

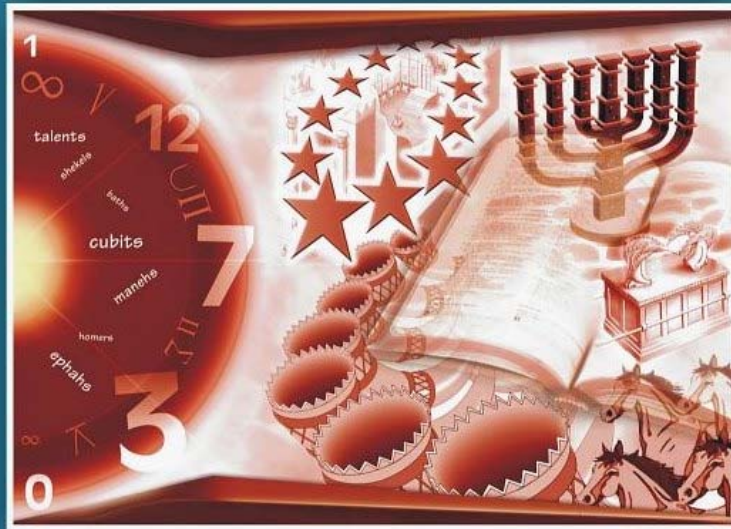
THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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The Herald

Of Christ's Kingdom



Symbolic Numbers

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In the Beginning

Symbolic Numbers

Let him that hath understanding count the number.—Revelation 13:8

It is well known that the Scriptures use numbers symbolically. But it is a subject which many approach apprehensively, sensing that the treatment of this subject is sometimes speculative, and treatments by Christian writers not well informed on the Divine plan are sometimes imprecise. These concerns notwithstanding, it is a fertile field for thought and study.

Frequently specific numbers in a narrative are helpful clues to the meaning of the passage. When Revelation says the wall of New Jerusalem measures 144 cubits, we naturally think of the elect saints. When we see the priesthood of old divided into twenty-four courses of service, twice the number of tribes of spiritual Israel in Revelation 7, most Bible Students realize there is something meaningful here. When Revelation refers to seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven plagues, and seven angels, we grasp that these series are related in some purposeful way.

The investigation of symbolic numbers is the theme of this issue. As you read these articles, weigh the suggestions and evidence thoughtfully. We believe you will find good reason for the various thoughts tendered. We trust these will help you be more aware of numerical meaning in the Scriptures and enhance your appreciation of the Divine Word.

We begin with three articles, each treating a specific number: seven, fifteen, and forty. The first cannot be comprehensive because the subject is too large, but this overview shows some of the lovely themes which it expresses. Fifteen is a less common number, but the frequency of its use on a central theme is highly engaging. The more familiar forty is then examined, with an array of evidence that it represents trial, testing, or probation in the Divine Plan. The fourth article is an overview, including all numbers from two through thirteen, and some higher. This article also suggests some basic patterns in the use of symbolic numbers.

These are followed with articles on the ten lepers, a lesson of thankfulness, and the ten horns of Revelation 17, a lesson in prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes. We hope you find this issue engaging and helpful.

Seven

The Sabbath of Rest

On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.—Genesis 2:2

Fred Binns

Seven, and the ordinal seventh, has been made a feature of a specific ordinance in Scripture, circumscribed by the severest penalty: “Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 31:15). This certainly demonstrates the importance of this number as a symbol. Its continual use in the Scriptures respecting the divine purpose has naturally given rise to the idea of divine perfection.

Not surprisingly, the essential idea of rest in the text above is clearly stated in the first instance of its use: “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Genesis 2:2).

Thus our first definition of this important Scriptural symbol is **rest**. As to its importance, we need only quote from the epistle to the Hebrews: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Hebrews 4:1).

What then is this rest? After all, if it were so important that we enter into it, would it not be well to ascertain its true nature? Our heavenly Father has certainly not ceased from working. As Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). So how do we understand the “rest” of this Genesis text?

The later use of this “rest” concept by Moses may help: “Ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no **servile** work therein” (Leviticus 23:7). Here the operative word is “servile.” Holy works were both permitted and appropriate. But “servile” works have no place in the sabbaths of the new man, and are a positive danger, as intimated in the typical warning of Exodus 31:15.

The apostle Paul explains this matter in Romans 8:1-14. Quoting in part: “God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit” (verses 3 and 4, RSV).

This pattern of seven applied also to rest for the land which was to be tilled for six years, but lie fallow during the sabbath year. When Israel neglected these sabbaths, the Lord stepped in to ensure their observance by removing Israel from the land, permitting it to lie fallow during the period of desolation. This occurred during the seventy years of 2 Chronicles 36:21, which again highlights this symbolic number. These seventy years may

also represent seventy weeks of years, that is 490 years—note the connection suggested by comparing Daniel 9:2 with verse 24.

That Unique “Week”

This leads us to the familiar seventy weeks of Daniel, a period of special favor to Israel, and to that unique seventieth “week” of all weeks which marked the sacrifice of our master. Upon this work of this week the entire weight of the eternal purpose still rests. This in turn introduces the Gospel age, bringing us to the door opening in heaven (Revelation 4:1), and to the breaking of the seven massive seals that only one fitted for eternal things could loose (Revelation 5:2)—to the holy “work” of redemption which God is accomplishing, through Christ, in this seventh **creative** day of his “rest” from mundane creation.

If we stand now with the apostle John, “in the Spirit [and] on the Lord’s ‘day’ ” (Revelation 1:10) and, at the “voice” of the seven-sounding trumpets, turn with him to cast our gaze backward from our day upon the history of the seven stages of the church, we see that the entire eternal purpose has been marching to the beat of this divinely ordained number. Thus we have in Revelation’s representation of the Gospel age, when we enter into his rest, seven churches, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, culminating in seven judgments (plagues). In Revelation 7:12 we have even seven praises to the heavenly Father for these marvelous works.

Jacob’s Service

The incident of Jacob’s service for Rachel is a type of Christ and his church. In this light the words ascribed to Jacob seem full of deep meaning: “Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her” (Genesis 29:20). Just as in Revelation the number seven occurs repeatedly, so in this narrative respecting Jacob and Rachel. After serving seven years for Rachel he was given Leah, then after seven days he received the bride he desired, and again had to serve seven years more for her (seven years, seven days, seven years).

Now that we see the constant beat of these sevenfold “times and seasons,” let us look further into this figure. Our heavenly Father expended the wealth of many ages on a creation which he knew would fall into ruin through sin, and thereby develop a new creation—the “Rachel” class. Can the constant rhythms of these sevenfold ages suggest the very divine heartbeat, and that the long ages of creation “seemed unto him but seven days, for the love he had to her”?

The Work of Redemption

Let us return to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 and to the wonderful holy work committed to that last, unique “week” on which so much depended. The details of this work are placed before us at the commencement of the prophecy, though sixty-nine weeks of preparation had to precede it. “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people

and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Daniel 9:24). Does it surprise us that this work is six-fold in nature?

To finish the transgression.
To make an end of sins.
To make reconciliation for iniquity.
To bring in everlasting righteousness.
To seal up the vision and prophecy.
To anoint the most holy.

Just as the old creation required six days before God would rest, so it is with the new creation.

The Word (*Logos*) had to work on that first primal chaos: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2). Just so with the new creation; our Lord had to descend and move amongst fallen man, “Born in sin and shapen in iniquity” (Psalm 51:5). But then, “The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matthew 4:16). So it was on the first day of the new creation.

This wonderful work of making “reconciliation for iniquity” will end (in its complete sense) when the whole of creation is brought to a glorious state of “everlasting righteousness,” when at its conclusion the kingdom will be “delivered up” to the Father. Then he will rest for all of eternity, the rest of which our cipher so eloquently speaks.

But for his saints, and in his saints, this rest is already a reality. “For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Psalm 132:13,14). The apostle calls it God’s own inheritance: “Being enlightened, that ye may know ... the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18). It is an amazing inheritance, graced by words from the lips of our own dear Lord: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

Iniquity Must be Purged

God cannot rest where there is iniquity, nor can his saints rest unless he has “made an end of sins.” How blessed we are “being made free from sin,” that our Lord has “put away sin” for us (Romans 6:22; Hebrews 9:26). How important to understand this, and to fully enter into this spiritual condition. We may believe the Word, but unless there is an entering in of faith, no spiritual development will be achieved, and worse, if no progress is made, eventually the blessing will be withdrawn at great loss. “For the time, ye ought to be teachers” (Hebrews 5:12); progress is expected and required.

No less than three times God had to demonstrate this principle in his people. First, when Moses was obliged to remove the first tent of meeting far out of the camp after the idolatrous worship of the molten calf (Exodus 33:7). Second, when idolatry reached its climax in the time of the kings when the prophet saw the glory of the Lord depart (Ezekiel 10:18). Third, when Israel was brought down to the “lowest hell” (grave, Deuteronomy 32:22) after crucifying their Messiah. “So that they will say in that day, are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?” (Deuteronomy 31:17).

Strictly speaking, these three examples are judgments and therefore could be shown under their appropriate number forty (for example, the forty years of their opportunity, from 29 A.D. until 69 A.D.). But when the Lord prophesied of their coming judgment because he was still Israel’s Savior, he did so under the prescribed number, seven: the seven “woes” pronounced upon that nation and its leaders in Matthew chapter 23 (verse 14 is spurious, leaving seven woes rather than eight). Jesus warned the nation that their house was soon “to be left desolate,” and he warned them in accordance with the sevenfold figures of the law.

Specifically and pointedly he addressed them as hypocrites (Matthew 23:23-29). “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness” (verse 27). Ceremonially they were clean, but they little appreciated that outward “works” belonged to the sixth day. Respecting the seventh day, the touch of Adam’s death was all about them. They could not enter into God’s rest. The prescribed remedy was a sevenfold exclusion from the presence of a holy God.

The definitive figure is found in Numbers 19:16 and 31:19. “Whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days ... And do ye abide without the camp seven days.”

Parallel Application

The parallel between the above mentioned seven woes on the hypocritical leaders of natural Israel, and the seven last plagues on the apostates of the Papal system, is obvious. The exclusion will be remedial, God be praised. But both must be first “thrust out” (Luke 13:28) that this eternal lesson may be fully learned.

“And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp” (Numbers 31:24). Thus the work of the great septennial day will be complete and God and his creation then will have entered the eternal rest which has always been the object of the “eternal purpose which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:11)—the “at-one-ment” between God and man.

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him” (Ephesians 1:10). This “dispensation of the fulness of times” has been marked out by

divine overruling in sevenfold stages, a demonstration of the perfection of the creative will operating unimpeded even in a fallen and imperfect world.

A Final Set of Seven

We have considered just some of these “times,” regrettably passing over others. With one final “set” of sevens we close. These pertain to the principle that God has determined that a period of time must elapse before the cleansed individual can return to the camp and fellowship with the creator. For an individual or a band of men, this was to be seven days. We have seen it of a nation for seven times ten years at the time of the Babylonian exile.

We now note that same nation cast away from their kingdom for 7×360 years, the 2,520 years of Gentile rule. There is an even larger sevenfold period, the $7 \times 1,000$ years, extrapolated from the use of seven in the Scriptures and made venerable by tradition. Chronology supports this approach, and as Ecclesiastes 4:9 puts it, “Two are better than one.” With a Scriptural principle at hand we now have a “threefold cord which is not quickly broken” (verse 12). For in Adam the whole of creation was cast out of Eden and our number suggests this be a sevenfold period of seven thousand years.

Let us, however, who have been called with a heavenly calling, mark again the admonition of Hebrews 4:11, “Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest.”

Fifteen

Deliverance

I will add unto thy days fifteen years.—2 Kings 20:6

David Stein

Much of the Bible is highly symbolic. The infinite wisdom of Jehovah made it that way so that it would appeal only to those having a certain condition of heart and humility of mind. Others would reject it as nonsense.

So it is that numbers in the Bible are frequently symbolic. The list of numbers Bible students have used for their symbolic value is large. But **fifteen** is not a number we encounter often in Scripture. Its obscurity has not made it a candidate for deep study. However, even this number appears to have a meaning associated with it. Fifteen appears to symbolize **deliverance**, with the associated ideas of **restoration**, **restitution**, and **healing**.

Hosea's Wife

“The LORD [said] ... Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine. So I bought her to me for **fifteen** pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: And I said ... abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” —Hosea 3:1-5.

This interesting text deals prophetically with the future relationship of Israel to Jehovah. First Hosea is told to marry an adulteress! This strange directive of Jehovah makes sense only when we see it as a parallel of Jehovah's relationship to Israel. Israel adulterously served other gods, showing her unfaithfulness to her covenant. However, the time will come when God will redeem Israel from that condition and deliver her to a new and precious relationship.

This was already suggested by Hosea: “And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi [husband]; and shalt call me no more Baali [Lord]” (Hosea 2:16). Jehovah is saying he will not be just another faceless god of the unfaithful nation, but rather he will be the husband of a nation that will then become faithful and loyal.

The price of **fifteen** pieces of silver for the deliverance of the woman connects the symbolic meaning of this number with the concept of deliverance. But the 1½ homers of barley contain at least two more marvelous lessons.

First, that the purchase price was barley is a wonderful allusion to the sacrifice of Jesus. In the agricultural year of Israel, barley was the first harvest of the year. Since it was the firstfruits of the nation's harvest, it was handled in a special way: "When ye be come into the land ... and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD ... on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day ... an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD" (Leviticus 23:10-12).

A sheaf of this firstfruits, the barley offering, was to be waved before the Lord "on the morrow after the sabbath." From the context, this would be the morrow after the first day of unleavened bread which is the sixteenth of Nisan. This is significant because it was on the sixteenth of Nisan that the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead! Consequently, we associate the barley harvest with the resurrection of Jesus. Thus the barley Hosea paid for the woman teaches that Jehovah redeems Israel with the precious blood of Jesus.

The second lesson is the quantity: 1½ homers of barley. Because one homer is equal to ten ephahs (Ezekiel 45:11), this price is fifteen ephahs! Again we find the number fifteen, and the lesson is the same: deliverance, restoration, healing, renewal, and redemption.

Hezekiah's Deliverance

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And ... Isaiah ... said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he ... prayed ... O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And ... the LORD [said to Isaiah] ... Tell Hezekiah ... I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days **fifteen** years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city."— 2 Kings 20:1-6

Hezekiah's prayer was answered, and his life spared. Jehovah granted him fifteen additional years of life. The direct lesson connects fifteen with deliverance, healing, blessing. But additional information identifies the source of deliverance in the sacrificial death of Jesus. Hezekiah was to go to the house of Jehovah on the **third day** in appreciation of his healing! We associate this with Jesus who died and was resurrected on the third day (Matthew 16:21).

Also note verse 7: "And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered." Hezekiah's healing is expedited by laying a lump of figs on the boil. Figs are a general symbol of Israel. This medical protocol suggests the healing of mankind is connected with Israel, in harmony with the original Abrahamic promise, "in

thy seed [heavenly and earthly] shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18).

Fifteen Furlongs

“Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about **fifteen** furlongs off” (John 11:18). The context of this text concerns the raising of Lazarus. He was delivered from death and restored to life. It is not then unexpected to find the number fifteen in this account since a deliverance is prominently shown.

There are further implications. Bethany means “house of misery” (Strongs 963) and Jerusalem “city of peace” (Strongs 2414). The distance between Bethany and Jerusalem may symbolize the journey of mankind from the misery of sin to the deliverance of peace. The result is deliverance, and thus it is **fifteen** furlongs. This might be one reason why the destination of Jerusalem is taken to another level in Revelation with the picture of **New** Jerusalem coming down from heaven. John saw the “new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:2-4).

How wonderful that in the account of raising Lazarus from the dead, which is a kingdom picture, this tiny detail that Jerusalem is fifteen furlongs from Bethany is mentioned! The numerical symbol is consistent.

Noah’s Ark

“**Fifteen** cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered” (Genesis 7:20). The entire picture of the flood and Noah is one of deliverance. Again we are not surprised by the presence of the number fifteen, because it depicts deliverance.

This detail may also have a practical reason for being included. Since the ark was thirty cubits high, perhaps it drew about fifteen cubits of depth, i.e., the lower fifteen cubits of the ark were under water. Thus even if the ark floated near the highest mountains in the area, it was not in danger of hitting anything underwater.

Jesus said the days of Noah were prophetic of the days of the presence of the son of man (Matthew 24:37). This furnishes an interesting irony. The “world that was” was destroyed by a flood of water. The world of the future, delivered in the Millennium, will be saved by a flood of the knowledge of God: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

Covering the tallest mountains by fifteen cubits which effected Noah’s deliverance reminds us that the flood of knowledge in the kingdom covering everything will effect the full deliverance, healing, and restoration of mankind by destroying every imperfection of sin.

Genesis 7:24 says “The waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days”—ten times fifteen. Ten often symbolizes earthly wholeness or completeness. Perhaps this one hundred fifty indicates the complete deliverance of Noah and his family.

Jacob

“Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times” (Genesis 31:41). Jacob served Laban fourteen years as debt for acquiring Laban’s two daughters as wives. The year of his deliverance from this debt to his father-in-law was the **fifteenth** year of his service.

The Tabernacle Court

“The breadth of the court on the east side ... shall be fifty cubits. The hangings of one side of the gate shall be **fifteen** cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And on the other side shall be hangings **fifteen** cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits” (Exodus 27:13-16).

The east side of the court was fifty cubits wide and it had a gate twenty cubits wide. There is specific mention that on each side of that gate were fifteen cubits of linen curtain. The gate to the court, the door to the tabernacle, and the vail dividing the Holy from the Most Holy all represented Jesus: “I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

We properly associate the gate as “the way,” the door as “the truth,” and the vail as “the life.” The gate was one hundred square cubits as was the door and the vail. One hundred is another of those wonderful symbolic numbers and consistently seems to point to Jesus and his ransom sacrifice. The gate, Jesus as “the way,” is flanked on each side by fifteen cubits of white linen. It seems to show this is the **way to deliverance**, healing, and restoration. Again Jesus is at the center.

There might be something more in the repetition of fifteen on either side of the gate. Jesus laid his life down that we, the church, might have heavenly life. The world in the kingdom will have deliverance to human life. This is the doctrine of the two salvations. It may be a reasonable inference that the fifteen cubits on each side of Jesus represent the two salvations which flow from his offering.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

“Thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits” (Exodus 27:1). This brazen altar, or Altar of Burnt Offering, was five cubits by five cubits square, and three cubits high. This is another representation of Jesus as the ransom sacrifice. Each side of the altar was fifteen square cubits. No matter which side one examines, one sees the deliverance which stems from the sacrifice of Jesus.

Bars of the Tabernacle

“Thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end.”—Exodus 26:26-29

These verses describe the bars which held the tabernacle boards together—five bars each on the north, west, and south, a total of **fifteen** bars! A beautiful application of this is how love binds the church together: “The love of Christ constraineth us” (2 Corinthians 5:14). These bars, covered with gold, represent the divine love Jesus has for the church, the same love expressed by those in the church.

That there were fifteen bars suggests deliverance. Perhaps the most dramatic deliverance effected by love is deliverance from fear: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18). Love delivers from fear and substitutes trust.

The Exodus

“They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the **fifteenth** day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians” (Numbers 33:3). Israel’s deliverance from Egypt occurred on Nisan 15.

Feasts of Israel

The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles both commenced on the **fifteenth** day of the month (Nisan 15 and Tishri 15—see Leviticus 23:6,34). The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed the Passover. Thus the connection with national deliverance, reckoning back to the deliverance of the firstborn, is clear.

For the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles we turn to Zechariah: “Every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

Note the connection between the kingdom and the future celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Full deliverance for the world requires them to observe the future Feast of Tabernacles. The blessings are held back unless there is compliance. Since both feasts commenced on the fifteenth of the month, we see illustrated the lesson of deliverance, both for the church of the firstborn and for the world.

Steps to Ezekiel's Temple

“The gate that looketh toward the east ... they went up unto it by seven steps; and the arches thereof were before them ... toward the utter court ... the going up to it had eight steps” (Ezekiel 40:22,31).

Ezekiel's temple had an Inner and an Outer Court. There are seven steps to the Outer Court and eight steps to the Inner Court. Thus there are **fifteen** steps to the Sanctuary of the House of the Lord, fifteen steps to reach the place of deliverance, healing, and restoration.

Deliverers of Israel

“When the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men” (Micah 5:5). The deliverers of Israel when the “Assyrian” attacks are seven shepherds and eight principal men (princes)—a total of fifteen deliverers.

The seven shepherds represent the church, since seven symbolizes spiritual completeness or perfection. The eight princes of men represent the ancient worthies, the ancient heroes of the Old Testament, resurrected first among mankind and raised to princely positions in the earthly phase of the heavenly kingdom.

Deliverance in the Days of Esther

“But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the **fifteenth** day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness” (Esther 9:18). The Jews celebrate their deliverance from the enemy on the fifteenth day of the twelfth month.

Solomon's Temple

“Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him ... from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt ... seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. On the eighth day ... they ... went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.”— 1 Kings 8:65,66

This episode occurs during the dedication of Solomon's temple. He held a great feast of fourteen days and sent them home on day **fifteen**. However, the Scripture does not call it day fifteen; it calls it day eight. Why? Eight is a symbol of newness: new life, new relationship, new beginnings. Hebrew males were circumcised on the eighth day of life, entering into the Mosaic Law covenant for which circumcision was a sign. Jesus was raised to newness of life on the eighth day (the day after the seventh).

The building and dedication of Solomon's temple pictures the establishment of Christ and the church in power and glory, commencing deliverance for the world. This is indeed the

most wonderful newness for the world. But it is also the beginning of the deliverance from sin and death. Thus we see a synergy between the symbolic meanings of fifteen and eight.

Gematria

Gematria is the substitution of letters for numbers. Such substitution leads to many interesting symbolic meanings and insightful results. The shortened form of Jehovah used occasionally in scripture is Jah. The Hebrew letters used in this name are: Yod (w) and Hey (h). Yod is the tenth letter, and Hey the fifth letter, of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus the “number” of Jah is fifteen. Our God is a great deliverer. His promises never go unfulfilled.

Conclusion

The presence of the number fifteen in Scripture draws our minds to the concept of deliverance, healing, restoration, and redemption. Often symbols of the sacrifice of Jesus are implicitly associated with the number fifteen. Jesus gave us a vital promise to sustain us in the intervening time of the Gospel age: “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

Forty

Testing and Probation

And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.—Genesis 7:12

Michael Nekora

The names given to various people in the Bible are usually meaningful. So too are numbers. One of the more prominent numbers is forty which appears first in Scripture when God brought a flood of waters upon the earth.

According to the *Companion Bible* forty is the number of probation. Probation is defined as “a process or period in which a person’s fitness, as for membership in a working or social group, is tested.” The forty-day rain may have been a test of those inside the ark; it was more like a judgment upon those outside the ark.

After Jesus was baptized by John, he “was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1, 2, NIV). The prophet Elijah had a similar forty-day experience (1 Kings 19:8) as did Moses (Exodus 24:18).

Moses’ long forty-day communion with God in the mount was not so much a test of him as it was of those who were left behind. It was a test they failed: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto” (Exodus 32:7,8).

One would think after such a serious failure Israel would be extremely careful to not allow a lack of faith to ever again interfere with their relationship with God. But soon afterward there is the incident of the spies who spent forty days exploring the promised land. Although the spies were unanimous in saying it was a good land, ten said the nation was too weak to take it. Then Joshua and Caleb speak: “The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. ... But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.”—Numbers 14:7,8,10

To punish the people for such terrible behavior God invoked another forty: “As for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years, and you shall know my displeasure” (Numbers 14:32-34, RSV).

Eventually Israel did enter the land. At first they are led by judges, but they want a king like their heathen neighbors and God gave them Saul. It was during Saul’s reign that

there was great confrontation between the Philistines and Israel. Each had stationed its army opposite the other. Every day the same drama occurred: “And the Philistine [Goliath] drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days” (1 Samuel 17:16).

Forty shows this is a test, but a test of whom? It was a test of Saul and he failed it miserably. Goliath was “head and shoulders” taller than any other Philistine. Whom did he expect to fight? Certainly it would be the one who was “head and shoulders” taller than all the other Israelites and that man was Saul (see 1 Samuel 9:2). But Saul did not want to die at Goliath’s hands so he stayed in his tent and the people were terrified. Saul failed his test.

The first three kings of Israel all reigned the same length of time: forty years. We can see in the life of each of these kings a picture of the world’s three major ages which are periods of probation for different peoples.

The Jewish Age

“And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul ... by the space of forty years” (Acts 13:21). At the very beginning of Saul’s reign he showed great promise. At a wonderful victory over the Ammonites Saul correctly said, “The Lord has wrought salvation in Israel” (1 Samuel 11:13).

Likewise the nation of Israel started off well. It celebrated the passover, left Egyptian slavery in an exodus, passed through the Red Sea, and agreed to all the things that God had commanded through Moses. But its continued experiences as God’s chosen people put them on trial and they did not do well. Saul, picturing those of the Jewish age, started well but quickly changed.

Why didn’t God supernaturally drive out all of Israel’s enemies from the land? It was “to prove Israel” (see Judges 3:1,4,7). It was during the second year of Saul’s reign that the events of 1 Samuel 13 took place. Saul took two thousand men and went to a place and did nothing; his son Jonathan took one thousand men and attacked a Philistine garrison. This enraged the Philistines and they prepared for war:

“And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude ... When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. ... As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.”—1 Samuel 13:5-7

This abandonment of faith in God by the people and Saul so soon after they had embraced him mirrors the abandonment of faith by the Jews in the time of Moses. It was at this time that Saul made a key error. He personally offered a burnt sacrifice instead of waiting for Samuel to appear and do it, something he knew he should not do. When

Samuel did appear, he said to Saul, “Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee” (1 Samuel 13:13,14).

Who was this “man after God’s own heart” that was destined to be “captain over God’s people”? It was David, but the remarkable fact is that David would not be born until some eight years later. Similarly the period of the unfaithfulness of the Jews during the Jewish age would end when the “greater than David” would appear, though that would be a long time in the future.

The unfaithfulness of Saul stands in marked contrast to the faithfulness of his son Jonathan. The Philistines were so much in control that if the Israelites wanted something made of iron, they had to go to the Philistines to get it. In all of Israel only Saul and Jonathan possessed an iron sword (1 Samuel 13:19,22). So the weapons of Israel had to have been bows and arrows, and slings such as the kind David used to slay Goliath.

Saul had no interest in using his sword, but it is different with Jonathan. He decided that God can save by a few as easily as by many so he and his armor bearer went boldly to the Philistine camp. They slew the first soldiers they met, twenty in all. Panic, which appears to have been partially induced by an earthquake, seized the enemy. Soon the Philistines were slaying each other. It was a wonderful display of faith on Jonathan’s part making him a picture of the entire class of the faithful we call ancient worthies. Although Jonathan was at least twice David’s age when he died, he had a wonderful respect and love for the one he knew God had chosen to lead the people.

Saul and Jonathan died at the same time. Absolutely nothing had been accomplished. The land was still under the hand of an oppressive foe. Likewise the Jewish age brought no enduring benefit to anyone. Sin and death continued to reign and oppress mankind.

The Gospel Age

“David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years” (2 Samuel 5:4). This brings us to the age when God’s son—the greater than David—and the church (spiritual Israel) are on trial. David had the same faith as Jonathan. The animosity Saul had for David illustrates the hatred the Jewish leaders had for the antitypical David. When the Sadducees and Pharisees [pictured by Saul] were confronted with “one after God’s own heart,” they killed him. But we read that the “soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1 Samuel 18:1).

In Acts we read of a forty-day period following the resurrection of Jesus: “To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).

Perhaps this was a kind of testing and training period for the disciples to see if their faith in God would remain strong.

Under King David the grip of Israel's enemies was finally broken. But note that the actual construction of the temple, the symbol of God's presence with the people, was not done during David's reign. That work was left for the next king under whom Israel enjoyed the most peaceful and prosperous period in its history.

The Millennial Age

"The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years" (1 Kings 11:42). Solomon's reign pictures the Millennial age, a time of peace and great blessing for mankind. This is when the Lord's house will be built. Solomon described his state of peace in a letter sent to King Hiram asking for building supplies: "You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. And so I purpose to build a house for the name of the Lord my God" (1 Kings 5:3-5, RSV).

Even though the kingdom age is a time of blessing, resurrected mankind will still be on probationary trial for life. They must learn and practice righteousness. At the very end of the Bible we read what happens to those who learn their lessons well: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

Those who fail their "probation" will not be rewarded with everlasting life. In fact they will be destroyed with the devil and his followers: "And ... fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20:9).

Our Forty Years

How long do the followers of Christ live today? To some extent it depends upon where one lives. In Russia the average life expectancy of a male is only fifty-eight years. That is less than in many countries, but not too long ago it was a typical life span in most countries. If someone consecrated himself to the Lord in his twenties, he might expect at most a forty-year walk in the narrow way. This would be his period of education, testing, and probation. True, some today may have more, some less, but we would not be far wrong to say that a person usually has forty years for testing and development as a new creature. What progress are we making in our walk along the narrow way so far?

We are in the school of Christ. When we go to school, we are expected to learn. Paul said there were some, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). Have we grown in faith and trust, or have we allowed something [or someone] to distract us from the special relationship God has permitted us to enjoy? Those in school are always tested to determine how much they have learned. Our

consecrated life is a life of probation—“A process in which a person’s fitness, as for membership in a group, is tested.”

The calling we have received from God will never be repeated in a future age for anyone else. Let us learn our lessons well so that when we are tested, we, as good stewards, will be found faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).

“And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul: and he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, my refuge, my savior. ... God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.”—2 Samuel 22:1-3, 33).

At the end of our life, may we like David, sing this song of victory knowing full well that the victories we have enjoyed have been given to us by the Lord.

Symbolic Numbers

*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing:
but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.—Proverbs 25:2*

David Rice

The mind of God is higher and grander than we can ever fathom. But God is pleased to reveal himself, in part, through his written word, the Bible. There God expresses himself on many levels. There are direct statements of his majesty and grandeur, covenant promises which outline his Plan of the Ages, prophecies, types, apocalyptic visions, doctrinal treatises, historical records of Godly men and of his son Jesus. Frequently these are interlaced with symbols—materials, colors, dimensions, quantities, trees, animals, locations, cities—which combine concepts to form pictures of the spiritual lessons. When we see linen, we think of righteousness; when we see blue, we think of faithfulness; fig trees, Israel; mountains, kingdoms, etc.

Numbers are among the most conspicuous and ubiquitous symbols in Scripture. Sometimes they disclose, and frequently they augment, the meaning of a type or figure. For example, it is commonly appreciated that the ark which saved Noah and his family represents salvation in Christ, following the lead of Peter's comments in 1 Peter 3:20,21. Then we note the dimensions of the ark which enhance the picture. It was thirty cubits tall and three-hundred cubits long, and the root number, three, is the number of the atonement. It was fifty cubits wide, and the root number, five, is the number for the new creation which helps Christ reconcile the world. The perimeter of the ark measures seven-hundred cubits, a reminder of the seven thousand years of God's plan which brings redemption to the world.

Seven

The chief of all symbolic numbers in the Bible is seven. As shown in the accompanying article devoted to it, this number is used of all the merciful purposes of God toward his earthly creation and his new creation. Perhaps the next most widely familiar symbolic numbers are six, ten, and twelve. Six represents things incomplete or imperfect, being one shy of the perfect number seven. Ten represents wholeness or completeness of earthly things, as the ten toes of the image represent earthly Gentile governments. Twelve represents wholeness or completeness of spiritual things, as the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel in Revelation, expressed even more intensely as $12 \times 12,000$, or 144,000, the number of the church.

These three numbers are related to one another as being each derived from the chief number, seven. Seven cannot be divided into whole number parts. But it can be broken down into pairs of additive factors: one and six, two and five, three and four. Multiplying each pair together yields the numbers six, ten, and twelve. We suspect these are not coincidental results but express a relationship the divine mind intends between these foundational symbolic numbers.

It is interesting to note that these three numbers are also the base numbers of the counting systems most used among men (augmenting six tenfold to sixty). The ancient Babylonians used a base-sixty numbering system (still used in measuring minutes, hours, and degrees of a circle). Common usage today is a base-ten system evidently derived from the ten fingers on two hands. Some systems of metrics use a base-twelve system because it is a relatively small number evenly divisible by two, three, and four: thus twelve inches to the foot, and twelve points to the pica. (Base-sixty adds divisibility by 5, 6, 10, 12.)

Two, Three, Four, Five

The lower numbers, being foundational to all the higher numbers, may carry symbolisms which we would not expect of larger numbers. We have never heard anyone ask, for example, the meaning of a number like 271. But smaller numbers, when used conspicuously, do seem to be symbolic.

Three

We begin with the number **three** because it is used so frequently. It appears conspicuously respecting our Lord's sacrifice and redemptive work. Jesus was three days in the grave, the price of his betrayal was thirty pieces of silver; he was anointed for his death with three-hundred pence worth of spikenard; and at Pentecost when his sacrifice was applied to the church, the number of believers swelled to three thousand persons.

In each case these references are apparently significant, judged by their repetitious use. The three days in the grave are specifically prophesied (John 2:19) and linked with the type of Jonah (Matthew 12:39,40). The price of betrayal was predicted in Zechariah 11:12, "so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." The spikenard Mary used on Jesus as he sat at their table was referred to in Song of Solomon 1:12, "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof," and its specified value therefore the more prominent. The three thousand enlivened through the spirit at Pentecost have their counterpart in the three thousand who died at the giving of the law (Exodus 32:28). "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

This grouping—3, 30, 300, and 3,000—is even more striking when we recognize the same sequence in one of the Old Testament narratives, specifically an experience of Samson. Samson had a riddle which challenged his adversaries for three days (Judges 14:14). The reward for its solution was thirty changes of garments (verse 13). The punishment on his enemies involved three-hundred foxes (Judges 15:4), and Samson was apprehended by three thousand of his fellows (Judges 15:11).

This is not simply a repetition of numbers; the themes involved have to do with the atonement brought to us by Christ during the Gospel age. The riddle posed by Samson—"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judges 14:14)—referred to a slain lion which bees had used to contain a reservoir of honey. The lion represents our Lord Jesus, the "Lion of the tribe of Juda" (Revelation 5:5), from

whose death we have redemption and the sweet call of the divine nature pictured by the honey. The thirty changes of garments represent the justification all may receive who identify and accept their Savior. The two subsequent narratives refer to other judgments during the Gospel age, and the theme is extended in Revelation where the judgments during this first age of redemption frequently involve the number three. (Compare for example trumpets one through four where a “third part” was affected in each case.)

When Abraham viewed Moriah afar off where Isaac was to be offered, it was on “the third day” (Genesis 22:4). The Letter of the Law, symbolic of the later Spirit of the Law, was received by Israel on “the third day” and even on “the third month” (Exodus 19:11,1). Offerings under the law were to be fully consumed by “the third day” (Leviticus 7:17; 19:6). Defiled ones were sprinkled on “the third day” (Numbers 19:19). All these examples have something to do with atonement or reconciliation.

But why three? It is good to recognize a common theme in the use of a number, but the deeper question is why a particular number is appropriate for the theme. In this case, perhaps three is used because there are three parties to the atonement: God, man, and Jesus our redeemer. “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

Two.

Let us now consider the number two. A conspicuous use of this number is in Revelation 11:3, which describes two witnesses which prophesy in a mournful condition for 1,260 days, fulfilled as years. Brethren commonly recognize these as the Old and New Testaments which are witnesses of God and his purposes. During the reign of Papacy their testimony was subdued through the oppression of the Man of Sin.

These two parts of Scripture are represented in Zechariah 4:3 as two olive trees, reservoirs of oil which are drained through golden pipes to a lampstand of seven branches. This shows how the church receives enlightenment of the truth through the spirit from the Scriptures.

The same thought is conveyed by the two swords the Lord asked his disciples to carry (Luke 22:38), two silver trumpets used by the priests (Numbers 10:2), two stacks of shewbread, and two lampstands (Revelation 11:4; Zechariah 4:14).

Even the Mount of Olives is prophetically split into two parts, representing the earthly and spiritual parts of God’s kingdom. These parallel the Old Testament earthly hopes and promises and the New Testament spiritual hopes and promises. They also parallel Moses and Elijah appearing on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Paul, when speaking of the Christian’s armor, mentions “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). In the Marshall Diaglott a footnote to the word “which” says “Neuter, agreeing with *pneuma* [spirit], not feminine to agree with *maxaira* [sword].” Paul means the “spirit” is “the word of God” (symbolized by the sword). The

text equates “spirit” and “word”—and as the former is represented by oil and the latter by water (Ephesians 5:26), the two are really like two sides of the same coin. **{Footnote:** This may help explain Revelation 19:10, “the testimony of Jesus [Revelation] is the spirit of prophecy,” and Hebrews 10:15, “The holy spirit also is a witness to us: for ... he [it, the Scripture] had said ...”}

Two, then, is a number for the spirit, the truth, because it comes to us from two reservoirs in the Scriptures. Just as the number three was expressed in different orders of magnitude—3, 30, 300, and 3,000—so with this symbol. The Scriptures speak of 2, 20, 200, and 2,000—all related to the same theme.

There were two olive trees. Samson, who pictures the church, had a service of twenty years, representing the age of the spirit (Judges 15:20), the Gospel age. This was also the length of time the ark of the covenant was captive in Philistine lands, representing the church through the age captive to her enemies (1 Samuel 7:2). The distance to shore in John 21:8, representing the length of the Gospel age, was two-hundred cubits. The distance between the priests who took the ark into the Jordan River, and the rest of Israel which followed, was two thousand cubits, representing the age of the spirit which separates the atonement of the church at Pentecost, and the deliverance of the world in the kingdom (Joshua 3:4).

An even greater magnitude appears in Revelation 9:16. “The number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.” This army appears in trumpet six and represents the judgment of Scripture, exhibited during the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Wars, which ravaged Papacy’s hold on Europe (compare Revelation 11:5 and 13:10).

Two and Three.

These two numbers, as we have seen, represent the spirit, specially as it relates to the truth, and the atonement. Often the holy spirit is represented by oil, and truth by water. The atonement is represented sometimes by the blood of Christ, sometimes by wine which Christ used to represent his blood. These four symbols are matched variously in different pictures which show these two essential components—spirit and atonement—as the fundamental elements through which the church is healed, developed, nurtured, as the future bride of Christ.

First, we recall the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan represents our Lord Jesus who, unlike those appointed under the law (the Priest and Levite of the parable), had a heart of compassion for the wounded victim. He applied to the wounds “oil and wine”—the holy spirit and redemption—carried him to an inn for his care, provided two pence for this care, and promised whatever more was necessary at his return (Luke 10:34,35). So our Lord gives to our need, provides for our care, and returns at the end of the age to give more as necessary.

Second, we recall Jesus' last experience on the cross, following his passing into the deep sleep of death. A soldier, checking his condition, opened his side with a spear and "forthwith came there out blood and water." This experience of the second Adam parallels the experience of the first Adam, who passed into a deep sleep and had his side opened, from which came his bride Eve. In Jesus' case the opening of his side, through his ribs, allowed blood and water—redemption and the spirit of truth—to issue forth to redeem and develop the church, his future bride (John 19:34; Genesis 2:21-23; 1 Corinthians 15:45-47).

In both cases the spirit and redemption are highlighted as the two ingredients through which the church is developed. These elements are represented numerically in two other episodes.

First, the wedding at Cana where Jesus turned water into wine. There were six waterpots, representing the members of the church who are presently imperfect. The waterpots were of stone, illustrating Jesus' words at another time: "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matthew 3:9). The pots were filled with water as we are filled with the spirit of truth, and out of these same pots the guests at the wedding drew out wonderful wine, as the world will receive through the church. The church will be Christ's agent for distributing the blessings of redemption in the kingdom. Notice the capacity of these waterpots. They held "two or three firkins apiece" (John 2:6). So the church must presently receive what is represented by two and three—the spirit and the blood—before they can pass on these blessings to the world.

Second, in the first two narratives in the book of Acts when the Gospel age call of the church began in earnest, the numbers received into the body of believers is significant. On the day of Pentecost the believers swelled to "about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). After the next episode the number swelled to "about five thousand," augmented by two thousand more (Acts 4:4). These numbers—three thousand and two thousand in dramatic consecutive events—picture redemption and the spirit which develop the church.

Five.

This number represents the church, the new creation. We introduce it here because the reason this number is used for the new creation is intimated in the record just mentioned. The aggregate number five thousand is specified, being the sum of the initial three thousand and later two thousand. Five represents the church **because** it depends on the two elements indispensable for its development, the spirit (two) and blood (three).

Here are several instances where five is symbolic of the new creation:

1. Matthew 25, five wise virgins represent the church, the corresponding five foolish virgins the great company.

2. When Christ fed the multitude in John 6 and gathered up twelve baskets of fragments, it represented the feeding of the church early in the age, with the residue contained in the teachings of the twelve apostles. The number reported was five thousand.
3. In the time of Joseph the grain stored up to later rescue the world pictures the church which Jesus is gathering for the later rescue of the world. The proportion of grain stored was one part in five (Genesis 41:34).
4. The Lord's share of the goods collected by the Israelites in Numbers 31:27-31 may represent the Lord's elect. It was one part out of fifty, or out of five hundred, depending on circumstances.
5. The "tabernacle" described in Exodus 26:1-5 represents Christ and his church, which together compose the new creation. This curtain was comprised of two parts (as the church is shown in two loaves at Pentecost, *cf.* Romans 4:16). Each was composed of five strips, with fifty gold taches connecting the two main parts.
6. The entrance to the holy of the tabernacle, opening the heavenly call to the saints of God, was marked with five posts supporting the door (Exodus 26:27).
7. Ezekiel's temple, which represents the church in glory, has measures which are generally commensurate with lengths of five cubits (Ezekiel 40 and 41).

As with the 2, 20, 200, and 2,000, and 3, 30, 300, and 3,000, this number also appears in various orders of magnitude: 5, 50, 500, and 5,000.

Four.

This number, as with forty (see *Testing and Probation*, p. 11), refers to the concept of judgment or righteousness.

1. At the entrance of the most holy of the Tabernacle, the time of judgment of the church, appear four posts.
2. At the second feeding of the multitudes by Jesus, representing the time of harvest and judgment closing the Gospel age, the number reported was four thousand.
3. The forty years in the wilderness represent the Gospel age period of testing, trial, development.
4. The same is represented in the four hundred years of Genesis 15:13 which describes the period of the affliction of the seed of Abraham, representing the Gospel age affliction of the church. This period began with the mocking of Isaac (at the age of five) by Ishmael, a picture of the early affliction of the church by the Jewish authorities, and ends at the Exodus, a picture of the deliverance of God's people at the end of the Gospel age. These four hundred years, if multiplied by the 360 days in a prophetic year, yield 144,000, the number of the church in Revelation, showing the fruitage to be developed during the testing period of the Gospel age.

With this number we also have the different orders of magnitude expressing the symbol: 4, 40, 400, and 4,000.

It is noteworthy that of the dated visions of Jeremiah in chapters 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 36, three are dated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and three in the fourth year of

Zedekiah—all six judgments are in a year four. When the seven times of punishment on Israel was represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the expression "seven times" appeared four times in the narrative, and four times in the warning by Moses (Daniel 4; Leviticus 26). These judgments were fulfilled by four Gentile kingdoms dominating Israel during the 2,520 years of their national punishment. In all these uses, four is linked to the concept of trial, testing, probation, judgment.

Eight

Ignoring the number one, this accounts for all the single digit numbers except eight and nine. These illustrate the question we often face with symbols: determining which aspect of the matter carries the symbolism. Is the point of eight, for example, two fours, accentuating judgment, or two times two times two, expressing the core thought of two? Both are reasonable options, but probably the meaning is conveyed more correctly by observing that eight is the next number after seven, just as the meaning of six relates to it being one less than the perfect seven.

The first use of eight uniquely is in Genesis 17:12 which marks it as the day of circumcision for a newborn male child. Following the first week of life, this marks the child with the sign of the covenant given Abraham.

In Leviticus 9:1 the eighth day marks the entrance of the priesthood into their official duties, following the seven days of consecration described in the previous chapter. From this standpoint, it marks what follows after a previous week. In the case of the priesthood, it shows the church entering its priestly duties during the millennium, following the seven stages of the church.

The same use is shown in Ezekiel 43:18-27 which describes the consecration of the altar the people of the land (the world of mankind) will use for their offerings in the kingdom. To prepare this altar, a bullock for a sin offering was first offered. Then for seven consecutive days, a goat was offered, evidently picturing the church during the seven stages of the Gospel age. Following this, "upon the eighth day, and so forward," God would accept the offerings of the people. This represents the kingdom which follows the seven stages of the church (verse 27).

The Feast of Tabernacles also represents the kingdom (Zechariah 14:16). After seven days of remembrance of God's care in the wilderness, the special celebration was on the eighth day: "Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you" (Leviticus 23:36). That eighth day, following the remembrance of the seven stages of the Gospel age, brings us into the millennium.

This can be a little confusing. We often think of the millennium as the seventh day because it is the seventh millennium from Adam. This is a correct perspective, but it is not the one identified here. In these texts the seven preceding days refer to the Gospel age, and day eight is the kingdom. This perspective is consistent with relating seven to

the church, and eight with the world. Seven pertains to the spiritual, eight to the earthly. Micah 5:5, for example, refers to “Seven shepherds [an idiom meaning kings] and eight princes.” The shepherds represent the church who will reign from heaven, the princes represent the ancient worthies who will govern on earth.

The same thought is expressed in Ezekiel by the “seven steps” of Ezekiel 40:26 and “eight steps” of verse 31. By these means—the church and the ancient worthies—the world will be able to approach the Sanctuary of God for worship, praise, and thanksgiving. The coupling of these two agencies—represented by the sum of the symbolic seven and eight—is the means by which Israel and the world will be delivered—thus the composite number fifteen representing deliverance (see the article “Deliverance” beginning on page 7).

In Micah 5:5, when the “Assyrian” threat against Israel is answered by the intervention of the church (seven) and the ancient worthies (eight), their rescue is represented by the fifteen years Hezekiah’s life was extended when he faced the very threat which was the prophetic backdrop of Micah’s prophecy (Isaiah 38:5,6).

When King David, representing our Lord Jesus, had put down the rebellion of Absalom, he invited those who embraced his authority to join him back in Jerusalem to dine at his table. But one of his close supporters, Barzillai, declined the generous offer, preferring to remain on the other side of Jordan, explaining that he was “fourscore years old” (2 Samuel 19:35). David’s offer represents the gracious invitation to the heavenly calling, to join the administration of the new ruler. It was declined by noble Barzillai who represents the faithful of the previous age. His age, eighty, links him symbolically with the earthly class rather than the spiritual.

David’s men were numbered in two parts: those of Israel and those closer to him, of Judah. The former were 800,000 strong, the latter 500,000 (2 Samuel 24:9). Perhaps these represent the two classes which will support Jesus in the kingdom—the ancient worthies and the church, respectively.

Nine

It seems that any meaning intended in nine rests upon its construction, namely three times three. It would represent a class atoned for, or in need of atonement; its double, eighteen, is used to represent the world in need of atonement in at least three places. In Luke 13:4 eighteen men perished at the Tower of Siloam, whom Jesus used as an example of people suffering calamities in common with the condemned race. Seven verses later Jesus healed a woman bound by Satan with an infirmity eighteen years, part of the general curse which came from Satan’s deceptions (Luke 13:11-16). Ezekiel used the same number, multiplied by a thousand, as the circuit measure of the city representing the earthly kingdom (Ezekiel 48:35), when mankind is rescued from this curse.

Nine, by itself, appears only once in the New Testament (Luke 17:17), specified as the count of lepers who did not return to give thanks, similar to mankind under the curse

without a mind to regard God. In the form of nine-hundred, it appears conspicuously in Judges 4:3 as the count of iron chariots supporting Jabin, king of Canaan, which represents the Gentile powers who rule and oppress God's people. Both cases link the number with those under the curse awaiting redemption.

Composite Numbers

We introduced this concept to some extent with comments about five, fifteen, nine, and eighteen. By composite numbers we mean those whose meaning is drawn from the composition of the number—as for example five being the sum of two and three, or fifteen being the sum of seven and eight. We will consider three fresh examples.

Eleven.

This number, and its meaningful composition, is exhibited in the second covering of the tabernacle, the curtain of goat hair. This immediately overlays the linen curtain (termed the tabernacle proper), which as we noted earlier was composed of two parts of five strips each, showing two parts of the new creation.

The goat hair curtain was composed of one strip more—eleven in all—one part of five strips, joined with fifty copper taches to another part of six strips (Exodus 26:7-13). The goat hair curtain represents the justified human nature of the church which is consecrated to sacrifice in God's service. Naturally, we remember in this connection the goat offered with the bullock on the Day of Atonement. Through these sacrifices the blood of atonement is made effective for Israel, picturing the redemption of the world. Also, Song of Solomon 4:1 says of the church, "Thy hair is as a flock of goats." The church is also represented by Jacob receiving the birthright blessing from Isaac, supplanting Esau (natural Israel) as heir of the chief blessing. In this episode Jacob wore hairy skins of goats to claim the blessing (Genesis 27:16).

The church as a "goat," compared to Jesus as a "bullock," is lean by comparison, as our offering, compared to Jesus, is less rich, but nevertheless acceptable. We are dual creatures, like Christ was, but in our case the fleshly component is sinful flesh even though justified. This inherent sinfulness is represented on the Day of Pentecost by the two wave loaves being baked with leaven. In this case, it is represented by the six strips in one piece, combined with the five strips of the other piece. The six represents our sinful flesh, the five our spiritual nature. While sacrificing in the flesh we have this treasure (the new creature, five strips) in an earthly vessel (the flesh, six strips). The copper taches which join the two contribute the symbolism that our flesh is justified.

These taches join the two parts into one covering, and the aggregate eleven strips thus become symbolic of the church in the flesh during the Gospel age. Each of the component strips measured thirty by four cubits, and when laid out over the tabernacle, one strip was folded back over itself. The resulting perimeter of this aggregate curtain was thus 144 cubits—a reminder that this entire goat hair curtain represents the church,

presently in training, just as the 144-cubit measure of the wall of New Jerusalem represents the church, then in glory (Revelation 21:17).

Eleven appears as eleven-hundred pieces of silver in two adjacent narratives in the book of Judges, and in only these two places in the entire Bible, making these adjacent occurrences conspicuous. In Judges 16 (verse 5) the narrative is about Samson, a picture of the Gospel age church, seven episodes of his life tracing the seven stages of the church through the age. In Judges 17 (verses 2 and 3) the narrative describes how the tribe of Dan fell into false worship from which it was not recovered—a picture of those in the Gospel age who turn away from Christ after once being washed. Conspicuously, Dan is missing from the tribes of spiritual Israel in Revelation. Both narratives pertain to the Gospel age church: Samson represents those who overcome, Dan those who do not.

Eleven appears again a pair of times in Deuteronomy 1:2,3. The first instance says the normal travel time between Horeb (Mount Sinai) and Kadesh Barnea (where the spies were sent out) was eleven days. This journey represents the Gospel age, again associating eleven with the church in the flesh. The second instance refers to the end of Moses' career, year forty (closing the Gospel age), month eleven (closing the church in the flesh). In 1 Kings 6:38 the temple of Solomon, a picture of the church, was completed in year eleven, following the seventh month.

Thirteen.

This number represents the ransom price, and its meaning comes from its composition, seven plus six. In John 3:14 Jesus likened his death on the cross to the brazen serpent in the wilderness which, looked upon, healed Israelites of their serpent bites, representing the sin which comes through Satan. What a peculiar picture of our Lord Jesus: a serpent! But Jesus is clearly seen in the application. The serpent was made of copper, showing that Jesus was a perfect man, without sin. It was on a pole, portraying Jesus on the cross as our ransom. The “serpent” evidently represents that our sins were laid upon him: “The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). In this light the symbol is appropriate: Jesus is the perfect one who bore the penalty for our sins.

The same thought is conveyed numerically by adding six (our sins) to seven (the perfect one) producing thirteen. The number appears once in the book of Ezekiel (40:11), respecting the east gate, which would parallel the gate to the court of the tabernacle which represents our Lord Jesus, his sacrifice allowing us entrance to our faith-standing with God. The porch of the gate in Ezekiel measured thirteen cubits in length, representing that the ransom is required for the world to enter a faith relationship with God in the kingdom. Later in the same chapter Ezekiel (in vision) approached the porch of the temple itself, and found its breadth to measure eleven cubits, probably showing that the sacrifice of the church in the present time is also a prerequisite for the world to approach God in the kingdom.

The number thirteen does not appear in the New Testament, and rarely in the Old Testament. Here are some instances:

1. Ishmael was thirteen when circumcised, signifying that the Israelites will be “circumcised” when they receive redemption in Christ.
2. The series of bullocks offered during the seven day Feast of Tabernacles began with thirteen the first day, decreasing one each day to total seventy by the end of the feast. The bullocks represent the atonement sacrifice of our Lord.
3. Solomon (representing our Lord) was thirteen years constructing his house, perhaps showing that the dwelling place of our Lord, the church now and the world in the kingdom, depends upon the ransom sacrifice he gave.
4. Jeremiah, who represented Jesus, was anointed in the thirteenth year of Josiah. This anointing represents the anointing of our Lord at Jordan where he offered himself in sacrifice, and the forty years of Jeremiah’s ministry until the Babylonians burned the temple parallels the forty years following Christ’s baptism until the Romans burned the temple.

The picture of the ransom is carried forward in three instances of 130 (thirteen increased one order of magnitude). Jehoiada was 130 when he passed from the scene and his son Zechariah was stoned to death for trying to reclaim Israel, picturing the unjust death of Jesus (Matthew 23:35). Adam was 130 when Seth was born, picturing the raising of Christ from death, just as the slaying of Abel pictured the death of Christ. Jacob was 130 when his entourage entered Egypt, remaining until the Exodus. This period pictures the Gospel age, from Pentecost until the plagues of Revelation, beginning with the redemption of the church. Thus 130 is connected with the death of Jesus providing the ransom, his resurrection to use his ransom, and the day of Pentecost applying the ransom.

Seventeen.

Joseph was seventeen when sold by his brothers, and was with his father an equal span after Jacob came into Egypt (Genesis 37:2; 47:28). Joseph pictures our Lord Jesus, and the explicit mention of his age when sold refers prophetically to Jesus when he was given over to the Romans by his Jewish brethren. The meaning of this number comes from the addition of seven (Jesus, the perfect one, as in the number thirteen), plus ten, the number of earthly things, representing the world Jesus came to save. Thus Jesus as the Savior is well represented by seventeen. Jubilee day was day ten of month seven. It represents the time the atonement releases men into liberty.

On the seventeenth day of the month the ark, like Jesus, saved the trusting souls within (Genesis 7:11); on the seventeenth day of the month it rested again (Genesis 8:4). The time between was exactly five months, suggesting the period of the Gospel age deliverance of the saints.

Another form of the same symbolism is expressed in seven times ten rather than seven plus ten; thus the seventy disciples of our Lord pictured the class redeemed during the Gospel age (Luke 10:1). The seventy sons of Gideon represent the same (Judges 8:30). The seventy sons of Ahab represent their counterpart, sons of the Antichrist (2 Kings 10:1). The seventeen-hundred shekels of Gideon’s spoil have a similar meaning (Judges 8:26).

Another form of the symbol is exhibited in the 153 great fish taken in the net miraculously in John 21:11—a picture of the harvest of the Gospel age, comparable to the parable of the dragnet in Matthew 13:47,48. The number 153 is the sum of the numbers from one through seventeen.

Jeremiah represented Jesus. The world, purchased by our Lord (compare Matthew 13:44), may be represented by Jeremiah's purchase of a field in Jeremiah 32:9. The purchase price was seventeen shekels of silver. The margin of the King James Bible shows this to be broken into "seven shekels and ten *pieces* of silver," a division which expresses the meaning of the number, as explained above.

When we considered the number eleven, we noted the perimeter of the goat hair curtain was 144 cubits, representing the church. The first covering, of white linen, properly termed "the tabernacle" (Exodus 26:1), had a perimeter measure of 136 cubits, which is a multiple of seventeen.

Adding and Multiplying

Multiplying a number by itself is a means of intensifying the symbol. Thus the spiritual number twelve, when squared is 144, representing the church in glory, which is the measure of the wall of New Jerusalem, and the number of the saints in Revelation (Revelation 7:4; 14:1; 21:17). The square of forty, in this case sixteen-hundred furlongs by which blood flowed from the treading of the winepress, represents the measure of final retribution for the sins of the Gospel age (Revelation 14:20). The same intensity can be expressed also by a repetition of digits—thus six stands for sin or incompleteness, 666 the famous number of the beast in Revelation 13:18, and 66 the number of the image in Daniel 3:1 (the sum of its height and width), representing an image of the 666 beast of Revelation.

As suggested above, adding (as in seven plus ten) or multiplying (as in seven times ten) are symbolically equivalent. Thus whether one uses the square of twelve, as in the 144,000 saints of Revelation, or the addition of twelve plus twelve, as in the twenty-four courses of the priesthood of Chronicles 24, the symbol is the same. In the same way, the seventy times seven years of Daniel 9, a period of grace for Israel, is represented in Genesis 4:24 by seventy plus seven.

Miscellaneous

Here are a variety of symbolisms to show the kind of diversity which can be involved in expressing concepts through symbolic numbers.

Enoch was taken at age 365 (Genesis 5:23). Enoch, the seventh from Adam, represented the church, just as Lamech, the seventh from Cain, represented Israel (Genesis 4:19-24). Enoch's age, coincident with the days in a solar year, links Enoch with the sun, which is another symbol of the elect church (Matthew 13:43; Revelation 19:17).

The forty-two youths who taunted Godly authority, and were torn by the claws of a pair of she bears, reminds us of the system which ruled forty-two months and exercised ravaging power represented by bear-like claws (Revelation 13:2). The punishment of these youths represents a just punishment for the system of Antichrist which ravaged others previously. The 42,000 enemies overcome by Jephthah points to the termination of the forty-two months of Papal authority during the sixth phase of the church, suggested by the six-year judgeship of Jephthah (Judges 12:6,7).

The next judge, Ibzan, was from Bethlehem, reminding us of our Lord Jesus. If Jephthah's six-year judgeship relates to the sixth period of the church, then Ibzan's seven years which followed nicely pictures the seventh stage of the church, which began with our Lord's return and his assumption of power. Ibzan's prominence is noted by the thirty sons he bore which became prominent princes, thirty showing his redeemed saints during the harvest, the same as represented elsewhere by Gideon's band of three-hundred (Judges 12:8,9; 7:22).

Ibzan was followed by Elon for ten years, suggesting the thousand-year millennium which rules the earth after the Gospel age. Abdon's judgeship of eight years expresses the thought that this kingdom will be the "eighth" stage because it follows the seven stages of the Gospel age. The authority of that kingdom is suggested by his seventy princes that rode seventy ass colts, which were signs of power and authority. So the redeemed church will share the royal authority of the kingdom with Christ.

Segregating Digits

Ezra 2:64 tells us "The whole congregation" of Israelites returning from Babylon numbered 42,360. These returnees represent spiritual Israelites who return from Babylon during the harvest, after the tortuous forty-two months of Revelation have ended, which is otherwise given as $3\frac{1}{2}$ prophetic "times" of 360 years each. This one number, 42,360, incorporates both of these features if we acknowledge a segregation of the digits: 42 and 360.

If this is an intended spiritual meaning of the text, it opens another method of analyzing large numbers. Sarah, representing the spiritual part of the Abrahamic covenant, lived to the age of 127 (12 and 7)—perhaps her age indicates those developed under the Sarah covenant are the church—twelve tribes of spiritual Israel in seven phases of the church. Abraham was 75 years old when God made his covenant with him (Genesis 12:4). Perhaps the seven represent the seven stages of the church, and the five that they are God's new creation. Abraham's age at death, 175 (17 and 5), similarly shows the redeemed children of Abraham who constitute the spiritual body of Christ.

The varied wisdom of God is unbounded. Probably there are still unseen treasures in the Scriptural use of numbers awaiting discovery in the next age as mankind looks into the deep things of his word. But the privilege begins with us now.

Thankfulness

"Were Not Ten Cleansed?"

*Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?
There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.
—Luke 17:17,18*

Gilbert Rice

Ten lepers met Jesus one day nearly two thousand years ago as he journeyed south to Jerusalem. All sought his mercy and were given the same instruction: “Go show yourselves unto the priests.” As they obeyed his word, all were cleansed. Yet only one, a Samaritan, returned to give thanks to Jesus. The failure of the nine to do so brought the above remarks recorded by Luke. What of the other nine? Were they grateful for their healing? Or did their joy in the gift cause them to quickly forget the giver? Yes, it is possible even for those who have received much to take God’s favors for granted.

Thankfulness, genuine gratitude, is considered a mark of maturity and gentility among all honorable people. But even then, it remains only a gesture unless it comes from the heart in real appreciation of the goodness of the giver. The one leper, when he realized he had been healed, deliberately turned back to where Jesus was. Heedless of all about him, he praised God with a loud voice. Falling on his face at Jesus’ feet, he thanked him publicly.

There is a lesson of thankfulness here for all people. It is not surprising to find numerous Scriptural injunctions to Christian thanksgiving—for all things, at all times, in all circumstances. Indeed, the Christian life is to be one of thankfulness, for “what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). These words are relevant to every believer in Christ Jesus: “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing” (Psalm 107:21,22). The psalmist associates the qualities of praise, sacrifice, and witness to others with the discharge of the debt of gratitude.

Causes for Gratitude

The writings of the apostles make it clear that the giving of thanks is an essential accompaniment to all other aspects of Christian living. But first there must be a heart of gratitude within, a full recognition of the bountiful grace of our heavenly Father and an appreciation of all his gifts. We read that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). What, then, of his “unspeakable gift”? How can we adequately thank God for his so great love in the gift of his dearly beloved and only-begotten son? Surely we can offer nothing less than lives of thankfulness in every part.

But is it possible to maintain a spirit of gratitude to God always and in every situation? While it is certainly not in our fallen and imperfect human nature to do so, the Christian perspective should be different from that of the world. This is one of the great axioms of our faith: “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Paul’s full confidence in God’s care for every believer enabled him to declare, “I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11). He who knows the end from the beginning has at heart the best interests of each trusting child. Having this blessed assurance helps God’s children heed the apostle’s words: “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Colossians 3:15).

Every experience of life is working out God’s purposes in us. Even the necessary chastenings are a token of our Father-child relationship. Each experience is to be received with thanksgiving, as from a wise and loving Father. “In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). It is God’s will that we show forth his praises in lives of inner peace, ready for his perfect will. Let us be truly thankful for all that he has done for us in Christ—for rich blessings already received, and for the even richer blessings still to come.

Our Savior Is Our Example

Consider that perfect example of thankfulness in our loving savior. He through whom and for whom all things were created, and in whom all things consisted (Colossians 1:16,17), always gave thanks to the Father for the daily fare he shared with the disciples. He gave thanks for those whom the Father had given to receive of his word (Matthew 11:25; John 17:6), and for answered prayer (John 11:41,42).

Each of us has much for which to be thankful. All God’s exceeding great and precious promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. They are certain of fulfillment because of the faithfulness of our dear Lord and savior. How can we be other than a thankful people when we remain mindful of the riches of his grace toward us already experienced! Each prayer should be first an offering of praise and thanks: “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise” (Psalm 100:4). It has been suggested that the basic elements of every approach to our heavenly Father should be praise, prayer, and petition, with praise—the expression of our gratefulness—having first place.

Of course our expressions of thankfulness should not be limited to our loving Father. Let us never take for granted and let pass unnoted the generosity and kindness of others; it is good to be grateful for all such loving assistance. It is important that we let them know of our appreciation. Our quiet sincere expression to benefactors may be to them a needed tonic of encouragement along the narrow way. And our spirit of gratitude will be a factor in that character development which God desires in us. May our lives be lives of thankfulness and praise in every part: first to our heavenly Father for all the riches of his

grace; to his dear son, our savior, who loved us and gave himself for us; and towards all whose love and kindness enrich our lives.

A Verse-by-verse Study of Revelation 17

Seven Heads, Ten Horns

The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.—Revelation 17:12

George Tabac

In the book of Revelation the apostle John represents the church class which is instructed by various means: in 1:17-20 by Jesus, in 4:1,3 by a voice from heaven, in 5:5 by an elder, in 10:9 by an angel, and in 19:5,9,10 by a voice from the throne. In chapter 17 we read, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters” (Revelation 17:1, NASB). This opening verse of Revelation 17 helps us to see the time setting is the beginning of the harvest. We believe this angel, “one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls,” refers to the seventh messenger to the church: Bro. Russell. This angel first speaks in chapter 17 and continues to instruct John all the way to the end of the book.

As we trace the teachings of this angel to John from chapter 17 forward, we see they all are things we learned from the ministry of Bro. Russell. In this first verse, he shows us the judgment to come of the great harlot. Who but Bro. Russell identified for us the casting off and final judgment of Babylon? In 17:3 he takes us back to the 1,260-year wilderness period. Bro. Russell explained the 1,260 days of Daniel, the development and reign of the Man of Sin. He explained who the bride class is and how they will bless all the families of the earth (Revelation 21:9).

In Revelation 22:2,3 the angel brought to light the doctrines of ransom and restitution that were hidden for centuries. In Revelation 22:10 the angel gives us words that were used in the title of the second volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*: “The Time Is At Hand.” In Revelation 19:6,9,10 he explains the doctrine of the Great Company which had not been seen since the days of the apostles. In Revelation 19:10 the angel tells us to not worship him for he was one of our brethren, and repeats it again in 22:8,9. The angel admonishes us as Bro. Russell himself did, that we are not to prove things by what he wrote, but by a “Thus saith the Lord.” As the angel said, we are to “Worship God,” not his messenger.

Incidentally, having seen that one of the seven angels who have the seven vials to pour out the plagues is the seventh messenger, it would follow that the other six angels are the other six messengers to the church. Since they were raised in 1878 as divine spirit beings, together with all the other sleeping saints, they would thus be in a position to pour out the plagues at God’s appointed times.

But why would the seven messengers be the ones to pour out the vials of plagues? Perhaps because no other seven individuals have a more comprehensive view of the persecutions done by the Antichrist system. These persecutions occurred through the age

and these seven messengers experienced and witnessed them as God's spokesmen at each stage of the church. So now it is their responsibility to oversee the carrying out of God's retributive justice.

The Judgment of Babylon—Revelation 17:1-5

There came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Revelation 17 deals with the judgment of Babylon, the false church, considered a harlot because instead of being a virgin espoused to Christ, she unites with the kings or governments. The strong language describes the false church, not any single individual or devoted, consecrated, sincere people in it; rather it describes symbolically the system overall and its actions and persecutions throughout the ages.

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (verse 3).

John is here given a vision of the 1,260-year period of the true church being in the wilderness condition, from 539 to 1799. The false church is pictured by a woman, sitting on a scarlet colored beast. This beast is scarlet colored. Two other beasts mentioned in Revelation are different. Chapter 12 refers to a **red dragon** and chapter 13 to a **leopard-like** beast. Both differ from the **scarlet colored beast** of chapter 17. When we speak of the beast in Revelation, we most often think of the leopard-like beast of chapter 13 which pictured Papacy; it had power forty-two months to persecute the saints, had the number 666, etc. But the scarlet colored beast of chapter 17 is not Papacy. It pictures the **common people** who supported the false church.

In verse 1 the harlot sits upon many waters, a picture of people. In verse 3 the woman sits on a scarlet colored beast. This is the angel's way of telling us that the many waters and the beast are the same. The beast, in other words, pictures the many common people who in one form or another help support the false system. She sits on the beast and the beast supports her. Just as a rider who sits on a horse controls the horse with the reins, in like manner the system controls the common people. Then in verse 3 we are told the beast had seven heads and ten horns. The four elements of the vision thus far picture the following:

- ♦ **The Woman Rider:** The false church which by harlotry rode or controlled the common people.
- ♦ **Body of the Beast:** The common people who directly or through coercion supported the false church. She rode this beast, showing she

controlled

it.

- ♦ **Seven Heads of the Beast:** The head of a beast is the part that does its thinking and directs the body. Thus the heads pictured seven successive forms of government or leadership throughout the age that were over the beast or people. These heads were also controlled by the woman.
- ♦ **Ten Horns: Horns** picture power. The ten horns picture the ten supporting European nations produced by a division of the Roman Empire; it is similar to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Throughout the age the number of the horns or nations that were the civil powers supporting the woman have sometimes been less and sometimes more than ten. The number ten symbolizes earthly completeness. Thus ten horns is but a symbolic expression of the disintegration of the original Roman Empire into numerous divisions and powers.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” (verses 4, 5).

The false church woman is pictured in royal robes as a queen because she was united with the kings of the earth and sat as a queen. She had a golden cup claiming to be the sole dispenser of biblical divine truths, but in reality the cup was full of religious falsehoods.

The woman rider is given a name: Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots. This implies there are other harlots who followed her example. Other religious protestant systems, like the mother, also united with the kings of the earth.

Things to Come—Revelation 17:6-15 (NASB)

And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. And the angel said ... Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

The scene changes now to the harvest time when the true church was given the correct understanding of the false church during her 1,260-year reign. It caused the harvest church to look with utter astonishment at the history of the Gospel age abominations done in the name of Christ. Then beginning in verse 7 we are told the scene is going to change. Rather than being told the history of the harlot woman, the angel is going to tell us the prophecy of her future, as well as the future of “the beast that carries her,” that is, what is in store for the common people who support that system.

The prophecies of verses 8 through 13 are quite complex. We will first discuss verses 9 and 10, then we will return to verse 8. The time of these verses is the beginning of the harvest when the seventh messenger speaks to the church.

Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. And they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while” (verses 9, 10).

Note carefully what is depicted. It is somewhat a recap of verse 3. The woman is the false church. She sits on a beast, which pictures the common people who support the system. This beast has seven heads, now called mountains, picturing seven successive forms of government through the age that did the thinking for the common people. In verse 10 the symbology changes. The seven heads of verse 9 become seven kings in verse 10.

About these seven heads or kings we are told, “Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.” In other words, at the beginning of the harvest when the seventh messenger speaks, five of these kings or heads have fallen, they are gone, in the past. One was in existence, and one was yet to come. Thus in Bro. Russell’s day the sixth head or king was in existence. The seventh head would come later and remain but a short time.

Who are these seven heads now called seven kings? “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits” implies she has control of the heads. Since the woman rode both the beast and its seven heads, she controlled both the beast and the heads. Thus the first of these seven heads would be a rulership that existed when the false church first came into existence and would in turn be able to control.

The Seven Heads of the Beast

1. Justinian’s Rome, which first gave the Bishop of Rome the title Pontifex Maximus, or Chief Priest over all the others.
2. Charlemagne’s Empire, which first allowed the Papacy to crown the emperor.
3. The Holy Roman Empire (962 A.D. to the “Peace of Westphalia” in 1648). In 962 A.D. Otto the Great became Emperor and named the empire “The Holy Roman Empire.” This third head continued until, as Revelation 13:3 [NASB] puts it, “I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed.” This wound began with the great schism, when two and eventually three popes fought a forty-year war against each other for control of the church. It continued with the Reformation upheaval by Martin Luther which divided the empire into nations favoring Catholicism against those favoring Protestantism. A thirty-year war resulted, ending in 1648 with the “Peace of Westphalia.” The Roman Church reorganized and the fourth head came into being. The head “that was wounded as if slain” was healed when a new fourth head appeared.
4. The Rejuvenated Holy Roman Empire after the Peace of Westphalia, to 1806.

5. Napoleonic Empire (1806) when Napoleon overthrew “The Holy Roman Empire.” At the time of the harvest message these “five heads had fallen” or were in the past.

6. The Victor Emmanuel Dynasty began in 1870. This is the one described as “one [head] is,” that is, was in existence during the time of the seventh messenger and lasted until 1929. (Victor Emmanuel conquered all of Italy, took away the Papal States, but made Roman Catholicism the state religion, and gave other guarantees to the Vatican.)

7. The Nazi-Fascist Empire, from 1929 to 1945. In the time of the seventh messenger this head was “yet to come.” It began when Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty with the Vatican in 1929. In return for the surrender of papal claims to Italian territory, the treaty granted the pope a large sum of money and complete sovereignty over Vatican City. The Catholic religion was given a privileged status and became the state religion. Other treaties were later signed between the Vatican and Hitler’s political party, paving the way for Hitler coming to power.

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life ... when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come” (verse 8).

The phrase, “the beast that you saw **was**, and is **not**,” is not referring to the entire beast, but only a portion of it. The entire beast never went out of existence. It is referring to an **anarchistic portion** of the beast that rose up against the Roman Catholic Church during the French Revolution. That anarchistic phase of the beast is what is meant by “it was,” that is, it rose up during the French Revolution, and then it “was not” when the anarchy ended.

The anarchistic phase ceased when Napoleon quelled the insurrection and reestablished the woman or Roman Catholic Church as the official religion of France once again. Thus at the time of the angel’s writing (Bro. Russell’s day), this anarchistic portion of the beast was not, but will rise again as “The Lord’s Great Army.”

After Napoleon overthrew “The Holy Roman Empire” in 1806, the next head of the beast came into existence. The Napoleonic Empire became the fifth head when Napoleon worked with the Papacy to reestablish Roman Catholicism as the state religion of France.

The same anarchistic portion of the beast is repeatedly referred to in this chapter when the common people rise up once again in opposition to the false system: “The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (Revelation 17:11). This is the same uprising portion of the beast referred to, that “was,” and “is not,” but will rise again as an eighth and then be destroyed. The phrase “will rise again as an eighth” cannot mean an eighth head for the beast had only seven heads, controlled by the harlot. Thus the symbology changed from heads to kings. The word kings refers to rulers. When the uprising of the people against the harlot takes place, the people as a body will rise up and be like an eighth ruler, but they will not be controlled by

the harlot as were the seven heads. They will be “of the seven” in the sense that this new eighth ruler will be as the uprising people that ruled during the French Revolution phase of the seven heads. This eighth king or ruler, after the uprising, will go into perdition, be destroyed.

A Singular Kingdom

*The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received **a kingdom**, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour” (verse 12).*

The Revelator now states what will happen to the ten horns. The ten horns are now called ten kings. Since Napoleon’s time the supporting beast with its ten horns has reduced its support to its head and harlot rider. The Nazi empire tried to increase the beast’s size to include the entire continent of Europe, but it failed. With the defeat of Nazism in 1945, the beast lost its seventh head. Thus these ten kings are no longer horns on a beast because there is no head to this beast to support horns. All seven heads are gone!

The ten, however, are still kings, or rulers of nations. We are told these ten kings have not yet received “a” kingdom (singular). It doesn’t say they have not received kingdoms (plural) for they are kingdoms or nations. Verse 17 shows these combined ten kings will receive a **singular** kingdom, for it says they will give “their kingdom” (singular) to the beast. “For God has put it in their hearts to execute his purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving **their kingdom** [singular] to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.”

This singular kingdom that the ten kings will give to the beast can best be understood if we digress from Revelation to consider what is currently happening in Europe today.

Antitypical Ten Horns [Kings]

After World War II, the NATO Alliance was formed calling for the United States and European Nations to help one another should there be a future attack on any member nation.

The war-weary nations of Europe formed another alliance in 1954 called the Western European Union. It was an alliance formed originally by Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to promote mutual economic benefits.

From this Union came what we know as the “Common Market,” an entity that worked to remove trade barriers among themselves.

By 1995 this Western European Union grew to ten nations when Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece were added. The Western European Union Alliance changed its name to the European Union.

The Alliance then formed the European Monetary Union. Its objective was for Europe to develop its own currency to challenge the dominance of the dollar and of the United States' leadership of the free world. Europe resented the power exercised by the United States through its control of the world's money. Until recent times virtually all central banks in the world would exchange one currency for another based on the value of the dollar.

In January 1999 a new currency came into being called the euro. By June 2002 this one currency was being used by all except two members of the then fifteen European Union member states. (Ten new member states were recently added to the European Union.) These linked economies and dominance should increase since European companies no longer need to exchange their currencies among themselves.

Another area of European resentment that has existed for years is that the United States makes virtually all the decisions regarding when and how NATO troops will be engaged. This led to a significant development in November, 2000. The ten symbolic kings of Revelation 17 agreed to go beyond their economic union to form a **military** alliance. According to the *Washington Post*, November 21, 2000, the "European Union" defense ministers met together to form an initial military alliance of 60,000 troops. The official name given to it is "European Security and Defense Policy." The troops will be used as a "Rapid Reaction Force" that could act in crises on the continent when NATO, and in particular the United States, chooses not to engage.

European Union Leaders, with delegates from all participating countries, met for seventeen months in Brussels to write a constitution for the nations of Europe. Valery Giscard d'Estaing the former president of France, was its chairman. On July 10, 2003, they submitted a draft treaty establishing a constitution for the nations of Europe that is now being evaluated by all those nations.

The "hand writing" seems to be on the wall. The European Union is growing at a rapid pace. It has developed a common market, a common currency, a common military alliance, and now are in the process of adopting a constitution for all member states.

Here is a comparison of the European Union with the United States:

	European Union	United States
Population	373 million	273 million
Work Week	35 hours	40+ hours
Vacation	4 to 6 weeks	2 weeks
Gross National Product	\$8.332 trillion	\$8.127 trillion
Armed Forces	2,196,000 Compulsory	1,411,673 Voluntary

Many European leaders are committed to full union: economic, military, and political. They take their inspiration from Emperor Charlemagne, crowned by Pope Leo III in 800 A.D., who had a vision of a United Christian Europe that would return the continent to the glory of ancient Rome. European leaders present an annual Charlemagne Prize to the individual who contributed the most to the concept of European unity in the prior year. In the year 2000 President Bill Clinton became the third American recipient.

These developments are causing great concern in Washington. The U. S. wants to maintain superiority and dominance over Western Europe. Senators Helms and Smith recently warned “that it is neither in Europe’s nor America’s interests to undermine our proven national relationships in favor of one with a European super-state whose creation is being driven in part, by anti-American sentiment.”

Is the European Union growing into a super-state, or superpower? Yes it is. Individual national language divisions will continue to exist (the ten kings continue on the scene in the prophecy), but a collective cooperative will emerge that will wield a power far in excess of the individual nations. What is developing at an ever-increasing rate is exactly what we should expect according to the prophecy.

“The ten horns which you saw are **ten kings** who have **not yet received a kingdom**” (Revelation 17:12, NASB). The ten horns are the ten kingdoms of Europe which have not yet received or become the single, combined, super-power kingdom, which is, however, knocking at the door. When they receive this kingdom, note what will happen:

“They receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast ... For God has put it in their hearts to execute his purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled” (Revelation 17:12,13,17, NASB).

Thus when the ten kingdoms of Europe achieve this new United Super Kingdom status, they will give or share the kingdom power and authority with the beast, which pictures the uprising common people, in other prophecies referred to as “The Lord’s Great Army.”

The power will be given by God for “one hour.” This is the same hour referred to in the next chapter, the hour in which Babylon is destroyed: “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come” (Revelation 18:10).

The result of the cooperation of the ten kings and the beast is given in verse 14: “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

The phrase “these shall make war with the Lamb” means the alliance of the kings and the beast will result in war against our Lord, against all our Lord’s kingdom interests including the remaining church members and those of the great company who will no doubt finish their course during the early part of this time. But the Lamb, our glorified

Lord as King of kings, will be victorious, together with his glorified saints who will then be with him, those who were called, chosen, and faithful unto death.

“And he said to me, The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues” (Revelation 17:15, NASB).

The angel reminds us of the main characters in this vision. The harlot is Babylon, primarily the mother, but it includes her daughters. The beast she sits upon and controls are peoples of all nations that supported her.

This is an important verse. The King James translation says “And the ten horns which thou sawest **upon** the beast, these shall hate the whore,” etc. The King James gives the thought that only the ten horns hate the harlot and in turn destroy her. This is not the thought of the Greek. Both the Sinaitic and Alexandrian manuscripts have “the ten horns **and** the beast shall hate the harlot.”

What will cause them to hate the harlot? This vision does not say, but other Scriptures imply it is because of a worldwide spread of the truth of God’s plan; the people will come to see her teachings as false. This is the thought of the phrase that the ten kings “will make her naked,” that is expose her for what she really is. But in any case, this text says the people who formerly supported the harlot as she rode upon them, controlling their actions, will now rise up as the Lord’s great army in opposition to her, just as they did in the French Revolution. The beast “that was” will rise up again out of the abyss of inactivity, and together with the authority or cooperation of the “United Ten Horns,” will destroy the harlot systems of Babylon.

This prophecy is in complete harmony with the type of Jezebel who similarly as this harlot of Revelation, pictured Babylon. It was Jezebel’s own eunuchs, who previously ministered to her every wish, who threw her out the window. Likewise here: those who previously supported her will destroy her as a system.

The End—Revelation 17:16-18

And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city [Babylon] which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

God will allow the Lord’s Great Army uprising to continue just long enough, “until”—until it fulfills his purpose of burning the tares and removing the false systems. Then will come the full blessings of the kingdom when all mankind, including the individuals who had part in these systems throughout the age, will be raised from the dead. They will be taught our heavenly Father’s wonderful plan which Satan blinded them from understanding previously. Then the glorified church will give them every opportunity to receive everlasting life.

Why did God give us prophecies such as this? This is Paul's answer: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:4,6).

God wants us to soberly watch current events that we might know where we are in the stream of time. He gives us these prophecies to strengthen our faith as we watch for the stately steppings of our Lord fulfilling prophecy. Let us watch, and be sober!

News and Views

Pastoral Bible Institute News

Religious

“Reading at Risk,” a survey based on data from “The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts,” was conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002. Among its findings are that fewer than half of Americans over 18 now read novels, short stories, plays or poetry; that the consumer pool for books of all kinds has diminished; and that the pace at which the nation is losing readers, especially young readers, is quickening. The Census Bureau study was one of the largest studies ever conducted on the subject. The one category of book to rise markedly was that of religious texts, with total sales of \$337.9 million, 36.8 percent over the previous year.

—New York Times, 7/8/2004

China is using tactics it employed to quash the Falun Gong spiritual movement against Christian churches and other fast-growing religious groups in a broad government clampdown on dissent. The campaign focuses on rural China, where religious conversion to Christianity and other faiths is flourishing. Across China, a religious revival is gaining momentum. Foreign church groups estimate that there are 35 million Chinese Protestants alone, and as many as two million more are baptized every year. The crackdown targets “cults,” defined by government documents as having characteristics commonly associated with “weeping and shouting.”

—Wall Street Journal, 7/27/2004

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland, Ore., filed for bankruptcy Tuesday, becoming the first Catholic diocese in the nation to seek financial protection against millions of dollars in potential sexual-abuse claims. Though Portland is the first, it probably will not be the last of the nation’s 195 dioceses to seek court protection from the scandal’s effects. The diocese of Tucson is expected to seek bankruptcy protection by mid-September. [Its vicar] has likened the increasing sexual-abuse claims to a monsoon. In New York, Father Thomas Reese, editor of the Jesuit magazine *America*, said he expected more bankruptcies. “People in the pews ... don’t want to pay to settle these suits, not with their hard-earned money.”

—Los Angeles Times, 7/7/2004

6%—Percentage of France’s population that is Muslim.

50%—Percentage of France’s prison population that is Muslim.

—TIME, 8/2/2004

Social

The proportion of the world's new H.I.V. infections occurring in Asia has risen sharply in the past two years as the epidemic has outstripped efforts to stop it, the United Nations said in a report. The size of the increase surprised United Nations health officials, who said that one in four—or nearly 1.2 million of the estimated 4.8 million new infections in 2003—occurred in Asia. Worldwide, the rate of new infections of human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS, in 2003 was the highest of any year since the epidemic was recognized more than two decades ago, the report said. Since 1981, more than 20 million people have died of AIDS, 2.6 million of them in 2003. About 5.1 million people in India are living with H.I.V., leaving India poised to overtake South Africa, with 5.3 million, as the country with the most infected people.

—New York Times, 7/7/2004

Most Indians have extremely limited and unreliable access to what they need most. About three in every four people have no public sanitary facilities (such as toilets). Even more have no access to safe drinking water. They experience a daily crisis. Many even die from it: every year more than one million Indian children are killed by bad drinking water. In states such as Andhra Pradesh, abysmal irrigation means crops keep failing. The state is a leading software magnet, yet away from its air-conditioned offices, some 500 of its farmers have committed suicide in 2004, often by drinking the pesticide that was purchased with debts they could not repay. Even in Hyderabad, the gleaming state capital, municipal water comes only every other day.

—Financial Times, 7/24/2004

An Amazonian tribe whose language has no word for numbers beyond two is the subject of a study to understand how language contributes to ideas. Language molds thoughts so much that man cannot conceptualize ideas for which there are no words, according to American researcher Peter Gordon of Columbia University. Dr. Gordon's work was reported in the journal *Nature*, and shows the ability of tribal adults to conceptualize numbers is no better than that of infants or some animals. The tribe has words for "one" and "two" but anything more than that is not quantified but merely lumped together as "many." The tribe has little social structure, no art, and they barter instead of using currency. Their language is limited to just ten consonants and vowels. Dr. Gordon says that his research casts doubt on claims by linguists that people have an innate numerical sense.

—Daily Telegraph, 8/20/2004

Professor J. Anthony von Fraunhofer of the University of Maryland Dental School ... took 20 healthy teeth extracted for orthodontic or periodontal reasons, cut them into tiny blocks of tooth enamel and exposed the blocks to a variety of popular soft drinks. All the drinks weakened or permanently destroyed the enamel. Diet sodas were just as bad as regular sodas, and canned iced tea caused 30 times the damage of fresh-brewed tea or coffee. The main culprit in this dental destruction, says Fraunhofer, is the presence of chemicals, such as citric, malic and tartaric acids, that are added to impart tartness to the drinks. Each year Americans drink, on average, nearly 600 cans of soda apiece.

—TIME, 8/9/2004

A new report warns that businesses world-wide need to gear up for a growing risk of water shortages, which already have led to plant closures or threatened shutdowns in India and elsewhere. Water shortages have arisen in recent years across the U.S. Southwest and Northwest, as well as in India, China and Africa. Some critics of globalization argue that companies should steer clear of arid places where water supplies are already under pressure from growing populations.

—Wall Street Journal, 8/23/2004

Political

Scientists are beginning to accept that earth has entered a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, so named because humans have come to rival nature in their impact on the global environment. The EuroScience forum in Stockholm, Sweden, said that climate change was the most obvious of a complex range of man-made effects that is rapidly changing the physics, chemistry and biology of the planet. Paul Crutzen, the Nobel prize-winning atmospheric chemist who first proposed the term Anthropocen four years ago, said the concept was winning wide acceptance from colleagues in other fields. A dozen hotspots have been identified which could trigger rapid large-scale changes across the planet if sufficiently stressed. Among them is the Amazon basin and the Sahara. Other hotspots include the North Atlantic Ocean circulation, the West Antarctic ice sheet, the Asian monsoon system and the Strait of Gibraltar.

—Financial Times, 8/27/2004

After being powerless to prevent mass murder in Srebrenica and genocide in Rwanda, the United Nations appears ineffective at quelling the Sudanese government's aggression against civilians of Darfur. In August, the U.N. reported aerial bombings against civilians. In addition, forced relocation of villagers and continued violence by the government-sponsored *Janjaweed* militia hindered humanitarian workers from helping the 1.2 million refugees now "guarded" in concentration camps by some of the same militiamen who made them flee. In July, the U.S. Congress described the atrocities of Darfur as genocide. While some leaders have advocated military intervention, no country has troops to spare at the moment. The U.N. Security Council's threat of economic sanctions against Khartoum has failed to produce results. So far, the people of Darfur have lost their homes and livelihood; they live in constant fear of attack.

—African Geopolitics Quarterly, 8/31/2004
(editorial by Michael Soussan)

A numb Russia observed the first national day of mourning for the more than 350 victims of the terrorist school seizure. In Beslan, townspeople crowded around the coffins of children, parents, grandparents and teachers ahead of the 120 burials scheduled in the town cemetery and adjoining fields. At the school at the center of the tragedy, people lit candles and left shrines including children's notebooks, shoes, and bottles of water—symbolizing the water the hostages were denied over three days of terror. Two rescue workers from Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry who were killed in the first moments of the battle over the school—when they arrived to remove the bodies of executed hostages—were being laid to rest in Ramenskoye, the ministry's base outside Moscow. The official death toll stood at 335, not including the 30 slain attackers; the regional health ministry said 326 of the dead had been hostages, and the Emergency Situations Ministry said 156 of the dead were children. The school seizure came ... just over a week after two Russian passenger planes crashed following explosions, killing all 90 people aboard. As with the hostage-taking, those attacks appeared linked to Russia's ongoing war in Chechnya.

—Associated Press, 9/6/2004

Financial

Hurricane Ivan cut a destructive swath across four Southeastern states, spawning deadly tornadoes, toppling houses into the Gulf of Mexico and leaving hundreds of thousands of people without power. At least 20 deaths were blamed on Ivan, on top of the 68 people killed during Ivan's destructive trek through the Caribbean. The storm could rank as the second-costliest U.S. hurricane, behind Hurricane Andrew, which in 1992 killed 26 people in Florida and caused insured losses of \$20.3 billion, adjusted for inflation. Hurricane Charley inflicted about \$6.8 billion in insured losses during August, and Frances caused an estimated \$2 billion to \$4 billion after it hit in September.

—Wall Street Journal, 9/17/2004

The stark new reality of life in a global economy is that Europeans have to work longer hours. The French, who in 2000 trimmed their workweek to 35 hours in hopes of generating more jobs, are now talking about lengthening it again, worried that the shorter hours are hurting the economy. In Britain, more than a fifth of the labor force, according to a 2002 study, works longer than the European Union's mandated limit of 48 hours a week. From the 1970s until recently, Europe followed a philosophy of less-is-more when it came to labor, with the result that Europeans work an average of 10 percent fewer hours a year than Americans. Germans, with the lightest schedule, work about 18 percent fewer hours. The French have an average of 25 vacation days a year, while the Germans get 30 days. The average in Japan is 18 days and in the United States, 12 days.

—New York Times, 7/7/2004

Two groups have put up a giant digital display to tick off the cost of the Iraq war. Organizers calculated the war's cost as of Wednesday at \$134.5 billion and were adding \$177 million per day. The billboard is on a hotel façade at Broadway and 47th Street [in New York].

—Los Angeles Times, 8/27/2004

The US Treasury has created a taskforce to examine how to save the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) in the event of a default by United Airlines, the bankrupt carrier. The crisis in the airline industry has raised fears that the U.S. taxpayer may be required to pick up the bill. Bradley Belt, executive director of the PBGC, said ... "the level [of premiums] received by the PBGC is simply inadequate to cover financial claims."

—Financial Times, 8/30/2004

About 1.3 million Americans fell into poverty in 2003, while the total without medical insurance swelled by 1.4 million, according to official figures from the Census Bureau. The total number of Americans living in poverty reached 35.9 million in 2003—12.5 percent of the population in the United States. The Census Bureau said rising levels of people without insurance was largely because of a fall in the number of people being offered coverage by their employers. The poverty line in the U.S. is set at an annual income of \$9,573 for individuals and \$18,660 for a family of four with two children. The poverty rate has risen from 11.3 to 12.5 percent since 2000 but remains below the average for the 1980s and 1990s.

—Financial Times, 8/27/2004

The [Greek] government is saddled with 40 stadiums and sports venues that glistened during the Games but may prove to be white elephants; there is no government plan for how to use the installations, and the price of upkeep will be exorbitant. The full cost to Greece of staging the Olympics is still unknown. Officially, the government Finance Ministry has estimated the price tag at 7 billion euros, but some private analysts say it could be closer to 10 billion euros—more than twice the amount budgeted. Greece’s debt stands at nearly 5% of its gross domestic product, one of the largest in Europe—in a nation already suffering high inflation and unemployment.

—Los Angeles Times, 8/30/2004

Israel

Tourism to Israel in the first six months of 2004 has increased 66 percent since a year ago; the Ministry of Tourism announced on July 20. The figure—673,900 people—is 69 percent higher than 2002. “We’re getting more tourists and we’re really happy,” said Nitsan Ilan, head of the ministry’s foreign press division. Ilan attributed the large increase to efforts made in targeting specific audiences—both Jewish and Christian—in the United States, Britain, France, and Russia, to an improved economic situation, and to the recent decrease in terror attacks.

—Jerusalem Post, 7/21/2004

Israel was ranked 51st for economic freedom in a report released by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank based in Washington, DC. In “Economic Freedom of the World: 2004 Annual Report,” Israel received a score of 6.6 out of 10 compared with 6.5 a year earlier, when it came in 53rd. This is the eighth edition of the report, which ranks 123 nations for 2002, the most recent year for which data was available. It measures economic freedom in five main categories: the size of government, the legal structure of property rights, access to sound money, the freedom to trade internationally, and the regulation of credit, labor, and business.

—Jerusalem Post, 7/18/2004

With immigration to Israel down sharply in recent years, a charter flight delivered nearly 400 new arrivals from the United States and Canada as part of an expanding program that has been luring middle-class Jews from North America. North American Jews, most of whom are comfortably middle-class at home, have traditionally migrated to Israel in small numbers, averaging 3,000 to 5,000 annually for the last quarter-century, according to Israeli government figures. But Nefesh B’Nefesh is seeking to raise those figures substantially. In its first try, the group brought in just over 500 immigrants in the summer of 2002. More than 1,000 came last year, despite the continuing Middle East violence and an Israel economy that was just beginning to crawl out of a recession.

—New York Times, 7/15/2004

Aquaculture, among the fastest growing sectors of the world food economy, has gotten a boost from an Israeli company that has developed a new method for raising fish in sea-based cages. The company has developed a new method of growing fish in the Mediterranean Sea, according to a report in Globes financial newspaper. According to a 2003 report by Hillel Gordin of the Ministry of Agriculture, “Several technological approaches were tried in the past but none was economically viable due to the high-energy state of the sea in winter along the Israeli Mediterranean coast.

—Arutz Sheva, 7/8/2004

A recent educational program on Palestinian Authority (PA) TV taught that the Jews of biblical history and those of today have no connection, and that accepted Jewish history in the Land of Israel is essentially “Arab history.” Palestinian Media Watch, a watchdog organization monitoring PA media, reports that two senior PA historians, guests on the television program, went to great lengths to deny ancient Jewish history and erase the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel while at the same time, describing a contrived ancient Palestinian Arab history and creating a historical connection to the land that never existed.

—Arutz Sheva, 8/23/2004

An Iranian Revolutionary Guards spokesman says Tehran won’t strike first but if its nuclear facilities are attacked, it will launch a “devastating” attack against Israel. Iran will “wipe Israel off the face of the earth” if it or the United States attacks its nuclear facilities, a senior Iranian official has warned. Masud Yazaiari, spokesperson of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, told the Iranian student news agency that the U.S. is using Israel to threaten Iran. He added that Iran will not strike first, but if it does, its attack will be “harmful, assertive, and devastating.”

—Maariv, 7/28/2004

In the same week that a United Nations court condemned Israel’s antiterrorism barrier, another division of the UN cast a more honest and revealing light on the situation of the Palestinians. The “Human Development Index” measures life expectancy, health, education, environmental quality, and overall living standards, ranking all nations from number one (Norway) to number 177 (Sierra Leone). The so-called “Occupied Palestinian Territories” earned a place near the middle of the list, with numerical scores much closer to the privileged nations of North America and Western Europe than to destitute areas of sub-Saharan Africa. The Palestinians ranked above both Syria and Egypt—the most powerful Arab nations of the region. Palestinians actually enjoy better living standards than their Arab brothers in neighboring states—or, for that matter, than citizens of the most populous Muslim countries, Indonesia or Pakistan.

—beyondthenews.com, 7/28/2004

The number of Israeli civilians killed in terror attacks in the last four years is nearly equal to the number killed by terrorists in the preceding 53 years, Shin Bet (Israeli security service) head Avi Dichter told the cabinet recently. Dichter told the cabinet that from November 29, 1947, when the United Nations voted for partition and Jewish statehood, until the start of the current violence in September 2000, some 755 Israelis were killed in terror actions here or abroad. Some 674 Israeli civilians have been killed since September 2000. Dichter said that there has been a substantial increase in the Palestinian use of women and children under 18 to carry out attacks. In 2004 they account for some 81 percent of attack perpetrators. Since January 2003, Israel has succeeded in foiling 70 percent of the attempted suicide attacks.

—Jerusalem Post, 8/9/2004

Short Subjects

Forgetful Neglect

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

This is a simple, but appropriate, exhortation. Its being in the Bible suggests that those who receive his benefits need to remember and acknowledge them. Perhaps we find it easy to forget or neglect to give due thanks to God for his deliverance of us from the world. Perhaps some of us—due to day to day pressures—neglect to give thanks for his overruling care. But it is not right that we forget or neglect. “Fear [reverence] the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you” (1 Samuel 12:24).

—Gilbert Rice

And Finally

*“Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered”
(Psalm 40:5).*

Probably we apprehend but a small fraction of the blessings which come to us from God’s providence. Even of those we perceive, “they are more than can be numbered,” meditated on, and fully appreciated. Nevertheless, it is a privilege of each child of God to mark the blessings of God, reflect on them, and appreciate what they speak of God’s love and care and kindness to each of us individually. We are constantly debtors to God’s loving grace. As the evidence of this permeates our heart, the more will we be prepared to reflect to others a token of this kindness from above. In this way these reflected favors may sweeten the lives of others, as ours have been sweetened.