

EXODUS 30:11-16 (THE RANSOM PAYMENT)

There are two words that should be explained in order for us to understand the contents of today's passage a little better. They are redeem and ransom. Both words deal with the same issue and the words can both be turned into either nouns or verbs.

For simplicity's sake, a ransom is a payment. It is a sum of money or of some other type of payment in order to obtain a prisoner's release. In the verb form, it is obtaining that release by making a necessary payment. If we think of man bound in sin, there must be a payment made to obtain our release from that.

Redemption involves regaining possession of something in exchange for payment. The ransom payment is what is used to redeem the thing. The noun form of the words differ more than the verb forms, but in all there is more involved in the word redeem than in the word ransom because the application is wider.

The reason I mention this now is that Israel is already at Mount Sinai, and yet they will be asked to pay a ransom for their souls. We shouldn't get stuck there and think that this somehow means they have earned their status. As we will see, this ransom payment only pictures the work of Christ.

It is not to be taken in any way at all that we somehow participate in our freedom from sin and bondage to the devil, with but the exception of receiving what Christ has done on our behalf. The payment here is only a type and a shadow of His work and is not to be equated with any effort on our own part in securing our release.

I will repeat this as we go through the verses to remind you of this. In the end, it is all about what Jesus Christ has done for us.

Text Verse: “And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Mark 10:44, 45

When I was young, we would save S&H Green Stamps in order to buy things we wanted. When we bought things at the store, we would get a certain number of stamps as a bonus. The more we spent (well, the more mom spent), the more stamps we would get.

It is the same as our bonus points for using credit cards today. Along with the stamps came a book filled with pictures of things we could buy with the stamps. The more costly the thing, the more stamps were needed. If there was a toaster mom wanted, she would save up her stamps for that. The toaster in the picture was in need of redemption and the stamps were the ransom payment for it.

When the book of stamps had enough to buy the toaster, off she would go to redeem her prize. It was an enjoyable thing to do and it was something that we anticipated with delight. This concept parallels man’s plight.

There is a picture of humanity, bound by sin and separated from the Holy God who created him. In order to not violate His own holiness, a ransom price needed to be paid. The value of the thing being ransomed is very high and therefore the price to be paid was high as well.

To think of what Christ did for us is... well, it is simply astonishing. When Jesus said that he came “to give His life a ransom for many” it means just that. He gave His life to redeem us. As God’s holiness is what could not be violated, the price for our redemption is an infinite one. As only God is infinite, then only the God/Man could make the payment.

The Humanity of Jesus is the payment, but the Deity of Jesus is what seals the deal. He is the bridge between the two. The payment is made for us by Him, and it is received by Him on behalf of God the Father. This is what we see pictured in today's passage. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Ransom Money

¹¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

This is the first time these words have been given since Exodus 25:1 when the Lord began to give the instructions for the gathering of materials for the tabernacle. Since then, it has been one long, uninterrupted set of instructions.

These words now form a new thought with a new direction, but they will only last for six verses and then the Lord will provide further instructions for the construction of more tabernacle implements. However, even these instructions, which seem unrelated to the on-going narrative, are intricately tied into it. In Exodus 25:1, it said –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.’”

All of the articles of these past chapters seem to have been constructed from this willing offering of the people. But this is incorrect. We will see this as the verses continue. What seems now as an interruption in the normal, unbroken flow of the narrative is actually a logical and even essential part of it.

As the words, “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying” are set off as their own verse, it is as if we are being asked to pause and consider them. Now that we have, we can move forward into the “what” and “why” of the coming verses.

¹² **“When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number,**

Not to overwhelm you with a complicated commentary from a long-dead scholar, but one of the things that I often repeat is that we need to be careful with reading commentaries and assuming they are correct. John Lange goes into great detail concerning what is being mandated in this verse with the intent of correcting other scholars. And yet, his commentary is completely inaccurate –

“The tabernacle itself was to be built from voluntary contributions (35:5), not from legally imposed taxes, and in this voluntary way more was given than was needed (36:5 sqq.). Moreover, the designation of the use of the money, **עַל-עֲבֹדַת אֱהֶל מוֹעֵד** [“for the service of the tent of meeting,” Exo 30:16], does not mean: for the work of the building, but: for the perpetual service of God in the building. This is implied also in Luther’s translation [and in the A. V.]. Moreover, it is said, that this tax is to be collected from the Israelites when the census of the adult males is taken. But such an enumeration did not take place till after the tabernacle was erected (Num. 1:1–18).” John Lange

He gives several points. 1) The tabernacle was to be built of only voluntary contributions. 2) More than enough of voluntary contributions were given and so this tax was unneeded for the construction. 3) The money to be mentioned in connection with this census is for the care of the tabernacle, not its construction. 4) The census was taken after the construction of the tabernacle.

The analysis is incorrect because he didn’t consider the words of Exodus 38 which we will look at later. It is a mistake that would lead to a wholly unfounded

conclusion as to *why* the Lord is now directing this money to be collected at the time of a census.

Let us always be careful to not assume that a commentary is correct until we have fully searched out the matter at hand. The Lord is now, at this time, requiring a census of the people, right in the middle of the details for the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture. Why would He do this?

^{12 (con't)} **then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord,**

When the census is taken, each man is to give a ransom for himself. This seems more than odd, especially when the people have already been redeemed by the Lord –

“You in Your mercy have led forth
The people whom You have redeemed;
You have guided *them* in Your strength
To Your holy habitation.” Exodus 15:13

This is now the third time that the noun *kopher*, or ransom has been mentioned in Scripture. The word comes from the verb *kaphar* which means “to appease.” It means then “a covering,” and thus figuratively, “a redemption price.”

It was first used in Genesis 6:14 in the asphalt which was used to cover the ark of Noah. The verb form was used was in Genesis 32:20 when Jacob sent a gift to Esau in hopes of allaying his anger. At that time, he said –

“I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.” Genesis 32:20

The intent of the gift was to cover over his previous transgressions against his older brother. The required ransom payment now is tied in with the numbering of the people. Its intent was to impress upon the minds of the people that they were actually unworthy to be a part of the holy congregation.

Because of this, they would need to pay a covering for that unworthiness. The Lord had redeemed them in a state of unworthiness and now they were to pay a ransom as a personal acknowledgment of that redemption.

When the ransom is paid, in the eyes of the Lord it would be as if their unworthiness no longer existed and thus they would be kept safe from the justly deserved punishment of the righteous Judge of mankind. With this covering, they could then come into the presence of the Holy Lord without any fear of danger. This is explicitly stated in the next words...

^{12 (con't)} **when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when *you* number them.**

The paying of the ransom is directly tied into the idea of being saved from a plague. Interestingly, the word *negeph*, or “plague” has only been seen once so far in Scripture, in Exodus 12 –

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. ¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the **plague** shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.”

As you can see, the Lord is making a direct connection between the shedding of the blood of the lamb and the ransom payment of the men in the census which is to be of silver. One logically follows along with the other, redemption and ransom. The terms, though similar in meaning, do differ. Redemption is wider in its application than ransom.

This noun form, *negeph*, or plague, is only used seven times in the Bible and all are in relation to the people of Israel. The final time it is used is in Isaiah 8 where it is ascribed directly to the Lord in relation to the people of Israel –

“He will be as a sanctuary,
But a stone of **stumbling** and a rock of offense
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Isaiah 8:14

This verse from Isaiah is then used by Paul when speaking of Christ in Romans 9, and by Peter – also speaking of Christ, in 1 Peter 2. In essence, Christ became the very plague upon Israel that the blood of the lamb and the ransom money was to protect them from. In their rejection of Him, they rejected what these types and shadows only pictured. What a mistake to underestimate and thus reject God’s provision in Christ!

¹³ This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give:

The term “those who are numbered” is the Hebrew word *paqad*. It is not an unusual word in and of itself. It is used over 300 times in Scripture under various contexts. What is unusual is that it hasn’t been used since Exodus 20 and it won’t be used again until Exodus 32, both under different contexts.

However, it is used 5 times in verses 12, 13, & 14. It is being specially highlighted. The word means “to visit,” “to appoint,” “to attend to,” etc. The significance of numbering then is to show that a certain group out of a whole are being appointed or visited for a special purpose.

13 (con’t) half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary

The word for “half,” *makhatsith*, is introduced here now, and it will be used three times between verses 13 and 15. The specificity is given that it is to be *one half* a shekel. The stress though is not on half, but on shekel. We know this because the weight is then further described as “the shekel of the sanctuary.”

A shekel is a measurement of weight, not specifically a coin of a preset value. It is this weight which is required, but more than just any shekel, it was to be of the shekel of the sanctuary. It is a standard shekel by which all other weights would be compared.

The amount is not a great one. It is believed that the half shekel would equal approximately eight grams of silver. Although the value of silver in biblical times isn’t known, on the day I typed this sermon, 8 grams of .999 pure silver is worth \$4.21.

The amount is not so small as it should be treated with contempt. Even a rich person will pick up a five dollar bill on the road. On the other side, it is also not so large as to be a burden on even a poor person. A poor person will spend more than this much on a McDonald’s breakfast on any given day.

13 (con't) **(a shekel is twenty gerahs).**

Now a half shekel is defined in another way for us, by the *gerah*. It's a new word for us which will be used five times between Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel – all in the same context. The word comes from the verb *garar* which means “to drag away.”

The *gerah* literally means “a bean” or “a kernel” which is round as if scraped. Thus it is a portion of a shekel which has been taken away. This is exactly the same idea as our modern use of “grain” when speaking of money, gun powder, etc.

A shekel is said to equal twenty *gerahs* and thus one half shekel is 10 *gerahs*. Specificity is given and so an explanation is expected. Therefore, we must again turn to Bullinger to define the number –

Ten “signifies *the perfection of Divine order* ... Completeness of order, marking the entire round of anything, is, therefore, the ever-present signification of the number *ten*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.”

13 (con't) **The half-shekel *shall be* an offering to the Lord.**

This ransom money is said to be a *terumah*, or an offering, to the Lord. The word *terumah* comes from the word *rum* which means to be lifted up or exalted. This seemingly insignificant payment was to be exalted and raised up before the Lord.

¹⁴ Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the Lord.

The age of those who were to pay included any male from the age of twenty and up. It is at the age of twenty that a Hebrew was considered as full grown. At this age, they would be considered acceptable for military service. Also, the Levites commenced their service in the sanctuary at this age. No male above this age was to be exempt from payment. The number twenty is defined by Bullinger as the number of *expectancy*. All of these, twenty and above, were to give their *terumah*, or offering, to the Lord.

¹⁵ The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel,

The *ashir*, or rich, are now mentioned for the first time in the Bible. The word won't be used again until the book of Ruth and it will mostly be used in the five books of wisdom.

The *dal*, or poor, are mentioned for only the second time. The word comes from *dalal* which means "to dangle." By implication such a person dangles - he is lean, needy, and weak.

The point of this requirement should be obvious, but it is well explained by Matthew Henry –

"The rich were not to give more, nor the poor less; the souls of the rich and poor are alike precious, and God is no respecter of persons, Ac 10:34; Job 34:19. In other offerings men were to give according to their wordly ability; but this, which was the ransom of the soul, must be alike for all. The souls of all are of equal value, equally in danger, and all equally need a ransom."

The rich man couldn't walk up to the temple and say, "I am giving more in order to secure my own, better ransom." The poor man could not feel that his atonement was of less importance than the wealthy man. And there is no stated provision for a man to pay for the ransom of another man. It is a tenet later written explicitly into Scripture by the sons of Korah –

"None of *them* can by any means redeem *his* brother,
Nor give to God a ransom for him—

⁸For the redemption of their souls *is* costly,
And it shall cease forever—" Psalm 49:7, 8

¹⁵ (con't) **when you give an offering to the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves.**

For the third time in three verses, we are told that this is a *terumah*, or a raising up of an offering to the Lord. This raising up is specifically said to "make atonement" or to be a covering for the people. A ransom is required or atonement will not be made.

The offering is equally binding on all, and thus its effects are equally realized in all. It is what saves from the vengeance of God which was sure to come on those who failed to make it, whether through pride, arrogance, or sheer neglect.

¹⁶ **And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting,**

The atonement money which is collected will come out to a total of one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels. This is

recorded in Exodus 38 and the specific use for this silver is explained there as well

—

“And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation *was* one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: ²⁶ a bekah for each man (*that is*, half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men*. ²⁷ And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them.” Exodus 38:25-28

Going through the description of the tabernacle’s construction, it was seen that there were exactly 100 silver sockets to be made, each a talent in weight. The weight of these are precisely aligned with the 100 talents of silver which were collected. There were also the silver pillars, hooks, and bands. The exact amount needed for these implements was precisely received from this census ransom as well - 1775 shekels.

There is nowhere else in Scripture a note that extra was needed or that extra was left over. In other words, the exact number of people had come out of Egypt to exactly provide the exact amount of silver required for these items.

As the deliverance of Egypt was at an exact moment in time which was promised 430 years earlier, and as the travels of Jacob took them to Egypt at exactly the ½ way point of that 430 years, and as countless other exacting details had to occur in order for there to be this precise number of people at this moment in time, the collection of the silver which is now being mandated shows evidence of God’s

hand on every minute detail of time, human generation, the movement of nations, even the amount of food that was available at any given moment in history.

This one verse, taken in context with these other points recorded in Scripture, shows us the absolutely sovereign nature of God over all things. In order for this to come out as it did, an *infinite* number of minute and precise occurrences were needed to align perfectly. And yet, we read verses like this without a second thought.

But the details, when understood, show us a magnificence in the word of God that is beyond our ability to properly grasp. Every chapter, every verse, and every word is intricately woven into the most marvelous tapestry ever conceived of.

As a side note, the KJV again messes up the translation here. It says *ohel moed*, or the tent of meeting, not the tabernacle of the congregation. They receive two demerits, and the NKJV gets one for calling it the tabernacle of meeting. Precision is realized in God's word; we should therefore be precise with God's word.

As another side note, every translation of this verse gives the idea of the silver being used for the ongoing "service" of the temple, but as was seen from Exodus 38, it is to be used not for its continuing service, but for its construction. This silver is for the sockets and other items. Specificity is important as the next words bear out the reason for what we are seeing...

***¹⁶ (fin) that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves."**

The silver ransom money was to be, as it says, “a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord.” The first time a *zikkaron*, or memorial, was mentioned in Scripture was at the Passover in Exodus 12 when it said –

“So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.” Exodus 12:14

Again as earlier, the blood of the Passover is being directly equated to the silver of this ransom money. The redemption and ransom are intricately woven into one concept. The memorials brought to remembrance past deliverance, and they continued to remind them concerning that state of being. The redemption silver was used in the tabernacle construction to show us that everything about our redemption stands on Christ and is supported by Christ alone.

*A price was paid to bring us back home
Atonement came; a covering perfect and pure
And so from Your courts, never shall we roam
Our place is fixed and firm; our place forever secure
Through the payment of Christ there on Calvary
Ransom was made, no more is there any debt
Because of His death there on that cruel and lonely tree
Satisfaction for what we owed has been perfectly met
The price was paid; the life of the Man ebbed away
Our atonement came so perfect and pure
But then came an even greater day
When death was defeated; now our place is forever secure*

II. Pictures of Christ

Moses was implicitly instructed that a census was going to be taken with the words, “When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number.” No census had been mentioned to this point, but now it is a known matter. There is a specific timeframe involved in the taking of this census, even though it is not yet revealed when it will be.

A census is made in order to determine a number. The mention of numbering the people is made five times in these few verses. Thus there is a hidden stress upon this word. Further, the name of the Lord – Yehovah is mentioned six times in the passage, but only five of them are in the actual instructions. Both of these five occurrences point to grace; five being the number of grace.

The act of numbering implies ownership or authority over a thing. This is why we number the things we possess. I may know that my neighbor has \$2,000,000 dollars, but only because he first counted it and told me. He counted what he possesses. Likewise, I have counted my money and it equals \$24.37... all mine!

We can do this for any of our assets because they are ours. The Lord is calling for a census of His people because they are His. The fact that He already knows the number is irrelevant. He wants Moses, and thus us to know it. He is identifying for all to know that this total number is His. As they are His, He has authority over them and the right to align them in the manner He chooses. The stars are numbered because they belong to the Lord –

“He counts the number of the stars;
He calls them all by name.” Isaiah 40:26

Not only does the Lord number the stars, but He also names them. It is a double note of ownership. The same is true with Israel. He named them and therefore He is now expressing a double note of authority over them. The same holds true the span of our lives. In Job, we read that He is the owner and controller of all men by this concept as well –

“Since his days *are* determined,
The number of his months *is* with You;
You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.” Job 14:5

The Lord is exercising His authority and demonstrating His ownership of Israel through the coming census. This is why the sin of David in the taking of a census was so great. He went out to number the people of Israel without the Lord’s direction. He was, in essence, claiming his ownership of them and excluding the Lord’s authority in the process. It was a costly lesson for David.

The account is recorded in both Kings and Chronicles in part as a reminder to us of both the sin of pride and of the mercy of the Lord at the repentant heart. The Lord will not give His glory to another, but the Lord will allow us, if we are humble, to share in the blessings of His glory.

In this, we see that there is only One rightful Person who has been given the trust of choosing, ordering, and numbering the people of God - Jesus Christ. In this position of authority, He never forgets the glory of His Father, a glory which He has shared in and will share in for all eternity.

Moses’ numbering of the people at the Lord’s command is only a picture of the Lord’s numbering of God’s people. But there is a logical order to the process before the numbering. First, there was a need of redemption. The people were in Egypt and in bondage. That is man bound by sin.

Next there is the One who can redeem. One who is powerful enough to break the bonds and overthrow the power of the devil who has bound us in sin. That is Christ. This is followed by the act of redemption itself. This was seen in the slaying of the Passover, picturing the death of Christ.

After that, the duty of the redeemed was seen in the obedience of following the Lord and His commands. Only after that then come the privileges of our redemption which are found in worshipping and serving Him. Each step has been logical and orderly.

Only when people are redeemed can they then be numbered among the redeemed. This is where we come to in this passage. No sooner is the numbering mentioned for Israel, then the note of a ransom to be paid is given. As Arthur Pink states –

“God appropriates His elect unto Himself only as a ransomed people.”

This is the same pattern as before at the Passover where the same words were used. Again, the blood of the Passover is being tied into the silver of this ransom money. And in both instances, if the people failed to meet the requirement, simple as it may be, the penalty would be a plague among them.

Both the blood and the silver picture the work of Christ. In their rejection of Christ, He became the plague upon Israel. The same is true with the world at large. In its rejection of Christ, the plagues of revelation will come upon the world. The pattern follows consistently in Scripture. This is why the Bible says in a seemingly contradictory manner –

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,

Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1

The ransom money only pictures Christ. We are not redeemed with such things as silver. Peter explains this to us in his first epistle –

"...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:18

The precious blood of Christ is pictured in the silver metal. The blood is the mode of redemption and shows us the character of Christ's work; its value is the means of payment and shows the very high price of the ransom.

As we have seen in the past, silver itself pictures redemption. Silver, or *kespeh*, comes from another word *kasaph* which means to "be eager" or to "long for." Thus this redemption money signifies that which we long for. Paul explains this in Romans 8 –

"Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **eagerly** waiting for the adoption, the **redemption** of our body." Romans 8:23

From the fall of man onward, the expectancy of the work of Christ is pictured in the redemptive process of man. And Christ is the foundation of that redemptive process. Paul explicitly says in 1 Corinthians 3 that Christ *is* the foundation of the gospel.

The next thing noted was the word *paqad*. It is mentioned 5 times in this short passage. It signifies to visit or to appoint. A certain number were appointed out of a whole. In this a picture is being developed of the greater world at large. It is explained in the words of Luke's description of what occurred in Acts 13:48 –

“Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

There is a portion of a whole who are appointed to eternal life. They are those who believe in Christ and receive His work. It is this special purpose in the process of redemption that is being highlighted in this verse.

Next was mentioned the specific amount of the ransom payment. This is a beautiful picture of Christ. It is one half a shekel according to the sanctuary shekel. The sanctuary shekel pictures the divine standard by which all else was to be measured by.

The half shekel then pictures Christ's humanity as the mode of redemption. He is the heavenly standard, but it is His humanity which must deal with the sins of man. Further, as I noted it was silver, reflecting the precious nature of Christ, but it was only a small amount. In today's money, about \$4.21.

It was not so small as it should be treated with contempt by a rich person, but it was also not so large as to be a burden on even a poor person. Anyone who would treat this with contempt would be foolish to do so, and anyone who said they couldn't obtain the amount would be considered too lazy to deserve what it signified. As Alexander MacLaren states about this –

“Thus there is but one Sacrifice for all; and the poorest can exercise faith and the richest can do no more.” Alexander MacLaren

In both we see the truth that Christ is available if we are willing to simply reach out to Him on one hand, and to never treat what He has done with contempt on the other. The silver pictures His work, not ours. It is only a type and shadow for us to understand.

Whether the blood of the Passover, or the silver of the ransom money, each of which pictures Christ, there is a truth which must be considered. We must personally obtain the work of the Lord, applying it by faith to our lives so that He will stand between sinful us and the holy God.

Next we saw that the half shekel was further defined as ten *gerahs*. The word *gerah* comes from *garar* which means to drag away. Ten *gerahs* are required to make full payment and thus it is this amount which pictures the dragging away of our sin. If nine were given, it would be insufficient. If 11 were given, it would be too much.

As Bullinger notes, these ten then imply “that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete.” There is nothing wanting and all is complete in Christ’s payment for our sins. These are, in essence, dragged away once and for all time through His work.

These ten *gerahs* picture the Ten Commandments. The price of those was paid in Christ’s fulfillment of them in His human state. It was He who kept the law and paid the penalty for it on our behalf. Thus, He is the perfect ransom. This is actually beautifully spoken of by Him in the parable of the lost coin –

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds *it*?⁹ And when she has found *it*, she calls *her* friends and neighbors together, saying,

‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ ¹⁰ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15:8-10

Our turning to God through the completed work of Christ is all that is necessary to make the angels of heaven rejoice.

Next noted was the age of those who were to give – twenty and above. Twenty signifies “expectancy.” In this, there is the note that those who give are those who are expectant of what the offering would mean. It is the hope of the believer that what Christ has done is sufficient. The number is neither arbitrary or without meaning. Rather, it is exactly what the Bible speaks of concerning our faith.

And this brings us to the next point, that it is faith in the offering. The offering, or *terumah*, as I said, comes from the word *rum*, meaning exalted, or lifted up. This is seen explicitly in the use of the same word in Isaiah 52 –

“Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;
He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.” Isaiah 52;13

This carries over directly to the NT where Paul writes of the exalted Christ -

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11

In that this was the set amount where the rich were not to give more nor the poor less, it signifies that there is one standard, and one standard alone, by which man is redeemed. We cannot purchase our salvation through any other means, nor can we be redeemed without meeting the exact payment. Only Christ is a suitable ransom.

This is why the term “offering,” or *terumah*, is mentioned three times in three verses. It is this and no other. Only through the cross of Christ can man be redeemed. He is the offering; He alone. This offering is what was in the last verse said to be taken and appointed for the service of the tabernacle to serve as a memorial. It is that which made atonement for them. The memorial before the Lord is exactly seen in the words of Hebrews 12 –

“...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2

Christ is now seated, ever before the Father, as a memorial for us. His work is complete and His scars are the proof of our redemption. It is this which has made atonement for us and it is He by which we are atoned for. No passage of Scripture could be more reassuring than what is presented in these words.

As a sort of explanation for you, I want to note that the placement of this passage may at first seem abrupt and illogical. We have the description of the Altar of Incense and the description of the Bronze Laver, and right in between the two there is this passage about the ransom money. And it is ransom money which will be used for things which have already been detailed.

But the last verse explains the placement. The silver is to be appointed for the construction of the tent, specifically for the silver implements mentioned, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord.

The Altar of Incense pictures Christ's intercessory work *for* us which includes our petitions and prayers. The Bronze Laver will picture Christ's sanctification *of* us, meaning our ongoing spiritual purification as well as growth.

By placing the memorial of our atonement between the two, we are instructed that it is Christ who redeemed us. Therefore, it is He to whom we pray to God the Father through, and it is He who sanctifies us before Him. In other words, it is our redemption and atonement upon which everything else stands and upon which everything else is dependent.

No prayers are heard by God apart from Christ's redemption of us, and no sanctification before God occurs apart from having first been redeemed. This passage, between those other two passages, is given as a stark reminder of this fact.

Israel brought ten *gerahs* of silver as a ransom before the Lord. We bring the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments by Christ before our heavenly Father. In this, we have been counted among His sons. Christ has acquired His rights over us. We are no longer our own for we have been bought at a price.

And that brings me to my final thoughts about this passage. I mentioned the precision of what had to occur for the amount of silver to come out exactly as was needed for the silver of the sanctuary. Literally, from the moment of creation, right up until the moment of the census, *everything* was preordained in order for these two things to line up.

And yet, there is more on the other side of the census as well because the same things that we read about in this passage were also used to show us larger pictures of the redemption of man through the greater work of Jesus Christ.

In other words, the grandiose nature of planning to have the correct number of people of a certain age come forward with a certain amount of silver to fit an exact need for the construction of the tabernacle at a particular moment in time is only a picture of something even more precisely detailed and even more magnificent.

When we get thinking that life is out of control, or if we think that somehow God has forgotten about us, what we can do is come to this passage and see that this is the furthest thing from the truth. If He cares enough about mere grains of silver which can be lost in the sand by simply letting go of one's grip, how much more do you think He cares about you, an integral part of His heavenly temple, not built with hands?

Don't allow yourself to get sidetracked by this wearisome world! Instead, keep your eyes on the prize. Fix your eyes on Jesus. And know in your heart that God has a marvelous plan which is being worked out in such immense detail that even the hairs on your head are figured into it. Be at peace, trust in Christ, have a steady heart, and know that you are highly favored.

Closing Verse: "Lift up your eyes on high,
And see who has created these *things*,
Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of *His* power;
Not one is missing." Isaiah 40:26

Next Week: Exodus 30:17-21 *Some tasty nuggets from the word for you to savor...*
(The Bronze Laver) (85th Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Ransom Money

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

When you take the census, according to my word

Of the children of Israel for their number, as I am relaying

Then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord

When you number them

That there may no plague among them be

When you number them

Abide by these instructions from Me

This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give:

Half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary

(A shekel is twenty gerahs)

The half-shekel shall an offering to the Lord be

Everyone included among those who are numbered

From twenty years old and above, as noted by Me

Shall give an offering to the Lord

Follow this directive carefully

The rich shall not give more
And the poor shall not than half a shekel give less
When you give an offering to the Lord
To make atonement for yourselves, as to you I address
And you shall take the atonement money
Of the children of Israel
And shall appoint it for the service
Of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial
For the children of Israel before the Lord
To make atonement for yourselves, according to My word

How great are You, O God, that You have sent Jesus
To be the ransom for the weary soul
It is He who came to deliver us
And onto Him, our many cares we can now roll
For we have been redeemed unto You
Through His shed blood, redemption has come at last
The payment is made, nothing more is due
From a life of sin and bondage, into Your courts we have passed

O God, your righteous demands have been satisfied for us
Thank You, O God, for our payment of Ransom
Thank You, O God, for Jesus!

Hallelujah and Amen...