

Numbers 2:10-16

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/num/num-2/numbers-210-16/>

The three tribes assigned to camp on the south side of the tabernacle were Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. The number of men eligible for military service was given for each tribe. The leaders are also named. These tribes were to move out second when the Israelites made their way through the wilderness.

The three tribes assigned to camp on the south side of the tabernacle were to gather around *the standard of the camp of Reuben*. It was fitting that Reuben have the “standard.” He was the first son of Jacob, by Leah (Genesis 29:32), thus holding a special place amongst the sons of Jacob.

The southern tribes were arranged *by their armies*. Each tribe would constitute an army. There were, therefore, twelve armies that made up the entire fighting force of Israel. Also, *the leader of the sons of Reuben* was named. It was *Elizur the son of Shedeur*. This agrees with what was stated in Numbers 1:5. The size of *his army, even their numbered men*, was 46,500. This is the same number that was given in Numbers 1:21.

The second tribe to camp on the south *next to Reuben shall be the tribe of Simeon*. *The leader of the sons of Simeon* was *Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai* (Numbers 1:6). The size of *his army, even their numbered men*, was 59,300. This is the same number that was given in Numbers 1:23.

Next in line to camp on the south side of the tabernacle was *the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the sons of Gad* was *Eliasaph the son of Deuel* (Numbers 1:14). The size of Gad’s *army—his numbered men—*was 45,650. This is the same number that was given in Numbers 1:25. The three tribes along the south side of the tabernacle were collectively referred to as the “camp of Reuben.”

So, *the total of the numbered men of the camp of Reuben was 151,450, by their armies*. This was the total number of troops on the south side of the tabernacle. These three tribes on the south were to *set out second*, after the tribes on the east. Their troop strength was 151,450 compared to 186,400 for the camp of Judah, who walked first in line, and camped on the east side of the tabernacle.

Biblical Text

¹⁰ “On the south side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Reuben by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben: *Elizur the son of Shedeur*,¹¹ and his army, even their numbered men, 46,500.¹² Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the sons of Simeon: *Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai*,¹³ and his army, even their numbered men, 59,300.¹⁴ Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the sons of Gad: *Eliasaph the son of Deuel*,¹⁵ and his army, even their numbered men, 45,650.¹⁶ The total of

the numbered men of the camp of Reuben: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second.