

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 30 versus 11 through 16. These are God's words. Then Yahweh spoke to Moses saying when you take the censuses of the children of Israel for their number, Then every man shall give a ransom for himself to Yahweh when you number them. That there may be no plague among them, when you number them.

This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give Half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary. A shekel is 20 gerahs. The half shekels shall be an offering. To your way. Everyone included among those who are numbered from 20 years old and above shall give an offering To you all.

The rich shall not give more. The poor shall not give less. Than half a shekel. When you give an offering, To your way. To make atonement for yourselves. 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 you all play. To make atonement. For yourselves. So, for the reading of God's inspired and inherent worth, There is a danger in considering ourselves our own and forgetting That we have been bought with blood. We've seen that danger already in the redemption price for the firstborn.

That would point back to the day of the Passover. And you remember the Lord commanding a redemption. To, to be made a sacrifice to be made for the firstborn male. Of every family, something that even Joseph and Mary had to come and do for the Lord Jesus giving as a did, the poorest of the three.

Um no the poorest of the options. For that sacrifice. There's a danger of considering ourselves, our own protectors of trusting, and might or trusting and strength, instead of trusting in the spirit of the Lord and trusting in chariots or trusting in horses rather than an entrusting the Lord himself.

There's a danger and considering ourselves to be our own providers as we have heard recently or maybe not that recently, it's been a couple months now. In our studying, the church's service and material things. And the threat that when the Lord brought them into a land flowing with milk and honey, vineyards, that they didn't plant and wells that they didn't dig.

And they were prospered that there would be forgetful of God and say my might and the power of my hand. Has given me. This. Well, And how offensive all of these things are? These are the things for which the wrath of God is coming upon the world. For all he has made himself known in the creation.

Men push down is oppressed the truth and unrighteousness and neither glorify him as God or give thanks. Well, if that's the response of God, to what we do and pushing down on the knowledge of him and his glory and creation, how much more in redemption The providence of God, who, who is the one, who is our protector?

The one who is our provider, the one who Has appointed for us. As we heard this morning, good works to walk in and sustains us by his grace, for the walking. In those good works. And

yet the people of god, we the people of god can be forgetful of god, even in the course of public worship, he appoints an offering for the service of the tabernacle here.

That comes by way of an atonement by way of an offering that is the same for every single israelite so that their contribution to the funds. That are used for procuring. The service of the tabernacle is all the same. That we will remember that we have been given life by god and we have given been given redemption by god and everything that we have not just the money that we gave.

For the service of the church. But our whole self is our career, our whole self and terms of creation, and ordinary, providence, and material things, and so forth. And especially our whole self in terms of the grace, that would give us to desire. Uh, to To participate in and and be part of how the lord provides for his worship.

This is a great danger that continues today. I remember and Uh the first call that i had, i actually wasn't ordained to that call because they weren't paying me enough and the presbyterian didn't want to set a bad precedent for Uh, for what you pay or named men. But i served them in every way that a licensure was Was permitted to do and i remember as things in the church were reforming.

And the lord was blessing, his people. There was one couple He was the lead elder. And she was a fourth generation daughter of the church. And he, Had taken over his father-in-law's farm and they were running the thing. It was horrible, you know, they were using the church to launder money and all sorts of stuff.

But i remember something that that she said, one day, Uh, when and there were accustomed to having seminary students come for a few months at a time? And, There was something that Uh, that she Hadn't liked about the worship. And she said something. And, I explained to her what?

The active elder, not her husband. Uh, had Said we would do after having discussed from the bible and why we were doing it. And she said oh well that's fine honey. Um, you know, ministers come and go, but i'm here forever. And she is actually a sweet converted lady.

But there's a danger. In thinking that our contributions. Whether it's the, you know, the generations of our family to the church or the amount of service that we put in or the amount of the church's funding that comes by way of our bank account. That we are somehow the ones who are providing the worship of god or the service of god.

It's not just a danger for, for of forgetting that i am. I am my own. No, our sin is so great. That we will actually, think not only am i my own, but, you know, big part of the church is work is my own too. A big part of the church's ministry is my own.

This is a danger that presents itself, especially to elders and ministers. Who have received anything good that comes from us? Comes through us has come only from god. And why would we be proud as if we had given anything that we didn't receive from him first as the, the apostle says to the Corinthians when they're all caught up and which minister there, you know, the, the peter group and the paul group and the Apollo group and then the really pious ones that jesus group who are also forgetting.

Because they're proud of themselves. And someone who is truly of the jesus group, which is, of course, the whole church is jesus group. Would not be proud of themselves. It would not be fractions, would they? And so the lord gives his people here in these verses a lesson that we still need to remember that.

We are the lord's possession. He is the lord, our possessor. And that we are under the lord's protection and is he who protects his people? And that. He is so that he is the lord, our protector. And that his people are sustained by, and his worship is sustained by the lord's provision that he is the lord, our provider and he ties the half shekel tax.

Uh, to the service of the tabernacle to drive that home. By means of the worship that they offer. Uh, well, first he is the lord, our possessor. The head count is the lord's head count. And that's why. The reason why i'm using that word is because where it says, here for their number, it's a word that actually Comes from the, from a root that means the lifting up of the heads.

The gathering. Uh, you know you'd have the the people gathered and then you would muster that get them in line. Have everybody lift their head up so that they're easier to count it is. Most often a military term just like muster. You know, we use the word. Well, nobody, we were bad with english or vocabularies or so small.

But supposing we hadn't declined so much. Grammatically or linguistically, we would use the word mustard and we would use a primarily for we'd have a primarily military idea about it, wouldn't we? But we would use it for all sorts of Sorts of other things as well. Well, this is a word that means the raising up of the head.

And so, i'm using the word head count here in the outline. And in the sermon to try and convey that idea when you take the census of the children of Israel for their head count, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to yahweh. When you count their heads, that there may be no plague among them, when you take the head count, This is why this is what everyone among those who are in the head count shall give Half a shekel.

And so forth, but it's the lord's head kept. You see a sentence? It's a dangerous thing because it can give the illusion that we belong to the king or in our case the government or the nation or the church or even ourselves. Whoever it is that tells us You know, when Caesar augustus says everyone in Rome, has to be a part of a census than everyone goes to their hometown.

And they bought because he sees her You know, simon peter could not declare a census. And yet there's a danger, isn't there and thinking that you belong to Caesar? The just because he is the one who through whom the lord is giving military stability and the ability to do business and in fact, he's facilitated doing business by stamping, his image on coins.

And, And use causing those to be used for. For transactions that you belong to Caesar. But the lord jesus in his wisdom, doesn't he? When someone says should we pay taxes to caesar and they're trying to get him in trouble, either with the, you know, jewish zealots or Order loving texts taxation, requiring romans sure.

We pay taxes to Caesar. He says, bring me a coin. He says, who's images? This As Caesar's image he says give to Caesar what is Caesars, but give to god, what is gods? And the the idea is not that there's some kind of bifurcation there. That a little bit belongs to Caesar and everything belong.

Everything else belongs to gods to god. He's saying, Caesar himself belongs to god. Caesar was made in god's image. And you're made in god's image, too. If god uses caesar, To give you order and economy and you know, the protection of the kingdom. Fine. But don't you dare think that Caesar is the one who's protecting you or that, Caesar is the one who's providing for you or is that you belong to Caesar, you belong to god, who made caesar, and you, and every other man woman and child in his own image.

And whatever protection god gives you through Caesar, you get from god and whatever, provision god gives you from season through. Caesar you get from god. And there's a similar idea here with this text, isn't there? Lest we think we belong to ourselves? You see, sentences are usually taken. In that in that time it was especially taken for determining what the military strength was.

But the military strength of israel was not 600 and some thousand men over 20, which you actually have the number of the census at the beginning of the number of numbers. And then god's miraculous mercy to this wicked generation who's parents fell in the wilderness at the end of the book of numbers, it's almost an exact same number.

And so, they're being fruitful and multiplying even in the desert. But the military strength of the nation of Israel was not 600. Some odd thousand. The military strength of the nation of israel was the holy arm of the living god

The other reason that a census is, Would often be taken, would be to find out. You know, what the tax assessment could be. Um that's the more common one in our day, i think. Uh, now, you know, there's all kinds of crazy work reasons for taking a census and a lot more than counting heads that takes place and all kinds of Nonsense.

Wickedness, not just nonsense. Both The other reason for taking a sentence was to figure out how much you could raise, if you attack them all, a half a chuckle ahead. But the lord was not trying to figure out if he could raise, you know, some 325 thousand shekels shekelim for the tabernacle service.

Because the wealth of the nation of israel was not found. In the number of people and the amount that you can tax them. The cattle on a thousand hills belongs to god. He has not needy of bold meat for sacrifice. And he's not needy of silver. In chuckles or garage?

The census is a dangerous thing because it can give the illusion That we belong to our nation or our country, or our church. There's head counting in churches, isn't there? Oh, how many people is your church up to?

Is not the strength of the church. The lord, oh, we got so many wealthy or gifted. People. What's your budget now? Well. The riches of his glory in christ jesus. According to which he supplies all our needs. Uh, our budgets infinity, who's just put that on the statistical reports, we send it to send it.

Number. Uh, An innumerable multitude and glory and some other odd physically present ones on earth. Budget infinity. That's the statistical report of israel. But there's a danger. In finding our assurance, our hope. Our safety, whether it's protection, Or our. Ability for what we would love to do under the instruction even of the lord.

In ourselves as Protection or ourselves as provision. But the protection that the lord gives us. Is himself. And the first protection that we need is actually from himself. Did you get that in in the passage? How he talked about the half shekel, not as attacks, but as an offering and then he stepped it up from an offering to an atonement.

Indeed. Uh, when we are numbering ourselves and there's that danger, we need atonement, don't we? Israel needed atonement in second Samuel, 24. Remember god was angry with israel. It wasn't angry with david at first, he was angry with israel. And so he provoked god and yes, he find out in the chronicles parallel.

That. The god provoked david and you find out in the chronicles parallel that god was not the one who tempted david. Satan is the author of evil. He was all too happy to tempt david to take a census. Satan intended for evil and he accomplished evil god intended good and he accomplished good.

Just like We've seen so many times and so many places in scripture, but when he was angry with israel and he what did he do? He prevented david to take a census. And, you know, it's bad. You know, it's bad when job becomes the voice of reason and biblical fidelity.

And he says you know may the lord multiply his people even more, but while you're going to go do something so wicked and stupid as numbering them so that the wrath of god falls upon us. And there are bible commentators who will read second Samuel 24 and they'll get themselves lost in the weeds and say aha the reason it was so bad was because they didn't take the half shekel tax.

But that's not the atonement. That was needed. There, was it? The atonement that was needed, there was to burnt offering on the threshing floor of our wuna, which ends up being the the temple mount of solomon. Which is not entirely identical to the temple location of parrot. And may actually be more.

Close to calvary. But whether whatever the geography of that hill was, is the same hill. Which incidentally was known in the time of abraham as Mount Moria. Upon what she was going to sacrifice Isaac. And his son said, Where's the ram for the burnt offering? Where's the land for the burn offer?

Here's the fire, here's the knife. Where's the? Where's the sacrifice? The abraham says, The lord will provide. The sacrifice. And the mountain of yahweh. It will be provided. And got stops him. From slaying his son. And then he looks up and there's a ram and a thicket. And there's a burn offering.

The lord. Is the provider. That's the point. In the first thing that we need is provision. Of atonement. We need a blemishless substitute. Who has like nature to ourselves. And like value unto, the living god himself, who is as great as the glory of god against which we have sinned, We need got the sun.

To add to himself a human nature. So that still as a divine person but with a fully human nature, He might pay for our sins shed, his blood suffer god's wrath. The half shackle didn't atone for israel. It was given as a token of atonement, wasn't it? But if bulls and goats can't put away sins, Little pieces of silver can't put them away either.

You see the first? One from whom, we need to protection as the lord. When he protection from his holiness, we need protection from his wrath. We need protection, for what we rightly deserve. From god. The census requires a ransom, it may induce a plague. Verse 12, it requires an offering verse 13.

Again, the word offering in verse 14, Making atonement verse 15. The silver is called atonement silver in verse 16. To make atonement for ourselves and diverse. 16. Here's the lord who owns us, he is the lord who protects us. We've covered that already. Here's the lord who provides for us.

We have covered that already. And then the last place he gives us worship to drive this home. All believers have. The same resources for protection. And provision. Which is to say, They have the lord himself, you know, it's interesting. The inverse 15 when he says, the porch shall not give less than half a circle.

Now, that's the one that the church administrators. Are enforcing their? What about the rich? What about a rich guy here? You know, he's like solomon silver is like stone stem in the day. Silver came like stolen in the day of solomon, you remember? Yeah. All those ministers out there praying that a professional sabbath breaker will join their church.

Uh, so that they can tie their nfl salary.

What if, what if the rich guy wanted to give more than the half shekel? Verse 15 says, absolutely not. You know, let that rich guy be tempted to think. That he had a greater part in the tabernacle service. Than his poor neighbor. Which is why the the poor man couldn't give less than half a shekel.

You're going to require so little of that, man, that he will think. That he had less of apart than his rich neighbor. No. The lord. Has given. Uh, both the rich and the poor, the same protection, which is christ. The same provision, which is christ. And in this particular expression, That pointed to him.

They had to give the same Let the rich know that their true safety and wealth is the lord not their riches. So there will not be puffed up or trust in them. And put away the covetousness of their stinginess in which, because they trust in their money, they want more of it.

And let the poor man know that his true safety and wealth is in the lord. So that his poverty will not discourage him or diminish, his dignity. Or lead to anxiety. He will not fall into what he has taught to pray. Don't give me poverty. Lest i steal, lest my covetousness.

Uh, lead me into cutting corners and taking, what isn't mine?

Well, believers have the same ultimate strength and the same ultimate wealth, the lord himself. I mean, what does it matter? Comparatively, speaking of the difference in our bank accounts. Elon Musk has a pittance. Compared to the riches of the glory of god that are in christ jesus. And that is what you are being supplied by Yes, it may come through a paycheck.

It may come through. Your freelance work it make it may come through, whatever, other appropriate means. Instrumental means god is using But it is coming from the riches of god's glory in christ jesus. Who supplies all your needs? And so, tesla stock could multiply by 100 tomorrow. It won't.

And you would still outwealth Elon Musk. To the point where whatever he has and his bank account is insignificantly higher than whatever you have in yours. By comparison.

So, believers have the same strength and the same wealth. You know, the entire US military. Cannot defend your life. So, well, as the providence of god will defend your life. Until the moment you have walked in the last of the good works that had been prepared before you prepared for you.

Beforehand. That is the hand of the living god, and you've all read Um, Things like, Oh, i've lost her name now. The, the dutch corrie tin. Boom. And, and other accounts, you know, where The man would have the gun to their head, and Pull the trigger. Unable to pull the trigger physically.

I get all the i get these missionary accounts. Uh, mixed up. In one case is unable to pull the trigger. Physically, in other case, he pulled in the gun jammed and he grabbed another gun, and he pulled the gun jammed, And he threw the gun down and disgust and left.

Or they pulled the trigger or they send you to glory. And that was when you were going to go to glory, and you were honoring, the lord in the way that you died. So there are to give the same amount because they're equally invested and have equal potential. And they're usefulness to god.

He sets it low enough by the way that you can find two portions and efficient's mouth. Because there was going to be another occasion on which they tried to get Jesus over taxes. And this time, it was the temple tax. Matthew 11. Said, why doesn't your master pay the temple tax?

And Jesus gives Peter a theology lesson about how Their children and not slaves, and Part of the implication is that. Um, This was not designed to be a regular tax. It was only in times of census. But he says, in order not to give offense. You know. Go catch a fish, whatever you find in its mouth.

Give to them. Well, it happens to be. A coin that is worth. Two drachmas. That is the equivalent of the shackle for this one. Doesn't matter. I think it was called, doesn't matter. But you can find the amount for two men in the mouth of one fish. He sets it low enough that the poor man.

Can afford it. Ultimately, all of our giving a subordinate to Christ's having given himself. Once for all, and what we give is an outworking of Christ's character in us and what we have comes from, Christ's providence, over the entire world, You see the tabernacle could have been abused by their sin, leading them to think that they were the ones providing for God's worship.

But the Lord mercifully gives this particular way of funding the ongoing service of the tabernacle. To drive home that he himself is the provider. Dear Christian, you are the lords. You have been bought with a price. You are not your own. And yes, it means things like you may not use your body for filthy things.

You have been purchased. But it also means that you have your hope and of safety in him alone. And you have your hope for provision in him alone. And as in his providence, you do wise things. To keep yourself safe, it's not wrong to do those things. But it is wrong to trust in doing those things.

Trust in the God. Who has given you. The ability to protect life. And trust in the God. Who has? Provided for you. He has provided for us, ultimately. In Jesus. And yes, if you were If you were a wife or you were a child, you wouldn't be in that 20 years old men and 20 year old men end upward but the lesson would be the same.

You would just be reminded that God had provided you that particular husband or that particular father. And that he who had provided those things for you. In an earthly sense. Was the one who provided for you eternally. And spiritually. And effectually. In the Lord, Jesus Christ to us to come then.

And who has come now? Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this passage. We thank you for its teaching. We confess before you that the The issues that you are addressing in. Your, your people's ongoing sinfulness? Uh, then are things that we face now. We pray that you'd not permit any of us to be proud.

Um, Or to be anxious. But that you would make us to know that you have provided for us all things. That we have been purchased by you, that we are protected by you and that we are provided for By you. Grant us to live vigorously than In light of the assurance of these things.

That we may spend and be spent. As those. Who belong to you through Christ. And his name. We ask it. Amen.