

# Numbers

**Authorship:** Moses

**Date:** c. 1446 BC – 1406 BC

The historical period during which Moses lived seems to be fixed with a fair degree of accuracy by 1 Kings. We are told that “the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel” was the same as “the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt” (1 Kings 6:1). Since the former was c. 966 BC, the latter—and thus the date of the exodus—was c. 1446 (assuming that the 480 in 1 Kings 6:1 is to be taken literally). The 40-year period of Israel’s wanderings in the desert, which lasted from c. 1446 to c. 1406, would have been the most likely time for Moses to write the bulk of what is today known as the Pentateuch.

**Background:** Having received the law at Sinai (Exodus – Leviticus), Israel prepared for their return to Canaan (1-10). After completing the short journey to the borders of Canaan, however, they rebelled against the Lord (13-14) and were condemned to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. 15-36 records various events of those years of wandering, as the nation vacillated between spiritual success and apostasy. The book ends with Israel encamped once more within sight of the Promised Land.

**Purpose:** (1) To show that God chastens His people when they disobey.; (2) To foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ through symbolism such as the red heifer and the bronze serpent (19 and 21).; (3) To continue revealing the attributes of God (Genesis – Leviticus) by showing: His perseverance in covenant keeping and the balance between His grace and His wrathful chastening.

## Outline:

### I. Israel at Sinai: Preparation (1:1-10:10)

- A. The First Census (1:1-54)
- B. The Arrangement of the Camp (2:1-4:49)
- C. Legislation (5:1-8:26)
- D. Final Events at Sinai (9:1-10:10)

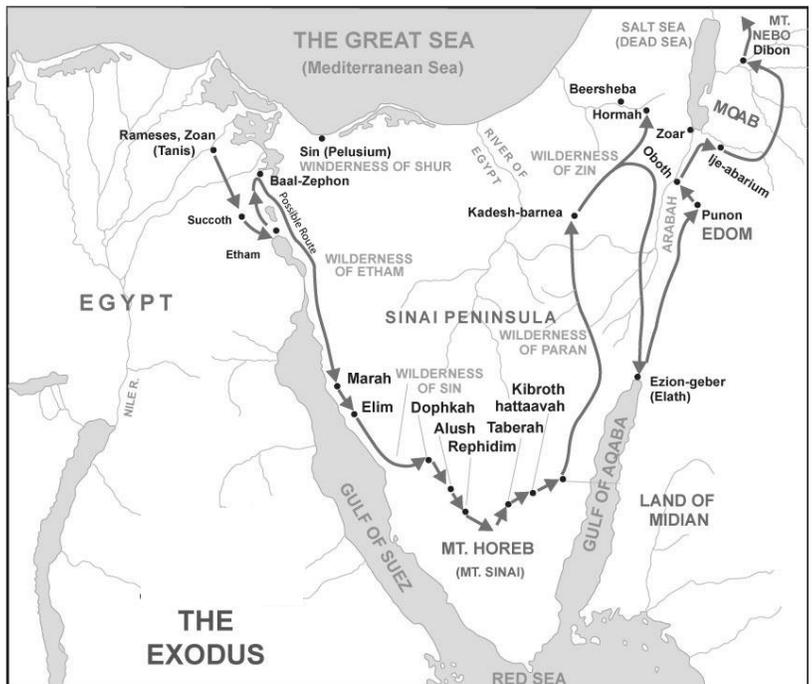
### II. From Sinai to Kadesh: Frustration (10:11-20:13)

- A. Departure from Sinai (10:11-36)
- B. Complaints and Solutions (11)
- C. Miriam and Aaron Criticize Moses (12)
- D. Rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea (13-14)
- E. Additional Laws (15)
- F. Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (16)
- G. Aaron’s staff buds (17)
- H. Duties of Levites (18)
- I. Purification by the ashes of a red heifer (19)
- J. Moses strikes the rock (20:1-13)

### III. From Kadesh to Moab: Anticipation (20:14-36:13)

- A. Edom denies passage to Israel (20:14-21)
- B. Death of Aaron (20:22-29)
- C. Bronze serpent (21:1-9)
- D. Israel defeats Sihon and Og (21:10-35)
- E. Balak and Balaam (22-24)
- F. Israelites seduced by Moabites (25)
- G. Second Census of the people (26)
- H. Joshua to succeed Moses (27)
- I. Regulations for worship and vows (28-29)
- J. Regulation for vows (30)
- K. Israel defeats the Midianites (31)
- L. Settlement of Transjordan tribes (32)
- M. Review of the wilderness journey (33)
- N. Settlement of Canaan described (34-36)

First Census = 603,550 fighting men  
Total population could be as many as 2 million



Second Census = 601,730 fighting men  
a decrease of 1,820 from first census

## Sources:

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-genesis/> (visited on: 09-08-2020).

Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington's Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.