

### Exodus 30:11-16

<sup>11</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when *thou* numberest them. <sup>13</sup> This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel *is* twenty gerahs:) an half shekel *shall be* the offering of the LORD. <sup>14</sup> Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. <sup>15</sup> The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *they* give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. <sup>16</sup> And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. (Exod. 30:11-16 KJV)

<sup>26</sup> A bekah for every man, *that is*, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty *men*. <sup>27</sup> And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. <sup>28</sup> And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. <sup>29</sup> And the brass of the offering *was* seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. <sup>30</sup> And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, <sup>31</sup> And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about. (Exod. 38:26-39:1 KJV)

### A Bekah for Every Man

#### OUTLINE

- (1) Counted for Atonement
- (2) Consecrated for Service
- (3) Conserved from Plague
- (4) Contributors to the House of God

#### INTRODUCTION

God took Israel out of Egypt to separate for Himself a people with the purpose of establishing them as a nation. This nation will be a witness for God to all the nations of the world. And when they reached Sinai, God gave them His Laws through Moses. This formed the constitution of the nation. They will not be a full-fledged nation until they possess the Promised Land. But before they would enter the Promised Land, God established worship through the building of the Tabernacle. Israel was asked to bring a willing offering for the construction of the Tabernacle from the spoils from the Egyptians before the Exodus. The blue-print for the Tabernacle and the priestly garment was given to Moses. The high priest and his sons were consecrated.

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Chapter 30 began with the construction of the Altar of Incense that symbolized the prayers brought before God and ended with the construction of the brazen Laver where the priests are to stop there to wash their hands and feet. Hands splatted with blood and his feet soiled from the dust of the Tabernacle court, the priests moved quickly but reverently to the brazen laver for cleansing. It was never used by the congregation but was provided solely for the priests' purification.

And Aaron was instructed to purify the Altar of Incense once a year with blood of the sin-offering put upon the horns of it, yearly, on the day of atonement. Matthew Henry observed well, "This was to intimate to them that the sins of the priests who ministered at this altar, and of the people for whom they ministered, put a ceremonial impurity upon it, from which it must be cleansed by the blood of the atonement.

*<sup>10</sup> And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD. (Exod. 30:10 KJV)*

*<sup>18</sup> And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. <sup>19</sup> And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. (Lev. 16:18-19 KJV)*

The focus of verses 11-15 is on the people of Israel. They were instructed to each bring personally half a shekel of silver as an offering to make atonement for their souls. Only those who are redeemed are numbered and are consecrated for God's service, drafted into the army for war and fulfil the duties of citizenship. Just like the identity card that is issued to each citizen of a country after payment of a fixed fee.

Failure to do so will incur God's wrath of a plague. When David numbered the people and did not gather the atonement money, the result was a plague breaking out among the people.

This sum of silver gathered from 603,550 men above 20 years old was 100 talents and 1775 shekels which was used to make the sockets into which the boards of the tabernacle was let and on which they rested, so that they were as the foundation of the tabernacle [Matthew Henry] - *<sup>26</sup> A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. <sup>27</sup> And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. (Exod. 38:26-27 KJV)*

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**(1) Counted for Atonement**

AW Pink rightly pointed out, "... Jehovah commanding His people to give "every man a ransom." This ransom was a monetary one, a half shekel of silver, and it was in order "to make an atonement for their souls." But this seems so utterly foreign to the general tone and tenor of Scripture that many have been sorely puzzled by it. How is our present passage to be harmonized with the words of Isaiah 55:1, "without money and without price?" How may we interpret it so as not to clash with 1 Peter 1:18 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold?"

It does not teach that salvation is bought by the payment of money rather than the payment signifies one being counted or accepted and brought before God by faith who has received redemption for sins. Notice that it is a fixed amount to be individually offered regardless of their financial standing. It is the same amount exacted for the rich as well as for the poor.

<sup>15</sup> *The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.*

Each Israelite 20 years and above must bring a poll tax of a half shekel which is exactly 10 gerahs or a bekah. The gerah is the smallest unit of weight. It is said to come from a word meaning "grain". And the bekah is known to be 5.712 grams. The shekel is the basic weight estimated to be between 11.3-11.47 grams. A talent derives its name from the fact that it is a weight of circular shape. There are 3000 shekels to the talent. The talent weight discovered weighed 28.38kg – 30.27kg.

<sup>13</sup> *This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that **are numbered**, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.*

The word "atonement" used in verse 16 is the verb "to cover over", to pacify, make propitiation, wrath averted. The atonement money is symbolic of the act of God's atonement being made effectual for that individual personally when he is being counted as "covered over" by the blood sacrifice offered. Each of us must come to Christ ourselves to repent of our sins and turn to Christ for salvation. This is the only way by which one would be accepted by God. Otherwise, a plague will befall them!

It is not salvation by works by redemption that meets God's requirement as He has stipulated. Just like the order for leprous Namaan to wash in the Jordan seven times to be cleansed. He did so and was healed by God of his leprosy. The way of salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way and the bringing of the atonement money signifies that the man who came is counted as one atoned for in the sacrificial system that God has established. This system of sacrifice in the Tabernacle, whereby every eligible Israelite above the age of 20 is granted the privilege is appropriate by faith when each will bring his half-shekel to be counted as God's redeemed. This establishment of the Tabernacle for the worship of God was a pre-cursor of the redemption that Christ will accomplish on the cross for the sins of men.

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The Apostle Paul aptly articulated this faith in Romans 3:20-26:

*<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; <sup>22</sup> Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: <sup>23</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup> Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; <sup>26</sup> To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. 3:20-26 KJV)*

You recall God gave to Israel the Law as summarized in the Ten Commandments at Sinai. What was the purpose of the Law?

*<sup>20</sup> And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. (Exod. 20:20 KJV)*

**Galatians 3:24-27** *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. <sup>26</sup> For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

After giving the Law, the establishment of the Tabernacle whereby the sacrificial system was inaugurated pointed to the atoning work of Christ for sins.

As Spurgeon rightly observed, it is a “redemption that meets the divine demand, because you see, the Lord not only says that they must each bring half a shekel, no more, no less, but it must be the “shekel of the sanctuary” – not the shekel of commerce, which might be debased in quality or diminished by wear and tear, but the coin must be according to the standard shekel laid up of the holy place. To make sure of it Moses defines exactly how much a shekel is worth, and what its weight was, “A shekel is twenty gerahs.” So, you bring to God the redemption which He has appointed, - the blood and the righteousness of Christ – nothing more, nothing less.” Indeed, we rejoice in the redemption that does redeem!

The Israelite bringing is atonement money is counted as belonging to God. He partakes of the benefits of the means of grace established for his spiritual advancement as a full-fledged citizen of the nation. A witness to the nations of the world to the living and true God.

## **(2) Consecrated for Service**

The giving of this ransom-money was connected with the "numbering" of Israel. Notice the word used 5 times in our text - <sup>11</sup> *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,* <sup>12</sup> *When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after **their number**, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou **numberest them**; that there be no plague among them, when thou **numberest them**.* <sup>13</sup> *This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that*

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**are numbered**, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. <sup>14</sup> Every one that passeth among them that **are numbered**, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.

Pink rightly said, “That this is no unimportant question is at once evidenced by the fact that the fourth book of the Old Testament is designated "Numbers:" its title being taken from the numberings of the children of Israel for war, for ministry, and for their inheritance in Canaan.” Having been counted as one of God’s very own, we are numbered, prepared, consecrated for service in His vineyard.

**Numbers 1:1** And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, <sup>2</sup> Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; <sup>3</sup> From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. <sup>4</sup> And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers. (Num. 1:1-4 KJV)

This census, like the identity card number, make us counted for citizenship and also means that when a man comes of age, he will be drafted into the army for service. As God’s children, we are consecrated for service.

Spurgeon insightfully observed, “Every man that is numbered among the children of Israel and permitted to serve God, by going out to war, or take upon him the duties of citizenship, must, as he is numbered, be redeemed. So, must every one of us, if we are truly God’s people and God’s servants, find our right to be so in the fact of our redemption by Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the joy and glory of each one of us: “Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.”

<sup>10</sup> He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. <sup>11</sup> And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. <sup>13</sup> These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. <sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. (1 Jn. 5:10-15 KJV)

Indeed, the child of God is witness of God’s power in his life, the power to overcome, the world, the flesh and the devil. John wants the believers to have the assurance in their heart and in their daily life of the power of God in their lives. They can call to the Father in heaven in the name of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ and have their prayers answered. What a blessed life! May it bring to us much joy and peace and assurance.

The work of believers today is that of being a witness for God in Christ to a dying world as Jesus sets for us the example.

<sup>35</sup> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; <sup>38</sup> Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Matt. 9:35-38 KJV)

We live in a day when the Lord's return is indeed nigh.

**Luke 17:28-30** Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

The attempt to repeal the section 377A of our law that criminalize homosexuality is a sign that the days of Lot are upon us. If we shall live like Lot, seeking to gather up for this world, we shall suffer great loss.

**Luke 17:31-33** In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Lot's wife was so engulfed with the luxurious life of Sodom that she was unwilling to leave the city reserved for judgment only to be turned into a pillar of salt! She did not escape because she left her heart in Sodom and was judged of God. It is a warning for us!

Whereas Abraham would choose to separate himself from the influence and lifestyle of Sodom, he will not choose the filthy lucre of Sodom but eat the humble bread in the tents. He witnessed the judgment of God!

**Genesis 19:24-29** Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. 26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. 27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: 28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

### (3) Conserved from Plague

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<sup>11</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

We recall when David numbered the people without the gathering of the redemption money facing God's wrath. The teaching was that of redemption. When David in pride forget that the people is God's and their existence is by the mercy of God, by way of being redeemed by the blood. God's judgment came! It was in Mount Moriah where the Temple that succeeded the Tabernacle will be built.

<sup>KJV</sup> **1 Chronicles 21:1** And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

<sup>2</sup> And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it. <sup>3</sup> And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword. <sup>6</sup> But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab. <sup>7</sup> **And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.** <sup>8</sup> And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, <sup>10</sup> Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. <sup>11</sup> So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee <sup>12</sup> Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me. <sup>13</sup> And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man. <sup>14</sup> **So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.** <sup>15</sup> And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. <sup>16</sup> And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. <sup>17</sup> And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued. <sup>18</sup> **Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.** <sup>19</sup> And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD. <sup>20</sup> And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. <sup>21</sup> And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshingfloor, and bowed

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himself to David with his face to the ground. <sup>22</sup> Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshingfloor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: thou shalt grant it me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people. <sup>23</sup> And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all. <sup>24</sup> And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. <sup>25</sup> So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. <sup>26</sup> **And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. <sup>27</sup> And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. <sup>28</sup> At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. <sup>29</sup> For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. <sup>30</sup> But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.** (1 Chr. 21:1-22:1 KJV)

It was also in Mount Moriah that Abraham drew his knife to slay Isaac, a picture of God the Father offering up His Son on the cross. It was there the ram caught in a thicket was killed instead of Isaac, as Spurgeon rightly said, “a fitting emblem of the Substitute accepted instead of man”.

#### **(4) Contributors to the House of God**

<sup>26</sup> A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. <sup>27</sup> And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. <sup>28</sup> And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. <sup>29</sup> And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. <sup>30</sup> And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar, <sup>31</sup> And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about. (Exod. 38:26-39:1 KJV)

As mentioned, this sum of silver gathered from 603,550 men above 20 years old was 100 talents and 1775 shekels which was used to make the sockets into which the boards of the tabernacle were let and on which they rested, so that they were as the foundation of the tabernacle [Matthew Henry]

The redemption money was contribution for the laying of the foundation of the Tabernacle. The people of God being counted for Him, consecrated to His service, contributed to the service of the Tabernacle.

Spurgeon rightly observed for us that the tabernacle as a type of the church of God as the place of divine dwelling. The true church is founded upon redemption. Every board of shittim



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wood was tenoned and mortised into the sockets of silver made of the redemption money and every man that is in the church of God is united to Christ, rest upon Christ, and cannot be separated from Him...Christ is the sure foundation of the church. To be united to Christ by faith is to be built upon a sure foundation. His church shall never be overthrown let the devil send what hurricane he may.

Matthew Henry said rightly, "Those that have the benefit of God's tabernacle among them must be willing to defray the expenses of it, and not grudge the necessary charges of God's public worship. Thus, we must honour the Lord with our substance, and reckon that best laid out which is laid out in the service of God. Money indeed cannot make an *atonement for the soul*, but it may be used for the honour of him who has made the atonement, and for the maintenance of the gospel by which the atonement is applied."

#### **CONCLUSION**

Thank God we can be counted in Christ to partake of His eternal benefits. Amen.