

Truth for Today

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Important Numbers in Scripture: Number 7

Did you know that there is, possibly, an “Angel of Number”? In Daniel 8:13 we read: *“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that **certain saint** which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?”* The word for “certain saint” is palmowniy and is based on another word meaning a “certain one”. Others say “Palmowniy” is a name that means “the wonderful numberer” or “numberer of secrets”.

We know of a certainty that we have a Creator who measures. In Isaiah 40:12 we find the following question asked: *“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?”* The answer is, of course, God! However, we know that the same Creator also numbers. In Isaiah 40:26 we read: *“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.”* Furthermore, we have confirmation of this in Psalm 147:4 which states: *“He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.”*

God is the One who numbers our steps in Job 14:16: *“For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?”*

He is the Lord who numbers Time - Leviticus 23:16: *“Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.”*

Also, there is number attached to His omniscience and care found in Luke 12:7. There we read: *“But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”*

It is God who numbers the durations of kingdoms as we find in Daniel 5:26: *“This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.”*

The Number Seven.

The Hebrew word for “seven” comes from a root word meaning to be “full” or “satisfied”. It comes up time after time in Scripture where it conveys the idea of “completeness” or “wholeness”. For example:

- the seven days of creation;
- the seventh day is the Sabbath;
- after seven times seven years there was declared a year of jubilee where all slaves were freed and debts forgiven;
- the seventy sevens appointed to Israel in Daniel which cover a period of 490 prophetic years;
- the many sevens in the book of Revelation.

So we could go on. However, for the purposes of this talk, we will briefly explore the number seven linked with:

1. the structure of Scripture;
2. creation;
3. the feasts of the Lord in Leviticus; and,
4. the churches in Revelation.

Seven Linked with the Structure of the Scriptures.

Matthew 1, verses 1-16 concerns the names of ancestors of Jesus Christ. It is an example of how many passages of scripture have the number seven stamped upon them. The following observations may be made about this passage in its original language:

- The number of words is divisible by seven as is:
- The number of letters,
- The number of vowels,
- The number of consonants,
- The number of names,
- The number of male names, and
- The number of generations.

In a similar way, the words of the Ten Commandments are stamped with the number seven.

Also, if you are someone who is interested in codes, then look at the book of Leviticus where, I'm given to understand, the name Yahweh – YHWH - is found in the text spelled by every seventh letter of the Hebrew original.

The number seven is also found in the gamatria of the Bible. This refers to the way that Greek and Hebrew letters have numerical equivalents. So, if we add the numerical total of a word, we would have a number. Such gamatria are found in passages such as that of creation in Genesis 1. It is also indicated by the number of the name of the antichrist being 666 in Revelation.

These are but three ways in which numbers are to be found in the structure of the Scriptures.

The Number Seven Linked With Creation.

In the first verse of Genesis chapter 1, we find the original creation given in a pattern of seven reminding us that fullness is impressed upon it. But then we ask the question:

“Why did God take six days to create this present earth and heavens when He could have created at will – and instantly?”

I suggest there are several reasons for this. Firstly, creation reveals **God's power and divinity** - Romans 1:20: “*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...*” Clearly, the presence of the universe requires a cause of some kind. The immensity of the universe requires this cause to have included great power. If this cause is God, then He is indeed almighty – the all-powerful One.

Again, the universe has beauty and order that are the result of design. It therefore, reveals that there must be a designer with remarkable intelligence. God is omniscient. He knows all things. He is the perfect Designer.

Then, as we look at ourselves as human beings, we can see, in a measure, this intelligence of God. But not only that, we see in ourselves emotions, and God expresses similar emotions in the Scriptures for He is love as well as light. We also have a sense of morality. Surely this reflects a God who is righteous. Furthermore, we have life and know it to be produced from previous life. God is the self-existent One who has life in Himself. He is its origin.

Secondly, we know that **God is a God of order**. Many Christians believe that the seven days of creation typically express the seven stages of God's ways with mankind from the Fall. They include:

1. *Man under Conscience* from the fall of Adam to Noah after the flood;
2. *Man under Human Government* from Noah to Abraham, still applying to some extent today;
3. *Man under Promise* from Abraham to the Law at Sinai; still applying;
4. *Man under Law* from Sinai to the cross of Christ;
5. *Man under Grace* from the cross until the church is taken to be with Christ;
6. *Man under God's King* - the thousand year reign of Christ.
7. *Man entering into that eternal rest of God.*

The chapter also outlines **the stages involved in reconciling a sinner to God** beginning with the action of the Spirit and the revelation of God through Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6 is the ground upon which we base this as it compares the initial command of light in creation to that of the knowledge of God revealed through Christ: “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” Hence, this begins with God acting upon a heart ruined by sin in order to reveal Himself. This is day one of creation. The seventh day is one of rest. The Christian will share in this rest. Hebrews 4:9-11 reads: “*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his...*” Therefore, with due study, we may find further stages in a sinner's conversion typified in the other days that also relate to the seven main characters in the book of Genesis.

The Number Seven Linked with the Feasts.

The Seven Feasts in the book of Leviticus, chapter 23, have a direct parallel with the New Testament.

The first feast in the chapter is the **Passover** which celebrated the shelter from the judgement of God that fell upon Egypt as well as the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. With reference to Christians, we read in the New Testament: *"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast"* (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). It is clear that the Passover Lamb of Leviticus represented the future Lamb of God whose blood shelters us from God's judgement and is the token of our deliverance from the bondage of Satan.

The second feast is that of **Unleavened Bread** that lasted seven days. Unleavened bread speaks of purity. It was a full period of purity. The New Testament equivalent: *"Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth"* (1 Corinthians 5:7-8), represents the complete life of the Christian as one set apart to God for His possession, purposes and pleasure. It should be a life marked by purity and truth.

The third feast is that of **"Firstfruits"**. Leviticus 23:10-11 tells the children of Israel to bring a sheaf of firstfruits of the harvest to the priest to be waved before the Lord for their acceptance. The feast was to be held only in the Promised Land. The New Testament describes Christ as the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15:20). Christ is therefore the first sheaf of a harvest of resurrection and ascension. He rose from among the dead first. This is confirmed by 1 Corinthians 15:23: *"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."* When the Lord Jesus comes for those who, as believers, have died then they shall be raised and go to be with Him. Those alive at the time will have their bodies changed immediately and go to be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4). What a glorious harvest!!!

The fourth feast is that of **"Pentecost or Weeks"**. Fifty days after the sheaf of firstfruits, a new meal offering was to be made by the children of Israel to the Lord. The offering was to consist of two wave-loaves made from fine flour and baked with leaven. This links directly with the Pentecost of the New Testament that relates to the coming of the Holy Spirit to form the one church (see Acts chapter 2). Fine flour usually represents the balanced character and attributes of Christ. Leaven speaks of sin. Here we have an offering that refers to those who should be Christlike, yet still have sin in them. The two loaves speak of the church today that is made up of all true Christians. Two is the number of witness. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. So the Feast of Pentecost speaks of the birthday of the church.

The fifth feast is that of **"Trumpets"**. This links very well with the harvest of the Feast of Firstfruits where the trumpet of God is blown when the saints are resurrected. However, there is an even more significant parallel. The Feast of Trumpets primarily represents the time when Israel is called out from among the nations to return to their land. In Matthew 24:31 the Lord Jesus Himself said, *"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* Isaiah 18:3-7 speaks of God's chosen people returning to Mount Zion *"when a trumpet is blown"*. Many other Old Testament scriptures support this. The Feast is also a call to remembrance and, in that day, Israel will remember their God (Zechariah 10:9).

The Sixth Feast is **The Day of Atonement**. Atonement means "covering" and the blood of its sacrifice was to cleanse away the sins of the children of Israel in accordance with the holiness of God's throne. If the blood was not shed, then Yahweh would not have been able to dwell among His earthly people. Leviticus 16:30 says, *"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD."* The blood of the Passover Lamb protected Israel from the judgement of God. The blood of the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement cleansed their sin so they could know God's presence and have communion with Him. The blood of both sacrifices speaks of the different aspects of Christ's perfect sacrifice. Hebrews 9:28 reminds us that: *"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."* The cleansing power of His blood is effective for us today - 1 John 1:7 confirms this: *"...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

Furthermore, the Day of Atonement looks on prophetically to that day when Israel will have returned to their land. It is at that point that they will realise that the Lord Jesus was indeed their Messiah. He who came to deliver from sin was rejected by the nation in general fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 53. At that time, they will look on Him whom they pierced as predicted by Zechariah (chapter 13:6).

The seventh feast is that of **Tabernacles** (Leviticus 23:33). It is the time of the year when the children of Israel were to dwell in booths made from the boughs of trees in order to remember the time they spent in the wilderness. It was a time of rejoicing (Deuteronomy 16:14). Prophetically, the feast refers to the time when the world will come under the

literal Kingdom of God with the Lord Jesus Christ reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords. Even the Gentiles (strangers) will rejoice under that rule. It will last for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:3) before Christ hands it, in a fully cleansed state, over to God.

The Seven Churches of Revelation.

Finally, we will look briefly at the Seven Churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The churches named were churches that actually existed in the apostle John's day. They represented the conditions of the churches in the light of responsibility. These characteristics may also be applied to individual believers. However, they also give a complete prophetic history of the church up until the coming of Christ.

- **Ephesus** means "desired" and speaks of a church that quickly took its eyes off Christ and although it was marked by work, labour and patience, it had lost Christ as its chief love. It represents the early church .
- **Smyrna** means "myrrh", a substance that relates to a fragrance of blessing from the bitter taste of suffering. It represents the persecuted Church from the time of Diocletian to Constantine.
- **Pergamos** means "firm union" and it speaks of the church married to the state at the time of Constantine. The result was that love for the world replaced love for Christ. Initially, the church held fast to Christ's name; but was infiltrated by idolatry and sexual immorality.
- **Thyatira** means "incense" and represents the church ruled by idolatry and being formed into an ecclesiastical system. This was prevalent in the Dark Ages, but will run on in a less prominent form to the coming of Christ. This church was characterised by works, love, service, faith and patience; but was also sternly rebuked for tolerating teaching that led to fellowship with idolatry and sexual immorality.
- **Sardis** means "remnant" and refers to the time following the Reformation that began in the sixteenth century. The church is described by Christ as one that had a name that lived, but it was dead. Its origins were sound, but it fell quickly. In fact, few of its individual members could be commended by Christ. Nonetheless, its force weakened, it will continue until the coming of Christ.
- **Philadelphia** means "brotherly love" and speaks of the return to simplicity of gathering and to mission from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries. This church is commended by the Lord as it kept His word and did not deny His name. It also goes on in a weakened form until the coming of Christ.
- **Laodicea** means "the people's judgement". Its name suggests a form of democracy. It is a lukewarm church that denies Christ as its Head. He abhors and rejects this church. It is an egotistic church marked by material wealth. Spiritually, it is blind. It seems to represent the apostate church of the present day. It denies the authority of God's word and leaves Christ outside. Nonetheless, it will continue until the coming of Christ.

So we have seen examples of the "completeness" represented by the number seven in the Scriptures. But are we complete? Knowing these things, do we gather with fellow believers in a church that holds fast to the word of Christ and does not deny His name? Furthermore, how are our own Christian lives affected by the wonder of the Bible – the word of God? Oh, fellow Christian, may God's word so touch us that our very lives may be epistles of Christ to the glory of God the Father.

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