

Israelite Census Populations

The reason for this program is that the census numbers of Israelite males is contradictory and impossible. The number of men ages 20 to 50 of fighting quality is given as 603,550. Yet, the number of first born males over one month of age is given as 22,273. This says that 22,273 couples have 603,550 sons aged 20-50. If the number is pro-rated for 0-50 it becomes 992,937 or an average of 44.6 sons per couple. Including an equal number of females it is an average of 89 children per couple.

The problem seems to be the translation of the word 'eleph'. That is where eleph could mean something else than thousand. This is based on listing the numbers of men in the various Israelite tribes as given in Numbers 1,2,3,4, and 26. Colin Humphreys proposes there are three possible meaning for this. Elephs written *ʾp* could mean one of three things. (i) eleph for the number thousand (1,000). (ii) aleph - a leader, commander, or chief (1). (iii) a clan, troop or small unit of a variable small size. Since this is a census something of variable size is not information that can be of any use so the (iii) definition is ignored.

* For the Kohathite most sources give the number as 600. This makes the total 22,300 and not as scripture shows of 22,000. A few Greek Septuagint versions texts have the number as 300 and this balances the books and is used here.

Either definition (i) or (ii) is a possibility. But when the Levite numbers for males of ages 30-50 years is compared to males of all ages the number of males of each groups, it is more. In which case the part is greater than the whole. To rectify this at least one aleph (ii) has to be converted to an eleph(i). This then opens the possibility of that a number of alephs(ii) in the numbers may also be elephs(i). Thus both (i) and (ii) may be true. A radio button set is provided to change the number of (ii) to (i). Selecting Variable finds the maximum number of 1000 man units that can be commanded by 1 aleph per 100 men and 1000 men by an additional aleph. That is 11 aleph/commanders per 1000 men. By Numbers 31:4 Moses sends 1000 men from each tribe, so there has to be 1000 or more men in the tribe.

By Numbers 31:4 "Send to war a thousand men from each of the tribes of Israel." thus there must be over 1,000 men in each tribe. How many more is not known.

Also, available is a growth selection window where a growth rate can be entered. (0-40%) This is growth per decade. Image at the right shows what the increase in population per 10 year age brackets were in the world population of 1950.

An additional 8% men are either too old or unfit for military service. These are added to the number under 20 total. The percent of persons under 20 is modified by the growth rate. When the growth rate is zero the percent under 20 is 37.4%.

Note - The number of all male Levites is not broken down in the second census. Only the total of 23,000 is given. The total for the second census from that of the first census is increased by the ratio of 23.000/22,000. i.e. 23/22.

Silver - I don't know how Moses could raise 301,775 shekels of silver from the men, Clearly ½ shekel from each man will not be enough. One way would be for each aleph to pay 500 shekels. That is quite a lot unless they tax their men to pay it.

