

Introduction It doesn't take long reading the Bible to spot certain numbers crop up more frequently than others. Some numbers are literal, some are approximate 1 Kings 19:18, while others carry symbolic significance. There have been those who have tried to stretch the meaning of some numbers to search for a 'divine special code'. It is very possible to read too much into numbers, and the topic has attracted some crackpots, but it is also obvious that God wants us to learn from His choice of certain numbers. The very repetition of certain numbers with significance across the whole Bible speaks of a single author. God designed and created the universe based on mathematical laws and numbers, principles that continue to govern the entire creation. God likes numbers.



No. 1

The Unity
of God.
God is One

The number 1 is only divisible by itself. Its meaning in the Bible centres on the unity and primacy of God in the form of the trinity, being one Deuteronomy 6:4. The concept of the first born crops up many times in scripture, Colossians 1:15-18. In the Greek alphabet the number one is represented by the letter Alpha, the first letter in the alphabet, Revelation 1:8. Jesus is the first one of many to be resurrected to eternal life. The apostle Peter tells us bluntly that it is through the one name of Jesus Christ, and him alone, that a person can receive salvation and live forever Acts 4:10-12, There is only one way to be saved. John 14:6. The number has significance for us in the Church, Ephesians 2:14, 4:4-6. All believers are one in Christ. The number 1 appears 1,697 times in the Bible. A modern heresy is 'Oneism' the idea rooted in pagan thinking, that everything is one, including us and God.

Questions

What numbers stand out for you? Which have meaning to you?

No. 2

Unity and
Division

Two teaches us the opposite of 'Oneism' that everything isn't one, there is a separation between God and Creation, Good and Evil, the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew 25:32-33. The number stood for division and choice Matthew 7:31. However there is the opposite meaning too. Two can stand for uniting. The obvious example is marriage Ephesians 5:31. Jesus also sent out his disciples in twos. Mark 6:7. In the O.T. two witnesses were needed for a court to accept the testimony in a case. Matthew 18:19 tells us the prayerful power of two or more.

Three is the number of completeness, such as found in the Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14. We find in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 talk of Man being three in one too, thus reflecting the image of God. 1 John 5:6-8 talks about the confirmation of Jesus by three divine witnesses.

No. 3

Complete-
ness

No. 4

Order
Stability

Four is a fundamental number in the natural world, from four seasons, four directions (Revelation 7:1), to four limbs, and much more. It is the number of order and the Earth. Construction for stability usually has four walls. The early symbol for the number in this part of the ancient world was a +. In the Bible we have four gospels, to tell the whole story of Jesus.

Five is generally considered the number of God's grace towards us. The Torah has five books. This tabernacle, whose design was given directly by God, contained five curtains, bars, pillars and sockets (Exodus 26:3, 26-27, 37) and an altar made of wood that was five cubits long and five cubits wide (Exodus 27:1). There were five types of offerings made. The height of the court within the tabernacle was five cubits (Exodus 27:18). Jesus had five wounds on his body

No. 5

Grace
Divine
appointment

No. 6

Man
Weakness

Six is the number of man, we were created on the sixth day Genesis 1:26+. We were told to work and labour for six days. Exodus 20:10. A Hebrew slave had to serve 6 years before he could be released in the 7th year. Six years were appointed for the land to be sown and then harvested. Famously in Revelation 13:18, 666 is the number of the Beast, always falling short of 7, God's number.

Seven is seen as perfection, and completeness. Seven first is seen in creation Genesis 2:2, as Creation is complete. God gave the Jews 7 feasts to remember. When God's people entered the promised land the number seven was key. Joshua 6:4-5, 8, 15. In the book of Revelation the number 7 is everywhere. When Jesus asked about forgiveness his answer was 70 x 7. According to Jewish tradition, the creation of Adam occurred on the first day of Tishri 1 or the Feast of Trumpets. Our complete week is made up of seven days.

No. 7

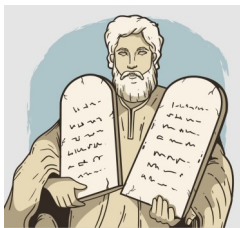
Perfection
Complete
Finished

No. 8

New
Beginnings

Eight is the number of new beginnings, a fresh start. In common with all Jews Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day Genesis 17:12, Luke 2:21, he also rose on the eighth day. After the flood at the time of Noah, God made a fresh start with mankind 1 Peter 3:20. After the time of the Judges, when the people wanted to have a King, David was selected by God. David was the eighth son.

Ten is the number of Human Responsibility and order. The Egyptians who enslaved the Jews were subjected to ten plagues. When the people were given their freedom they were given 10 Commandments Exodus 20. The people were asked to give 10% of their food to the Levites Leviticus 27:30, showing they had responsibility to God and others. Jesus told the Parable of the 10 Virgins, (Matthew 25) five were responsible, five were not.



No. 10

Order
Responsibility

No. 12

Authority
Governance

Twelve is the number of governance. The nation of Israel were split into the twelve tribes, and each tribe was represented on the High Priest's breastplate Exodus 28:21, 29. They were also represented in the Tabernacle on the Table of Shewbread by 12 loaves. Jesus choose 12 disciples to be in his close team, who he trained to lead after he was no longer on Earth. The number comes up in Revelation 21:12-14, associated with the eternal reign in Heaven. God's people are represented in Revelation ch 7:4 (12 x 12,000 = 144,000) Christ's prophetic bride, the church, wears a crown containing 12 stars Revelation 12:1.

Forty is the number of testing and preparation. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days Matthew 40:2. The Children of Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, previously Moses had spent 40 years in Midian. Moses spent 40 days and nights on Mt Sinai. While it rained for 40 days before the flood. Jesus spent 40 days with the disciples (Acts 1:3) before the ascension. Elijah had a 'time out' of 40 days 1 Kings 19:8. It was a time before resuming his work.

No. 40

Trials
Testing
Preparation

Other Numbers **70** comes up quite frequently, combining 7 and 10. In Exodus there were 70 elders. The Jews spent 70 years in exile, some say the number represents totality. Interestingly **13** only appears 13 times in the Bible. **Fifty** however is more frequent, Pentecost was 50 days after the resurrection, while in the O.T. it was a Year of Jubilee, and the law was given 50 days after the Passover.

It is clear God speaks to us through numbers. It is also evidence of one mind behind the whole Bible.

Questions

Questions or Comments

Next time - Mid January

Subject TBC