

Wednesday Night Bible Study
Biblical Numbers
Selected Scriptures

Opening Questions

- Do artists, authors, and architects ever do things in their work that are symbolic or have special meaning? If so what are some examples of this?
- Do you think God did this within His creation?

Objective for this lesson: To see how God in His Word and in His world has used numbers symbolically and we can learn from this.

I) One – The number of unity and the number of the nature of God

A) Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4; Zechariah 14:9; Ephesians 4:4-6

B) Realities

- 1) There cannot be two firsts
- 2) The number one stands alone
- 3) Number one in the Bible means “unity” and “uniqueness.”
- 4) “One is a lonely number.” God is independent, and we are dependent.

II) Two – the Number of Witness

A) Scripture - John 8:17; Deuteronomy 19:15

B) Realities

- 1) OT taught no one could bring an accusation except for another witness
- 2) Business meeting – second motion
- 3) There are two Testaments (OT & NT)
- 4) Jesus is the second person in the Trinity and He is the witness
 - a) Revelation 1:5
 - b) At Jesus' Resurrection there were 2 angels at the tomb
 - c) There were 2 angels at the ascension of Jesus
 - Acts 1:10-11
- 5) Revelation 11:3 – 2 witnesses
- 6) The number two can also denotes a difference.
- 7) The number two suggesting division and separation is seen in the following examples:
 - two birds, one slain and one set free; two goats, one slain, the other one set free; two masters; two covenants (Old Testament and New Testament); law and grace; Christ and the anti-Christ; the natural and the spiritual; male and female; the righteous and the wicked as in Psalm 1 Right and Left; Good and Bad; False and True
- 8) Two is the minimum number of people to be sent on an important assignment.
 - a) Two angels were sent to Sodom - Genesis 19:1
 - b) Two spies were sent to Jericho - Joshua 2:1
 - c) Jesus sent His disciples out two by two - Mark 6:7

III) Three – The Divine Number or Divine Perfection

A) Scripture - Revelation 1:8; Matthew 28:19; Isaiah 6:3

B) Realities

- 1) The fabric of reality itself reflects this
 - Triangle – simplest form; Man – Body, Soul, and Spirit - 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Everything is time space and matter; Time is past, present, and future; Space is height, width, and depth; Matter is solid, liquid, and gas; Musical Chords
- 2) Completeness and perfection are shown in threes
 - a) Jesus rose from the dead on the third day
 - b) Jonah was in the belly of the well for three days
 - c) Three days were enough to prove that Jesus had conquered sin, death, and the grave
 - d) Peter, James and John
 - e) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- 3) Three is the minimum number necessary to establish a pattern.
 - a) Samuel heard his name called three times before Eli confirmed that it was God calling Samuel - I Sam. 3:8
 - b) When something happens three times, it gains emphasis such as when Peter denied Jesus three times.
 - c) Three times Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but three times the chief priests and rulers rejected Him.
- 4) Three speaks of totality, sufficiency and the complete work of God.
 - a) Faith, hope and love
 - b) Grace, peace, and mercy

IV) Four – The Earth Number

A) Scripture - Isaiah 11:12; Revelation 7:1;

B) Reality

- 1) The World reflects the number 4
 - 4 Seasons; 4 Elements - Earth, air, fire, and water; 4 Directions - north, south, east, and west; 4 Seasons - fall, winter, spring, and summer; 4 Phases of the moon - first, half, full, and last (new); 4 Divisions of the day - morning, noon, evening, and night; The Bible also has ten references to the four winds.
- 2) Earth is the place where we have our testing
 - Noah's rained forty days; Moses Sinai; Jonah – yet 40 days and Nineveh will fall; Jesus tempted 40 days
- 3) The Gospels that are to preached to all the earth are 4 in number - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- 4) Four in the scriptures portrays universal observation, worship and adoration as in Revelation 4:6-8.

V) Five a part of a whole

- A) The number five is seen throughout the Bible, but almost every time it is used, it is merely a part of a whole. It is so small of a bigger piece that it could be considered only a “handful” as the five fingers on one’s hand.
- 1) Five fingers – we have ten
 - 2) The first five books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch comprise only a portion of the 66 books of the entire Bible.
 - 3) Even though five represents a small sum which appears to be insignificant within the larger scheme, it does individually possess high value.
 - When Abraham pleads to God to spare the people of Sodom, he begins by pleading for five fewer righteous people as to suggest that the loss of five would be insignificant in its consequence (Genesis 18:22-23).
 - 4) Sometimes in the Bible, the number five is half of the perfect number ten as in the parable of the ten virgins.
 - a) Five of them were foolish, and five were wise (Matthew 25:2).
 - b) The Ten Commandments are distinctly divided into two pairs of fives.
 - The first five commandments deal with our relationship with God; the last five deal with our relationship with others. Only Commandment #5 is different in that it is the only one with a promise associated with it.
- B) At times five indicates just recompense or bounteous reward.
- 1) Thieves must repay five times the value of the oxen they steal (Exodus 22:1).
 - 2) Benjamin was honored by Joseph with five times more food than his brothers (Genesis 43:34) and five sets of clothes (Genesis 45:22).
 - 3) Jesus took five loaves to feed five thousand. It was abundance for the multitude.
- C) The number five represents God’s grace seen throughout the structure of the tabernacle in the wilderness.
- 1) The pillars were five cubits apart and five cubits high. The brazen altar was five cubits by five cubits. There were five pillars at the end of the Holy Place. The sides of the tabernacle were reinforced by five bars on each side (Exodus 26:26-27).
 - 2) The inner covering of the tabernacle was composed of five curtains which were attached to five other curtains for a total of ten curtains (Exodus 26:3).
 - 3) There were five original priests: Aaron and his four sons (Exodus 28:1)
- D) Five is a number of preparation as the first five books of the Bible prepare you for Israel’s story throughout the rest of the Bible.
- 1) The five wise virgins were prepared.
 - 2) David, in preparing for Goliath, took up five smooth stones.
 - 3) To prepare and perfect the saints for ministry, some are called to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers (Ephesians 4:11-12).

VI) Six – The Number of Man

A) It reminds us of all man is

- 1) Incomplete
 - Man was created on the sixth day one day away from a complete week
- 2) Life and death
 - The sixth commandment calls our attention to the value of the human life that was created on the sixth day. It says, “Do not kill” (Exodus 20:13).
- 3) Our vulnerability
 - The serpent was also created on the sixth day (Genesis 1:24). This lets us know that Satan is capable of tricking us if given the chance.
- 4) We are called to follow God's pattern
 - Six days mark the completion of creation as God’s work. Therefore, six days were appointed for man’s labor.

B) It is a number of balance and harmony

- 1) Jesus’ first miracle changed six pots of water to wine for the wedding feast (John 2:6).
- 2) A wedding represents love as does the number six. Is that the reason June (the sixth month) is favored for weddings?
- 3) Could it be the reason Boaz gave Ruth six measures of barley symbolic of his love and protection (Ruth 3:15)?

VII) Seven – It denotes Spiritual perfection, fulness, and completeness

A) Completeness and perfection

- 1) Seven comes from a Hebrew word meaning - “to be full,” “to be satisfied,” and “to have enough.
- 2) In the Bible, numbers have spiritual significance. Of all the numbers, seven is the most familiar because it appears about 600 times.
- 3) The days of the week
- 4) Musical Scale
- 5) Revelation itself
 - a) Seven churches
 - b) Seven seals
 - c) Seven trumpets
 - d) Seven bowls

B) It is Symbolic as Completeness and Fulness – Joshua 6:1-20

- a) Seven priests
- b) Seven trumpets
- c) Seventh day you shall march around the city seven times

VIII) Eight – Symbolic of Resurrection and New Beginning**A) Newness**

- 1) Circumcision happened on the eighth day – establishment of covenant
- 2) Noah's ark held eight people who emerged to a new beginning.
- 3) God started a new time with David as King – David was the eighth son of Jesse
 - Solomon was the eighth son of David.

B) Resurrection

- Christ rose up on the first day of the week – also the eighth day

IX) Nine – Judgment and Finality**A) last of the digits****B) Jesus on the cross cried out at the ninth hour - (Mark 15:34)****C) A cycle of finality is indicated in the nine generations from Adam to Noah. Then the flood was the judgment.****D) Abraham's generation was the ninth from Noah.****E) According to Galatians 5:22-23, there are nine fruit of the Spirit.****F) According to I Corinthians 12:8-10, there are nine gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues.****X) Ten - the number of perfection or completion of God's "divine order."****A) Ten fingers and toes****B) Ten commandments****C) Our tithe is ten percent – our responsibility to God****D) Ten is a complete set of numbers****XI) Eleven - signifies a state not yet full, disorder, imperfection and incompleteness****A) The eleven apostles cast lots so that there would be twelve – they were incomplete****B) Eleven also represents disorder. The parable about the workers coming to work in the eleventh hour is in contrast to what we believe to be right in order and arrangement (Matthew 20:6,9).****C) The journey of the Israelites through the wilderness should have taken only eleven days (Deuteronomy 1:2).**

- It turned into a 40 years journey because of disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration.

XII) Twelve - Governmental perfection, completeness, or rule

A) In our world

- 1) 12 months in a year
- 2) 12 signs of the Zodiac
- 3) 12 people on a jury
- 4) 12 grades in school

B) Biblically

- 1) 12 tribes of Israel
- 2) 12 apostles
- 3) 12 disciples
- 4) 12 pillars on Mt. Sinai where the law was given
- 5) 12 spies to spy out the land (Deuteronomy 1:23).
- 6) 12 stones were set as a memorial after crossing the Jordan River (Joshua 4:3).
- 7) 12 stones were attached to the breastplate of the priestly garments bearing the names of the twelve tribes (Exodus 39:8-14).

C) The Book of Revelation

- 1) 12 gates to the city
- 2) 12 angels as gatekeepers
- 3) 12 tribes written on the gates.
- 4) 12 pearls and the wall
- 5) 12 foundations which bear the names of the 12 apostles.
- 6) The measurements of the New Jerusalem also involve the number 12 in its measurements.
- 7) The tree of life will bear 12 kinds of fruit for the 12 months for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2).