

## UNIT 56

# THE RANSOM MONEY

### (Exodus 30:11-16)

The little section that now follows seems to be a one time collection of ransom money from the company of the redeemed. Modern scholars say that the ancient people thought census-taking was dangerous, either by leading to pride or vulnerability, and so any time a census was taken a collection was also taken to secure them against peril and death. 2 Chronicles 24:6, 9 may be another tax at a census. Of course, it may have simply been a form of taking a fair collection from the company of the redeemed. The point would be, then, that those whom God redeemed from bondage had to ransom their lives from God in this way so that they would not perish. In a way, they were purchasing their freedom in the covenant. The money would then be used for the maintenance of the Tent. We could describe the theological point this way:

***Those numbered among the redeemed must support the work of the Lord to maintain their fellowship within the covenant.***

In New Testament terms we would say that the redeemed are not their own, and so must demonstrate their belonging to God.

The passage is fairly easy to outline. ***I. Every covenant member must give a ransom (thanksgiving gift) for his life to avoid discipline (11, 12).*** “Ransom” in the text is *kopher*. The suzerain demands the loyal support of his people; if they refuse to obey, they could die. So to give the tax ransomed the life from death. Compliance with the LORD's will is one way to escape His anger.

***II. The ransom for the life is the same for all, whether rich or poor (13-15).*** This is obviously not a competitive, free-will offering. The wealthy could not have an advantage, for God is no respecter of persons. There is an equal duty of the redeemed to show their submission to the LORD.

Finally, the purpose is clear: ***III. The ransom money supports the sanctuary as a memorial of the redeemed (16).*** It is a testimony to the redeemed that their offerings maintain the worship sanctuary. Moreover, their continued enjoyment of it is ensured by their faithful compliance with the offering. Here again “atonement” or “ransom” is a key word in the passage, meaning the price for the life that was

given to God.

If the person was a member of the covenant, one of the redeemed we would say, because he was numbered among them he was by duty bound to obey his LORD. Here a payment is demanded for each life, for the use in the tabernacle and for the preservation of the life. It was not extortion. It was the demand of the gracious LORD for a small token of gratitude.