
Day 36 – February 5

Establishment of a Nation (1525 – 1400 BCE)

A Nation Under Law

First Passover after Egypt

Number of the Israelites

Readings: *Numbers 1:1-54; 2:1-34; 9:1-12*

Reflections:

- This phase of Israel’s story demonstrates what life looks like when lived under the law as opposed to life under grace. There are indications of God's grace but primarily we will see the nature of life under the law - rules, punishment, fear, and death. Living by law (rules and regulations) is what we as humans gravitate towards, but as we will see with Israel it is this approach to life that ultimately destroys our relationships.
- Key statement: “You shall be holy (set apart for a special purpose), for I am holy (completely other than what is common).”
- First Passover was obviously an emotional moment for the nation. No doubt everyone wanted to share in this event. We see here both the strictness of God’s laws as well as evidence of his grace for the people as those who would normally be excluded are included in this celebration.
- Numbering of the Israelites: We see the importance of record keeping within the history of Israel. This would provide support for the historicity of these records. The number of the Israelites is specifically numbering their army tribe by tribe.
- You had to be twenty years old to be in the army. This would suggest the age of adulthood within Israel.
- The total number is over six hundred thousand. This is a huge number. Some historians doubt the historicity of these texts suggesting that it was very unlikely that Israel has numbers of this magnitude. Yet others see this as very possible in light of the detailed nature of the records.
- Everyone but the Levites had to be in the army. Worship for God still must be central, even over claiming the land or defending your loved ones. This will be clearly demonstrated in the taking of Jericho. We also see that those called to be Priests are called to lives of peace. This

will be restored in the Jesus movement as Christ-followers are called to be Priests to the planet and to live lives free of violence, even loving their enemies rather than taking up the sword or gun.

- The Levites' camp and the Tent of Meeting were always at the center of the camp. Again, this is a picture of God being at the center. The other tribes were given direction where to camp in reference to the Tent of Meeting. Again, this is a reminder to us that in everything we do we should always make God our primary reference point.