

The Cost Of Being Counted Exodus 30 Verses 11-16

Ex 30:11 ¶ "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **12** 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. **13** This they shall give, everyone 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. **14** Everyone that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. **15** 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. **16** 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."

"*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*" We see this statement, or similar wording, each time the subject changes for the commandments that God is giving to Moses for Israel. This tells us that God gave the different laws and ordinances to Moses at different times, not all at once.

The same was true for the disciples of Jesus. Jesus was continually giving them instructions and guiding their minds to see the spiritual aspect of being a Christian. Jesus was continually giving them instruction to demonstrate how they are to live when he has ascended back to heaven. The same is true in the life of a child of God today. We do not learn everything about living the life of a Christian, all at once, which is why we are told in: **2Pe 3:18** "*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*" Trials and tribulations broaden our understanding and strengthen our faith.

We are told if they were counted, they had to pay a price. This is a misunderstood concept among some of God's people, who believe there is no cost to be born in our worship of God. We see in these passages that that is not correct. If we are counted, in the number of the children of God, we are required to pay the cost. As God required here of every Israelite, who was twenty years old and upward, when numbered, the cost of a half shekel, that there be no plague among them.

It was the price of the ransom for his soul before God. Ransom means *a cover, literally a village as covered in; (specifically) bitumen (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); figuratively, a redemption-price: -- bribe, camphire, pitch, ransom, satisfaction, sum of money, village.* It simply was the price that every man paid to have his name entered into the roster of God's chosen people, and to bear the name of being God's people.

What does being counted have to do with our lives today? When are you counted as a Christian here in time? When you are born again and live a true Christian life. Especially, when you make your public confession of faith in Jesus Christ and join the organized church body, you are then counted, here in time, because your name is now on the membership role of the church.

We find further in scripture in: **Ro 9:7-8; 7** "*Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*" Today, in this age of Salvation by the Grace of God, we are children of the promise, and being born again, we are counted as children of God.

Now, being counted, you are to pay the cost of being a disciple of Christ. How does it cost, to be identified as a child of God, and be counted in the number of the children of God?

- It cost you the faith to stand firm upon the word and work of God, by declaring your belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation.
- It cost you the time, and effort, it takes to read God's word and learn of him.
- It cost you the time you dedicate to worship God in the congregational services.
- It cost you the time, you should spend in fervent prayer to God, for his continuing mercy and grace in your life.
- It cost you positionally in this world, because now the world looks down on you with disdain.
- It cost you effectually, because now God will chastise you, which proves you that are a child of God. **Heb 12:6-8; 6** "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father*

chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

- It cost you effectually because now when you sin you will pay the consequence of your sin here in time.
- It costs you time and money to support the ministry, the church, to help the poor and sick, the widows and orphans, and any other needs to be met. Remember the scripture in: ***Jas 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."***
- It cost you the loss of your pride, because now you see yourself as the dead, alienated, worthless, sinner, which you are without Christ in you.
- It cost you the loss of the love of the world and worldly things. Now you are to be devoted completely to God and Christ. Now you are to love God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and your neighbor as yourself.

And the list goes on and on.

Another aspect of the half shekel cost is our acknowledgment, that whether monetarily rich or poor, we are all saved by that same redeeming grace, bestowed upon us in the new birth by Jesus Christ, and we are all equal in the eyes of God. This is why I believe that the half shekel cost to be paid, by each one who is counted, is representative of each child of God making their public profession of faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, being baptized by immersion, and then walking in uprightness before the world and one another. We are making atonement for our souls, paying the cost of being saved by God's grace, and being counted as a child of God, by making this declaration of faith in Christ publicly. This demonstrates that we are forfeiting our lives, previously lived by the will of the inherited sin nature; and now, we are dedicating to live our lives, in accordance with the will of the new nature of Christ in us.

This half shekel payment was dedicated for the service of the tabernacle, and for the maintenance of the tabernacle and the utensils, and the sustenance of those who served therein. It was to serve as a memorial to Israel, reminding them that God is the one who eternally forgives sins and makes atonement for their souls, and that, all of God's chosen people, are equal in the sight of God.

If they were numbered and gave not the half shekel, then a plague would come and kill them, as seen when King David numbered the people in 2 Samuel chapter 24, and the plague killed seventy thousand men. How would this apply to our lives as Christians today? Remember the scripture in: ***Mt 10:32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."*** Certainly, this scripture should help us understand the need to be counted, and numbered, with the God's chosen people.

Did you notice that the half shekel was measured by the standard of the shekel of the sanctuary? The priests had a shekel that was preserved to measure by. This reminds us that the church which Jesus established is to preserve the true word of God. This demonstrates what we are taught in our 2nd Article of Faith: ***"We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, of the original King James Bible, are the words of God, and the only rule of FAITH AND PRACTICE."*** This reminds us that any offering we make, in life to God, is to be measured by the word of God, which is the true measure and standard for all we do. If the bible you use is not the true scriptures of God, you have a false balance, which gives you no way to give the true measure required.

The half shekel cost of being numbered was to be used for the maintenance of the tabernacle worship and all that was associated with it. Today, meeting houses and grounds, of organized congregations, require maintenance, and this is a cost to be borne by the congregation. We all should give to the necessity of the church facilities, and the necessity of the servants of the church. Today, some ministers have secular jobs, and they do not require a regular salary. However, each pastor, and minister, has expenses required for him to carry out his ministerial duties, and the church should gladly cover this cost with regular contributions, or salaries, to the pastors and ministers.

Finally, remember, this half shekel is for the atonement of your souls here in time, it is not for your eternal salvation, which cannot be bought with corruptible things as silver and gold, seen in: ***1Pe 1:18-21; 18 "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but***

was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

Atonement, as used in our text, means *to cover (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel: -- appease, make (an atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, make reconciliation.* To cover with bitumen gives us the picture of Noah building the ark and it was pitched without and within, to seal it up and ward off death by drowning. Today, making the public confession of faith in Christ is to be covered with bitumen; rather, to be covered in the robes of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, in whose blood we are sealed to the covenant promise of eternal life in Christ. It is Christ who has pardoned us. It is Christ who has appeased the wrath of God toward our sins. It is Christ, who has made reconciliation for us. Public profession of faith is paying the half shekel required, because you are numbered with God's chosen people: and not with the lost going to the eternal lake of fire.

We find further in scripture in: *Ro 9:7-8; 7 "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."* Being born again, we are children of the promise. We should want to be recognized as children of the promise, which means we are counted, and our names are inscribed in the Book Of Life, in the eternal heaven.

Now, let's look and think upon the eternal aspect, and we will see the picture more clearly that the required cost, of being counted and atoned for, is a half shekel according to the measure of the shekel of the sanctuary. Every person, who will be in the eternal heaven with Christ, will get there by the cost paid by Christ on the cross. Christ paid the same amount for every one of God's chosen children, which is his shed and atoning blood, and giving his life freely on the cross for the eternal remission of our sins.

When we get to the eternal heaven, in the eternal resurrection of the dead in Christ, we will all be accounted for, with not one missing, as seen in: *Joh 17:9-12; 9 "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11 ¶ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."* Praise God, for the security of our eternal salvation in Jesus Christ. Thank you, King Jesus, for paying the cost for each child of God to be counted, and that the sum of God's people is exactly the right number. Hallelujah! Amen!