

MYSTIC SYMBOLISM IN BIBLE NUMERALS

By

LEO STALNAKER



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CHAPTER

I

MYSTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF CERTAIN NUMERALS

All who read the Holy Scriptures in a studious way are tremendously impressed that, among the multitude of numerals in the Bible, certain numbers found there possess, in addition to their mere numerical value, some unusual and significant meaning—a mystic, numerical symbolism.

Most of the numbers in the Holy Bible occur in no unusual manner, but the earnest student of Holy Writ will discover that a surprising array of numerals found in the Scriptures do have attached to them, in addition to their numerical value, some startling, mystic symbolism of importance.

What is the hidden significance?

That some of this strange, numerical symbolism in the Bible originated with God, Himself, can be stated quite positively, and that much of it was recognized and employed by Jesus is also quite indisputable, and awe inspiring.

This dynamic fact identifies numerology as one of the profundities of Holy Writ to command attention of Bible students.

Numerology is the science that treats of numbers. It is the purpose of this work on Biblical Numerology to present an interesting, educational delving into Biblical, numerical symbolism in an earnest effort to bring about a helpful understanding of one of the mysterious ways in which God moves, His wonders to perform.

To that end, this volume sets forth every passage in the entire Bible that alludes to these peculiar numerals hereinafter designated as having unusual, mystic significance.

It is not the purpose of this work to recommend, or to attempt to defend, or to comment favorably or unfavorably upon any argument in behalf of, the so-called pseudo-science of Arithmomancy, or divination by numbers, which became very prevalent among the ancients and which Pythagoras declared to be an actual emanation of the Deity, and by which future events were said to have been foretold after the doctrine had been reduced to a science and governed by specific rules.

The origin of the science of symbols is lost in the maze of early antiquity. Though the beginning is not known, it doubtless connects itself with the cradle of humanity, and the science comes down to us from an age when only a few could read or write.

Man's earliest instruction was by symbols.

A thing to be symbolic must really mean something, and must, in its nature, be a proper, adequate or fitting sign or token of something.

Most ancient worships, arts, architecture, writings and culture came into existence under the influence of the science of symbols.

Pythagoras, in his travels in pursuit of knowledge, is said to have visited Babylon during the captivity of the Jews, and to have been instructed in the sacred things of the Israelites by Daniel, and perhaps by the prophet Ezekiel also. He was initiated into the deepest mysteries of his age by the sages who believed that "the science of numbers is one of the keys of magic, and will open up all of the gates of the universe." Pythagoras perhaps taught the purest doctrines, and was perhaps the most virtuous of all heathen philosophers. He saw in numbers the principle of all things. The mystical meaning and supposed Divine virtue of numbers formed an important part of his philosophy. He believed and taught that the creation of the world was produced by their harmonious combination, and that numbers existed before the world.

Divination, or fortune telling, by numbers was not confined to Jewish or to the heathen nations, but has occupied much attention in later times and during different periods of Christianity. The numeral system has been introduced into the modern practice of Astrology.

It is not within the province of this volume to seek to advance this line of thought or to commend or condemn it; this volume is concerned solely with the startling numerical symbolism that is certainly, unmistakably present in the Holy Scriptures.

The peculiar numerals of unusual, mystic significance

in the Bible are one, two, three, four, six, seven, ten, twelve, forty and seventy.

Among all these, the number seven is the most outstanding and important in this symbolism. It is the "perfect" number—the symbol of perfection.

While the number seven is used in some instances in the Bible without any significant meaning aside from its mere numerical value, we find it is symbolic of perfection in dozens of things, conditions or qualities. It is the symbol of perfection in conquest, in strength, in plenty, in scarcity or famine, in vengeance, in cleansing, in purification, in punishment, in service, in release, in rest, in worship, in feasting, in sacrifice, in commemoration, in discernment, in consecration, in light-giving, in wisdom, in God's covenant, in mourning, in fasting, in giving, in forgiveness, in trespass, in failure, in dedication, in demon-possession, in abominations, in greatness, in flight, and in revelation.

The numeral one is used in many instances in the Bible as the symbol of Deity. The ancients regarded one as the father of numbers, the cause of all the numerical system. And God is likewise the father of mankind, the first, the beginning, the cause of all things. "God is one." In the Scriptures He is referred to as "the Mighty One," "the Holy One," and the like.

Two is the symbol of association, union or combination. Antagonism in some form is very often present in this symbolism of the numeral two. In many instances the association, uniting or combining, represented or alluded to by the number two, is for the purpose of combating antagonism. But in other cases this associat-

ing, uniting or combining is of opposites or contrarities, thus resulting in antagonism.

Three is the symbol of the attributes of Deity, and of holiness. It alludes to the Godhead. God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Of course, this mystery of the Trinity or Triune God is beyond the full comprehension of the finite mind. God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. This symbolism of the number three is also seen in thrice holy of Isaiah, and the triple blessing in the benediction.

Four is the symbol of world-wide extension, or of the organized world in its extension. In this connection we have the four seasons, the four elements, the four cardinal points of the compass, "the four winds" of the earth, "the four quarters," "the four corners," "the four wheels," "the four metals," and "the four rivers."

Six is the world number—the symbol of the world powers' greatest triumph. This is very forcefully presented in connection with the sixth seal and the sixth trumpet in Revelation.

Ten is the human number. It is the symbol of that which is human or earthly. It is the number of the human fingers. In antiquity, before the time of a perfected system of symbols for use in calculations, human beings counted on their fingers and regarded them as visible, numerical signs. As time went on, these finger symbols were developed into a system capable of expressing numbers into the thousands. Ten later became the basis of the decimal system. The symbolic use of the numeral ten as the human number and the symbol of

that which is earthly is found in Daniel in the ten horns representing the ten earthly kingdoms.

Twelve is the church number. It is the symbol of God's people. Israel, God's chosen people, had her twelve tribes. Jesus had his twelve apostles. There are twelve gates in the New Jerusalem through which God's people enter the Holy City.

Forty is the symbol of trial, humiliation or desolation. The greatest desolation in history was wrought by the deluge. It was of forty days' duration. Forty is associated in the Bible, in several prominent instances, with humiliation. The periods of fasting and humility of Moses, Elijah and Jesus were forty days and forty nights. Jonah cried "Yet forty days and Ninevah shall be overthrown."

Seventy is the symbol of transition—change in humans from one state or status to another. The seventy elders selected in the wilderness allude to this symbolism. After seventy years, Tyre would experience a transition. The seventy years' captivity of the Jews, and the seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel, were destined to bring transition. The period determined upon by God as the usual and average life of mankind is seventy years, and then comes the great transition.

Among the early ancients odd numbers were regarded as being masculine, and even numbers as being feminine. The fact that even numbers could be divided and leave a perfect result, or "offspring," gave rise to this idea. The number one, being the beginning, the first, was regarded as the father of numbers, and from it sprang the prejudice among the ancients in favor of

odd numbers. Pythagoras, in his teachings, also observed this.

A study of the numerical symbolism set forth in the Holy Scriptures, discloses an actual and a remarkable distinction or difference between odd and even numbers. Odd numbers are applicable to celestial things, and allude to the Divine. Even numbers allude to things terrestrial.

One, three and seven are regarded as Divine numbers. One is the symbol of Deity; three, the symbol of the attributes of Deity; seven, the symbol of perfection. The even numbers, two, four, six, ten, twelve, forty and seventy, allude to human or earthly things—things terrestrial. Two is the symbol of union or combination and is usually associated with antagonism in the world; four, the symbol of world-wide extension or of the organized world in its extension; six, the world number, the symbol of the world powers' greatest triumph; ten, the symbol of that which is human or earthly; twelve, the symbol of God's people on this earth; forty, the symbol of earthly trial, humiliation or desolation; seventy, the symbol of transition or change in human and earthly matters.

The importance of numerical symbolism to the ancients perhaps arose from the fact that the letters of the Hebrew language were originally numerals, and the entire Bible being composed of different groups or combinations of Hebrew letters, it came to be the common belief that the true meaning or proper interpretation of difficult passages of Scripture could best be ascertained

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or reached only by resorting to the numerical value of those letters.