

Parashat Ki Tisa

פרשת כי תשא

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Have you relied upon your own strength or upon the Lord who strengthens you?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 30:11-34:35

הפטרה: 1 Kings 18:1-39

הברית: Mark 13-14

החדשה

10 *Triennial cycle: Shemot / Exodus 30:11-31:17*

In this week's reading, taking a census of the sons of Yisrael is considered a sin according to the Torah that leads to a plague that would break out amongst the people. *Shemot / Exodus 30:12* 'When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. (NASB) As we study these scriptures here and elsewhere (i.e. see David's sin in *2 Samuel 24* and *1 Chronicles 21*) it seems that the taking of the census was the sin. King David overruled Joab's wise counsel (*1 Chronicles 21:3-4*) and brought guilt upon Yisrael for numbering the people. As a result, the Lord killed 70,000 people. Why would there be a plague for numbering the people and why would each man be required to give money to make atonement for sin? Can money make atonement for sin?

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שמות 30:11-16

11 זָרַשׁ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי
12 יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כַּפָּר נַפְשׁוֹ לַיהוָה בַּפְּקֹד
13 אַתֶּם וְלֹא־יְהוּיָה בָהֶם נִגָה בַּפְּקֹד אַתֶּם: זֶה וַיִּתְּנוּ כָל־
הָעֵבֶר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מַחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ
עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מַחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה:
14 כָּל הָעֵבֶר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מִכֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שֵׁנִיָּה וּמַעְלָה יִתֵּן
15 תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה: הָעֹשִׂיר לֹא־יִרְבֶּה וְהַדָּל לֹא יִמְעַט
מִמַּחְצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל לָתֵת אֶת־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־
16 נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם: וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־כֶּסֶף הַכֹּפָרִים מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְנָתַתָּ אֹתוֹ עַל־עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהָיָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְזִכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עַל־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם:

Shemot / Exodus 30:11-16

30:11 The Lord also spoke to Moses, saying, 30:12 'When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. 30:13 'This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the Lord. 30:14 'Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the Lord. 30:15 'The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution to the Lord to make atonement for yourselves. 30:16 'You shall take the atonement money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves.' (NASB)

To begin our study, let's look at the Hebrew word "negef" which means "blow, striking (as judgment)." In our verse (30:12), negef means a "fatal blow or plague" similarly to its use to describe the death of the first born in *Shemot / Exodus 12:13*. The word "negef" is translated as "striking against which the foot strikes and so stumbles" in *Yeshayah / Isaiah 8:14*. These verses show the Hebrew word "negef" meaning "blow or striking" may be translated as "plague or stumbling over" having more than one meaning that depends upon the context of the verse. *Yeshayah / Isaiah 8:14* (shown below) "negef" is translated in the NASB as "to stumble over," illustrating a parallel between one stumbling and being plagued with disease.

14 מְעַרְצְכֶם; וְהָיָה לְמִקְדָּשׁ וּלְאֲבָן נֶגֶף וּלְצוּר מִכְשׁוֹל
 לְשָׁנֵי בְתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְּחָה וּלְמוֹקֵשׁ לְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם;

Yeshayah / Isaiah 8:14
 8:14 'Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (NASB)

In King David's case, God gave him a choice (see *2 Samuel 24* and *1 Chronicles 21*), three years of famine, three months of military reversals, or three days of plague. The Lord could have judged David and Yisrael by a variety of ways; the use of this Hebrew word "negef" in these verses indicates that the translation is based upon the use of the word and context of the verse.

The translation of this word as "to stumble over" is very significant for our understanding the problem (sin) of taking a census (numbering) the people. In addition to this, the monetary requirement for atonement after the numbering suggests that there is a connection with financial stewardship and God. *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18* says 'But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (NASB) Was this a practical way in *Shemot / Exodus 30:12* for the people to realize where their financial wealth comes from by drawing a parallel with the importance of making atonement before God? *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18* says that God gives us power to make wealth, to produce wealth; therefore, giving credit to the Lord is one of the principles of financial stewardship as believers. Scripture also says that "The Lord sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts" according to *1 Samuel 2:7*.

The question before us is why King David decided to go against Jaob's wise counsel to trust in the Lord and not number the people. I believe David was worried about his Military strength to defeat the enemy. David appears to be relying upon his own "military strength" rather than to trust in the Lord God.

Military Strength

Noun

1. Capability in terms of personnel and materiel that affect the capacity to fight a war; "we faced an army of great strength"; "politicians have neglected our military posture"

(synonym) military capability, strength, military posture, posture

(hypernym) capability, capableness

(hyponym) sea power

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(classification) military, armed forces, armed services, military machine, war machine

The phrase “military strength” means the “*capability in terms of personnel and material that affect ones capacity to fight a war.*” What do you think David was doing when he numbered the people? Was he relying upon the Lord or the strength of his army? Did he trust in his own ability to win the war? Did he take pride in himself on the strength of the army? Does David, in this instance, show a weakness of faith in God and His covenant?

Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18 tells us that God gives us power to make wealth and in doing so His covenant is confirmed in us. This is done in such a way that God; He is the one who is confirming the covenant in us. Correspondingly, the temptation today and then was that once the people had received God’s blessing (confirmation of the covenant) they would forget the Source of their blessing and take glory for themselves. The human tendency is to blame other people or circumstances on bad things happening and then to turn around and take full credit for the good things that happen. Moshe after presenting a picture of peace and prosperity warned the people of pride over their prosperity (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:14*). By focusing upon one self, pride forgets that God is the source of who we are and what we have. Yisrael should not forget the One who freed them from slavery in Mitzrayim (Egypt), led them through the desert, provided for their needs, and would bring them into the Promised Land. When that day came, they would need to resist the temptation to pat themselves on the back (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:17*). Have you forgotten who you are, where you have come from, and how God has helped you through to where you are today?

We must acknowledge the Lord as the real provider and the One who controls all things, including our financial situations. We should also reject pride and focus instead on a response of praise that is coupled with obedience in our lives. As wage earners we face the temptation today to give ourselves credit for any success we have. We would do well to heed God’s words in *Yeremiyahu / Jeremiah* that says *9:23 Thus says the Lord, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 9:24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord. (NASB)*

In conclusion, the scripture verses for this week say *Shemot / Exodus 30:12 ‘When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. (NASB)* reminding us to not focus upon ourselves or our own strength but to focus upon the Source of who we are and what we have is God. In addition to this, the Scripture in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18* suggests to us that God is the one who is confirming the covenant that He has made with us. Praise the Lord; this is exactly what He has done in Yeshua the Messiah as described in *John 3:16*: As we study the Scriptures and worship God, we are both recognizing what He has done in the past and what He will do in the future. God’s word reveals to us, and assures us that He is in control and that He sent his Messiah Yeshua to die for our

Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18

8:18 ‘But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (NASB)

120 sins. The Scripture for this week shows us that God is faithful and true, holy, and
a loving God, He will measure out justice in a holy and just way. According to
the Scriptures, God's wrath is directed towards those who oppose Him and who
oppose His people. The question before us is "am I a member of His people as
the Scriptures say?" If you cannot honestly say that you know without a doubt
that you are a child of God, say the following prayer with me.

125 Heavenly Father,

130 I surrender my life to you today. I am tired of the upward and downward spiral of
the success and failures of works that I do for you. I know that I am unable to
earn merit towards my salvation. Today I trust in Yeshua, I place my faith in
Him, in His finished work, and in Your mercy Lord. Please have mercy on my
soul, help me to rest my life and all that I am upon the rock of my salvation,
Yeshua the Messiah. Send your Holy Spirit Lord, create in me a new heart, and
135 restore to me the joy of Your salvation. Thank you Lord for all that you have
done for me. I give you all of the honor, the glory, and the praise. In Yeshua's
name I pray.

Amen.

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KATA IOANNHN 3:16

15 άνθρωπου . ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη
16 ζωὴν αἰώνιον . οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον ὥστε τὸν
υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν
17 μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον . οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς

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Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

John 3:16

3:16 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (NASB)