by the word of the Lord.*

Knuth *Moses enumerated the sons of Levi, as he had been commanded by God.*

## 1 Introduction to Numbers

1. Read Numbers 1:1-4. This census and the one in Chapter 26 are the basis for the English name for this book.
2. The Hebrew title for this book (*bemidbar*), means "in the desert," and is probably more descriptive of the entire book.
3. Numbers tells the story of Israel's journey from Mount Sinai to the border of Canaan.

## 2 Consequences

For each of the following verses, look at the actions of the people involved, the Lord's reaction, and Moses' intercession (if any).

1. Numbers 10:33-11:3
2. Numbers 11:4-20, 31-34
3. Numbers 12:1-15
4. Numbers 14:1-35
5. Numbers 16:41-50
6. Numbers 20:2-13

## 3 Providing Context

1. Read Numbers 3:14-16 and Numbers 1:49-51.
2. What was the purpose of counting the Levites?
3. The Hebrew word *pâqad* occurs in this verse, as it did in Exodus 3:16. Here, it means "to muster."

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## 4 How Many?

1. Read Numbers 3:39, Numbers 2:32-33, and Numbers 26:51.
2. This number of men implies a total population of 2 million. This is extremely unlikely given the time and location, especially when you consider that this number of people would also have been accompanied by livestock.
3. Possible explanations:
  - (a) Numbers corrupted in translation.
  - (b) The Hebrew word for *thousand* might have a different meaning (e.g. "organizational unit" or "chief").
  - (c) Regard the numbers as symbolic figures.