

## How to understand numbers in the Bible

Written by Administrator

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There is popular assertion that although the Bible may be inspired, so are the works of all good authors. That may be true in one sense, but the Bible is beyond measure far superior in inspiration than any other book ever written. There are many things which show this, such as symbolism, poetry, chiasms, and numbers, because the numbers in the Bible have symbolic meaning. To most people, this symbolism is not easily apparent, so let's take a closer look at what the Bible teaches us about numbers.

Dr. A.T. Pierson, a non-LDS Biblical scholar wrote, "There is unquestionable evidence of a numerical proportion and symmetry in this marvelous book [the Bible]. Numbers and mathematical proportion mark it as a whole, and appear in its individual parts, with such frequency, and in such definite relations and conditions, as to evince a mathematical mind. In the planetary and stellar worlds, their distances and dimensions, densities, proportions, orbits, and periods of revolution. In the most minute as in the most majestic objects in nature the same laws govern. In the mineral realm, crystallization shows its squares, triangles, circles and polygons, cubes, cylinders, and pyramids or cones, all with exact angles and perfection of proportion. The million snowflakes have a million exquisite forms, each, under the microscope, revealing indescribable complexity and beauty." ("Numbers in the Bible," by Robert Dugall Johnston, page 30)

To paraphrase Dr. Pierson's conclusion, God is a being of perfect precision and order, and He expresses this perfection in all of His works according to mathematical law. Therefore, it is only reasonable to expect to find a similar expression of His perfection in His word. This was also the conclusion reached by F.W. Grant. He said, "All natural sciences are ranging themselves under arithmetical law. Every law of nature, says Herschel, tends to express itself in terms of arithmetic. While astronomy preaches it to you from the starry spheres, the plants in the arrangements of their leaves and the division of their flowers, the animal kingdom shows its partiality among its different tribes for different numbers, the crystal talks mathematics to you from the window-pane. Why should not a law of numbers pervade Scripture also, and a link God's Work and God's Word together, or shows His Word also to be His Work!" (ibid, page 31)

Let's take few but good examples. The following extract from a Canadian magazine, quoted by Walter Scott is of interest.: "The Books of the Old Testament are 36 in number (counting Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles as one book each, since, originally they were). The simplest division of 36 is into 3 by 12. Put this number into the symbolisms of these figures, and what do we find? Three (3) is the number for Divinity or perfection and 12 the governmental number taken together, they give you "God in government"

What more precise definition could we have of the books of the law? But the books of the New Testament are 27 in number. And this is the cube of 3 (3 times 3 times 3), which is the most perfect number there can be because it is the only number which can be divided only by 3, and 3 is the symbol of Divinity. Furthermore, the number 2 symbolizes a witness, and the number 7 represent completion. Thus the number of books in the New Testament also shows that it is a

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second witness to the completion of God's redeeming work.

But how do we know this? Lets' take a look at what the Bible has to say these numbers.

The Number one represents either "the beginning" or "the head". We know that in mathematics, this number is the first or beginning number. Spiritually speaking it represents the first, the foremost, the lead, the chief, the source, or, in other words, the head. For example, there is only 1 God, 1 law, 1 priesthood, 1 Savior, and 1 way to God. Under the law of Moses, there was only 1 High Priest of the temple at a time. Thus this number represents the source from which all others come from.

The Number two represents a testimony, or a witness. In John 8:17-18 we read, "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of me"

Let's look at some Biblical examples of this. When the kingdom of Israel divided into 2 nations, Jeroboam, seeking to establish idolatry as the official state religion, made 2 golden calves. In 1 King 12:28 we read, "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." After this came the witness of two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, to 2 kings.

When we look at the New Testament, we see the same thing. In Matthew 9:27 is recorded, "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us." It is interesting to note that these two blind men also symbolized the moral blindness of the Jews.

In Matthew 22:40 Jesus said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The whole law, which was God's testimony to man, rested on these 2 commandments. And what are these two commandments? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39)." But in reality they are the same commandment, because in order to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind, we must love our neighbor because that is how we show our love for God. So both commandments testify or witness for each other.

Jesus was crucified between 2 thieves. They represent a witness of the hatred which the Jews had for their Messiah. But there is even more symbolism to Christ's crucifixion than meets the eye. When the Roman soldier plunged his spear into His side, blood and water came out. Jesus spoke of Himself as living water. Also, one is baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins, thus the water and the blood symbolizes the forgiveness of sins plus the atonement for man's sins. Thus these two symbols together serve as a witness of Christ's love for us

There are the 2 witnesses mention of in Revelation 11:3 "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." There are the 2 sticks which Ezekiel speaks of, and the 2 tables of stone on which

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God wrote for the law. If God wanted to, He could have made only one tablet, couldn't He? Certainly that's all that was necessary for just ten commandments. On the ark of the covenant were 2 cherubims that were at either end. And there are many other illustrations I could give.

The number 3 represents "Perfection". Before we look at this it is interesting to note that this number represents perfection even in the simplest things. For example, when we talk about "time" we can encompass it all by talking about the past, present and future. There are 3 dimensions that encompass everything on earth - length, width, and depth.

The scriptures contain this number more than any other. In the Godhead, there is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. There were 3 times that the Father's voice bore testimony of His Son. The first time was at Christ's baptism (Matthew 3:17) as a testimony to the Jews. The second time was for the church leaders (Luke 9:35) and the third was for the gentiles (Greeks) (John 12:28). In fact, Jesus even told them "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (Vs 30).

During His ministry Jesus raised 3 people from the grave to show his perfect power over death. Peter denied Jesus 3 times but Jesus gave Him the opportunity to repent 3 times. In John 21:15-17 we read, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

On the cross above Jesus was a sign that said, "King of the Jews". It was written in 3 different languages. Peter had 3 visions to convince him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 11:5-10).

According to 1 John 5:8 "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The multiples of the number 3 can have the same meaning. For example, Christ begun His ministry at the age of 30 and died at the age of 33.

The number four represents the earth, we have four points on the compass, four seasons and so on. Even creation is represented by the number four. The first verse of the book of Genesis is an accurate description of the origin of the earth and creation. This verse in its structure indicated that the creation was complete (see the meaning of the number seven), as implied by the mathematical structure  $4 \times 7$  Genesis 1: 28 letter =  $4 \times 7$  we have 28 Hebrew letters for this phrase.

The number 6 represents that which is not complete. This is especially true of the number 666. If 3 represents perfection, then the number 666 represents the perfect imperfection. What better number could there be to represent the Devil? The descendants of Cain are quoted only

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until the

sixth generation. In Genesis 22 the words "burnt offering" are mentioning six times, the seventh being reserved for the Divinely perfect Substitute (v8).

When the enraged Pharaoh pursued the Israelites, He did so with 600 chariots (Exodus 14:7). Three men stand out preeminently in the Scriptures as the enemy of God and his people and each of these is branded with the number 6. ""And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height [was] six cubits and a span. And [he had] an helmet of brass upon his head, and he [was] armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat [was] five thousand shekels of brass. And [he had] greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear [was] like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head [weighed] six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him" (1 Samuel 17:4-7).

Another is found in Daniel 3:1. " NEBUCHADNEZZAR the king made an image of gold, whose height [was] threescore cubits, [and] the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon." And the other one is the antichrist as recorded in Revelation 13, which has the infamous number 666.

The Number 7 represents completeness. In the Bible, when a cycle is finished or when something is complete, you will find the number 7. In Genesis 12:2-3 we have the blessing of Abraham with 7 promises "And [1] I will make of thee a great nation, and [2] I will bless thee, and [3] make thy name great; and [4] thou shalt be a blessing: And [5] I will bless them that bless thee, and [6] curse him that curseth thee: and [7] in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

To the Israelite people God likewise gave them 7 promises. In Exodus 6:6-8 "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am] the LORD, and [1] I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and [2] I will rid you out of their bondage, and [3] I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And [4] I will take you to me for a people, and [5] I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I [am] the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And [6] I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and [7] I will give it you for an heritage: I [am] the LORD."

There were 7 feasts for Jehovah during 7 days. When Balak the Mohabite king tried to curse Israel, he made 7 altars and prepared 7 bullocks and 7 rams for the sacrifices. It was a complete and perfect heathen worship. When the people of God destroyed Jericho, 7 priests with 7 trumpets went around the city 7 times, a complete and perfect victory of the faith. Christ explained the way to achieve complete forgiveness. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).

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In the temple there were 7 candlesticks. There are 7 letters in the New Testament to 7 churches. In the book of Revelation we have 7 more letters to others 7 churches. Further in Revelation we read of 7 seals which seal a book closed, and there will be 7 plagues poured out upon the world. Jacob worked 2 times seven years to bring a complete testimony of his love for Rachel. During the days of Joseph, the Pharaoh had a dream in which he saw 7 fat cows and 7 skinny cows, which represented a complete period of famine. The total number of people who belonged to Jacob's family when they moved to Egypt was 70.

the day of the sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70CE The Number eight is clearly the new beginning, or a new cycle. Circumcision was done on the 8th day and represented a covenant with the Lord. We baptized children when they are 8 years old. The number 8 is made up of 7+1. Seven symbolizes that something is complete. The number one means a beginning. When God destroyed all flesh upon the earth, He saved 8 souls to again repopulate the world. When the people were healed of their leprosy, the eighth day was the beginning of their new life, because on that day they were presented before the Lord. Jesus was resurrected on the eighth day. Since Thomas wasn't there the first time, Jesus came a second time on the eighth day. Those two visitations to His apostles symbolizes Christ's witness to them of His resurrection.

The sea voyage of the Jaredites was 344 days: three represents perfection the 2 fours represent 2 witnesses for earth and the sum 8 is showing the new cycle of life in the new born continent (the earth was just divided in the days of Peleg)

The number 9 represents spiritual completeness. Sarah was 90 years old and Abraham was 99 years old when the Lord completed His promise to them. There are 9 gifts of the Spirit. "For to one is given by the Spirit [1] the word of wisdom; [2] to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; [3] To another faith by the same Spirit; [4] to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; [5] To another the working of miracles; [6] to another prophecy; [7] to another discerning of spirits; [8] to another [divers] kinds of tongues; [9] to another the interpretation of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). In Galatians 5:22-23 we are given 9 fruits of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Both of these represent a completeness in spiritual blessings.

The number 10 refers to a perfection in Divine order. There were ten commandments. The law of tithing is based on the number ten and shows the divine order of the way God does business with man. There were ten plagues in visited upon Egypt to free the Israelite people, Jesus gave ten parables, and spoke of the 10 virgins. In Luke 15:8 Jesus used a parable about 10 denaris and how when even when one was missing the owner tried to find it.

The number eleven represents imperfection in government. Why? Because it is one number

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short of 12, which symbolizes a perfect theocratic government. As we look at the number 12 we see that is made up of 1 and 2, which equals the perfect number, 3. The number 1 symbolizes the

head, the first, the foremost, the chief,, or the source. The number 2 represents a witness. Thus, the number 12 represents the chief source of God's perfect rule. In the book of Revelation John described the celestial Jerusalem as having a wall around it whose foundation was made out of 12 precious stone.

The number 40 has 2 meanings. One is the completion of maturity, and the other is the completion of a trial, or test. To determine which meaning the number has, depends on the context, however, that doesn't mean that one excludes the other. Sometimes we must endure the the full trial in order to obtain full maturity.

According to Jewish tradition, maturity is obtained at the age of 40. After the flood, man life expectancy was 120 years, which is 3 times 40, thereby representing the perfect maturity. Moses lived 120 years. He lived 40 years until he had the maturity to leave the Egyptians. He stayed 40 years in the wildernesses before acquiring the maturity to lead God's chosen people out of captivity. Then he spent other 40 in the wilderness. He spent 40 days on the mountain receiving the Law of God. Because of their unfaithfulness, the Jews stayed in the wilderness for 40 years. Before then, they stayed 400 years in Egypt. Jesus was born 4000 years or 40 centuries after the earth was created, so the world was mature for Him.

Now we have several keys to better understand also the new scriptures and the events regarding the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-days Saints.

The book of Mormon's story begins in 600 b.c. This number would indicate that its history is not complete, or over with. However, the Nephite people ceased to exist as a separate culture in 421 after a.d. The sum is of 421 equals 7, which represents completeness! Also there are 15 books in the Book of Mormon, which is a multiple of 3, which is a symbol of perfection. However, if we add the digits together (1+5) we come up with the sum of 6, which means something is incomplete, or imperfect. And, in this case, we see that this is precisely the case because it contains only a third of the original sealed book. So we see that it is perfect for the part we have, but to be complete we need the other two-thirds that is sealed. One-third and two-thirds equal three-thirds, which is a complete record.

The Book of Mormon was published and the church was organized in 1830. The sum of these digits is 12 which means the perfect government. If we look at each, individual number we see 1, which represent the beginning, 8 which symbolizes a new cycle. The number 30 is made of 3 times ten. The number 3 means perfection, and 10 is perfection in Divine order. Hence 1830 symbolizes a new cycle of God's perfect Divine order.

Furthermore, the church was restored on April 6th, or 4/6/. Four plus six equals 10. The Book of Mormon had a total 12 witnesses consisting first of 3 witnesses, which gives them a perfect testimony. This was followed by 8 other witnesses, which testifies of the new cycle of the Church.. When we add Joseph Smith's testimony, that bring the number to 12, a perfect government in the church witnesses.

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In the Book of Mormon we find that in the year 385 a.d. there was the beginning of an apostasy. The sum of these digits is 16, which is equal to 2 times 8. Hence we see that this was the beginning of the second cycle of apostasy after the first one in the old world. On September 21, 1823 Joseph Smith was visited by Moroni to prepare him for the restoration, or new cycle of the gospel. This was the perfect time to start because September is the ninth month. Also, when we add the sum of the date (2+1) together we get 3. Both of these are perfect numbers. When added them all together (9+2+1) it equals 12. The year 1823 is broken down thusly: 1 means the head or the source, 8 means the beginning of a new cycle, 2 represents a witness, and 3 represents perfection. Hence, 1823 means that the head (God) is beginning a new cycle of preaching the gospel and it will be a witness of God's perfection. Along with this, Moroni appeared to Joseph 3 times to deliver his message.

When we look at the life of Christ we find the same kind of mathematical formula being followed. In the genealogy of Christ, all the way back to Adam we find 42 generations, which is 3 times 14. The number 14 is 2 times 7. There were 7 angels who appeared to Christ during His lifetime. He received 3 gifts when he was born. He begun to preach the gospel at the age of 30, and which is 3 x 10. Therefore, this was when He began to teach the divine order of the things of God. Before He started His ministry, he stayed 40 days in the wilderness to be tested, thereby gaining full maturity. His ministry was over in 3 years. In other words, it was a perfect ministry. He hung on the cross in agony for 3 hours. He died about 3 o' clock in the afternoon. According to the Bible there were 3 hours of darkness when He died. According to the Book of Mormon there were 3 days of light in the American hemisphere when He was born. He stayed 3 days in the grave. He had 12 Apostles, which represent the perfect government.

As we can see, the numbers in the scriptures give us a greater understanding of God's dealing with man. To believe otherwise is to say that these things and the recurrence of certain specific numbers are just happenstance. And to say that means that God does things by happenstance. I do

not believe this. God is a god of order, and so is mathematics. It seems only reasonable to me that God would use numbers as well as words to express His divine will.

coming up those:

What is the meaning of the rest of the bread and the fishes, after the miracles performed from Jesus? see [The Fish](#) on this page

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There are many name of cities, like Capernaum, Bethphage ,Bethlehem, Bethany, Bethel and so on, maybe they have some keys for us to better understand the context? see [Geography](#) on this page and

[Prophesies in names](#)

Why with the golden plates there was the sword of Laban?

What did happen to mother earth when Jesus died ? the answer to this question is post on [Master's page](#)

Why Helaman 14 is particularly interesting? the answer is on [Master's page](#)

Why in 3 Nephi did the disciples pray to Jesus instead of to the Father? The answer is on [Master's page](#)

What did Satan do when Zion came forth?

Why the descendant of Cain were cursed? The answer to this question is on the page [Racism](#)

In the great oceans there still remain parts whose waters have never been disturbed by sounding line of the Sailor, and where "dark unfathomed places" hold secrets in beautiful store. And in spite of the diligent searching of men, an untold wealth of Jewelry still lies hidden in the depths of the earth. So is it with the Word of God, so if somebody feel comfortable to add anything more they are welcome to do so.

Time from Adam to Noah 912 years, while that of the first nine patriarchs born after the flood was 285 years