

ParShaT *ChuQaS* One Pager Series

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[Background: We have been bringing controversies between Rashi and either academic scholars or other Jewish commentaries. Today we examine a Ramban-Rashi-Ibn Ezra controversy]

Rashi #1 Biblical Text:

Verse	Verse Text	What happened there	Rashi / Rasiyomi	Ibn Ezra	Ramban
Ex16-01	The <u>entire</u> congregation of Israel came	Complain on lack of food	<u>Entire</u> = united, despite complaints	No statement	<u>Entire</u> = united, in their complaints
Ex17-01	The <u>entire</u> congregation of Israel journeyed	Complain on lack of water	<u>Entire</u> = united, despite complaints	No statement	<u>Entire</u> = united, in their complaints
Nu17-06	The <u>entire</u> congregation of Israel complained	Complaint: Moses caused Korax's death	<u>Entire</u> = united, despite complaints	No statement	<u>Entire</u> = united, in their complaints
Nu20-01	The Israelites came, <u>the entire congregation</u>	After spies... Miriam dies	The entire congregation =no one was missing --- all deaths from spies accomplished	The entire congregation =no one was missing --- all deaths from spies accomplished	<u>Entire</u> = united, in their complaints
Nu20-22	The Israelites came, <u>the entire congregation</u>	After the incident of the rock...Moses calls them the rebellors ...after attempt to pass through EdomAaron dies	The entire congregation =no one was missing --- despite Moses calling them rebellors	The entire congregation =no one was missing despite dialogue with Edom	<u>Entire</u> = united, in their mourning of Aaron

Rashi – Rashiyomi: Rashi following the Midrash Rabbah deals with the biblical style that certain biblical paragraphs begin with a statement of the form *the entire congregation came or journeyed*, However, a careful examination of the table of verses shows two distinct substyles

*(A) The entire congregation of Israel came (or journeyed)

*(B) The Israelites came, the entire congregation

Rashi following the Midrash explains:

*Style B emphasizes that no one was missing (So Nu20-01 Rashi explains, the deaths from the sin of the spies were already completed so no one else died; Rashi does not explain Nu20-22 but it seems reasonable that after Moses had called the Jews the rebellious that nevertheless no one died (Moses was wrong)

*Style A is not explained by Rashi. But since the emphasis there is lighter – the entire congregation of Israelites came – the implication seems to more modestly be that *despite* their complaints the Jews came altogether with no subgroup returning to Egypt

Ramban: Ramban apparently overlooked that there were two styles and treated the group of verses as a whole. However, he is to be credited with pointing out that the issue is why this biblical style is used so often. Ramban explains

*All verses except Nu22-20 as indicating that the entire congregation complained

*Nu22-20 is explained as indicating that the entire congregation mourned Aaron

Ramban also notes that the Midrash Rabbah only comments on Nu22-20. This supports his treating this verse separately

Ibn Ezra: Ibn Ezra, like Rashi, does not explain style A, and also like Rashi cites the Midrash Rabbah – the deaths from the spies had been completed and hence the entire congregation came with no one missing. However, Ibn Ezra explains Nu22-20, “no one was missing despite their encounter with Edom.” Ramban demurs: But there was no military action so this explanation is overkill.