

HIDDEN SECRETS



IN THE BIBLE

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Hidden Secrets in the Bible
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Introduction

Based on the title of this booklet, if you are expecting to read about secret “Bible codes” or obscure “biblical” messages, you might be disappointed. Instead, we are going to lay out some interesting hidden secrets in the pages of the Holy Scriptures which might otherwise escape the casual reader.

In Part 1 of this booklet, we will show you the beauty of Old Testament poetry and how it lends a deeper understanding of the Scriptures.

In Part 2, we will explain the often overlooked significance of certain biblical numbers, while also clearing up some misunderstandings in this regard.

In Part 3, we will discuss a hidden message in the book of Psalms. Rather than viewing this book as a collection of unrelated passages, you will see a story flow that reveals God’s plan of salvation.

Welcome to a surprising and, we hope, deeply satisfying journey that will uncover the “Hidden Secrets in the Bible.”

Psalm 120— 1. Psalm of Ascent (Relief from Bitter Foes/Feast of Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 121—2. Psalm of Ascent (God Is our Help/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 122— 3. Psalm of Ascent (Jerusalem—the House of God/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 123—4. Psalm of Ascent (Plea for God’s Grace/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 124—5. Psalm of Ascent (God Helps in Times of Need/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 125—6. Psalm of Ascent (Trust in the LORD/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 126—7. Psalm of Ascent (Coming Deliverance from Captivity/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 127—8. Psalm of Ascent (God’s Blessing/Trumpets Psalm)
 Psalm 129—9. Psalm of Ascent (God’s Victory/Atonement Psalm)
 Psalm 130—10. Psalm of Ascent (6. *Psalm of Repentance/Atonement*)
 Psalm 131— 11. Psalm of Ascent (Simple Trust in God)
 Psalm 132— 12. Psalm of Ascent (God Dwells in Zion)
 Psalm 133—13. Psalm of Ascent (Brethren in Unity)
 Psalm 134— 14. Psalm of Ascent (Worship at Night/Tabernacles Psalm)
 Psalm 135—The Living God and Dead Idols
 Psalm 136—God in History
 Psalm 137—Reflection on Israel’s Past Captivity
 Psalm 138—God’s Word Is Reliable
 Psalm 139—God Is Omnipotent and Omniscient
 Psalm 140—Prayer for Deliverance from Evil Men
 Psalm 141—Prayer for Safekeeping from Wickedness
 Psalm 142—Prayer for Relief from Persecutors
 Psalm 143—7. *Psalm of Repentance* (Plea for Guidance)
 Psalm 144—God Gives Help and Prosperity
 Psalm 145—God’s Mercy and Love
 Psalm 146— 1. Psalm of Praise (for His Reign)
 Psalm 147—2. Psalm of Praise (for His Word)
 Psalm 148—3. Psalm of Praise (for His Creation)
 Psalm 149—4. Psalm of Praise (for His Saints)
 Psalm 150—5. Psalm of Praise (for His Majesty)

Part 1

Hebrew Poetry in the Bible

Some portions of the Old Testament of the Bible are written in the style of Hebrew poetry; however, this literary style is not to be compared with the kind of poetry that customarily rhymes at the end of each verse. Rather, Hebrew poetry is designed to emphasize certain aspects of the truth by repetition. In Hebrew poetry, the rhyme is the repetition of thoughts or the extension of similar thoughts, using different words, for the purpose of emphasis or clarity. It is important to identify how and when Hebrew poetry is used so that we do not misunderstand the intended meaning of a particular passage.

In this section, we will discuss, in depth, the beauty and wisdom of inspired Hebrew poetry, which can generally be described as **PARALLELISM**. There are several sub-types or styles of parallelism, and we will explain these separately.

We will begin with some biblical examples of the concept of *Synonymous Parallelism*.

A “synonym” is a word that has the same meaning as another word. Synonymous Parallelism means that the second line repeats the idea expressed in the first line. In this booklet, we refer to such thoughts as being “equal” or “identical” or “synonymous.”

We need to further distinguish between *Identical Synonymous Parallelism* and *Similar Synonymous Parallelism*. Identical Synonymous Parallelism repeats in the second line identical thoughts that were expressed in the first line. In Similar Synonymous Parallelism, one thought in the first line is repeated in the second line, but something else is added.

IDENTICAL SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM

We will now look at several examples of Hebrew poetry that contain **IDENTICAL SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM**—the repetition of identical thoughts:

Psalm 50:20:

“You sit and speak against your brother;
“You slander your own mother’s son.”

Two identical thoughts are expressed, but different words are used, as we will see, for emphasis. “Sit and speak” in the first line is identical with “slander” in the second line; likewise, “your brother” is identical with “your own mother’s son.” The *devastating and cowardly* concept of “slander” is emphasized here—one just sits there and speaks evil, and that against his own brother, the son of his own mother! Do you see how this *deepens* the meaning?

Psalm 24:1-3:

“The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness,
“The world and those who dwell therein.
“For He has founded it upon the seas,
“And established it upon the waters.
“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD,
“Or who may stand in His holy place?”

These verses contain several examples of identical synonymous parallelism or the expression of identical thoughts. In verse 1, the “earth” is equated with the “world,” and “its fullness” with “those who dwell therein.” In verse 2, we read that God “founded” the world “upon the seas”; that is, He “established” it “upon the waters.” In verse 3, the “hill of the LORD” is equated with “His Holy Place,” and “ascending” is identical with “being able to stand.” When one ascends to the holy hill of God (Jerusalem, see Isaiah 2:2-3), then he will stand there.

Psalm 15:1:

“LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
“Who may dwell in Your holy hill?”

Here, “abiding” equals “dwelling,” and God’s “tabernacle” describes “His holy hill.” Ultimately, God the Father will even dwell with us on the new earth, and His tabernacle will be with immortal men (Revelation 21:1-3).

Fourth Book of Psalms

Psalm 90—Prayer of Moses: Man’s Life Temporary
Psalm 91—God Rescues from Persecutors and Death
Psalm 92—Psalm about the Sabbath
Psalm 93—God Rules as King
Psalm 94—God Will Judge in Righteousness
Psalm 95—Call to Worship and Obedience
Psalm 96—God the Creator and Judge of the World
Psalm 97—Joy over God’s Rule
Psalm 98—God Brings Salvation
Psalm 99—God’s Great Holiness
Psalm 100—Give Praise to God
Psalm 101—Faithfulness to God
Psalm 102—5. *Psalm of Repentance* (and God’s Eternal Love)
Psalm 103—God’s Mercy
Psalm 104—Praise to God for His Creation
Psalm 105—God’s Faithfulness in History
Psalm 106—God’s Mercy and Israel’s Rebellion

Fifth Book of Psalms

Psalm 107—Thanks to God for His Deliverance
Psalm 108—God’s Victory in War
Psalm 109—Plea for God’s Help against Evil Persecutors
Psalm 110—The Messiah Reigns
Psalm 111—Praise for God and His Works
Psalm 112—The Fear of God
Psalm 113—God High Above the Nations
Psalm 114—God’s Wonders during Israel’s Exodus
Psalm 115—All Honour Goes to God
Psalm 116—Thanks for Deliverance from Death
Psalm 117—All Peoples Praise God
Psalm 118—God’s Help in Times of Need
Psalm 119—God’s Law

Psalm 60—Psalm of Victory
Psalm 61—David’s Future in God’s Kingdom
Psalm 62—God Is our Refuge
Psalm 63—God Is our Protection
Psalm 64—The False Prophet
Psalm 65—Feast of Tabernacles Psalm (Blessing)
Psalm 66—Psalm of Thankfulness
Psalm 67—Feast of Tabernacles Psalm (Conversion of the Nations)
Psalm 68—Return of Christ and Fight against His Enemies
Psalm 69—Psalm of Crucifixion
Psalm 70—Plea for Speedy Intervention
Psalm 71—God the Rock of Our Salvation
Psalm 72—The Prince of Peace and His Kingdom

Third Book of Psalms

Psalm 73—Warning of Unpardonable Sin Because of Prosperity of the Wicked
Psalm 74—The Time Shortly Before Christ’s Return
Psalm 75—God the Judge over the Proud
Psalm 76—God Will Very Soon Judge on Earth
Psalm 77—God’s Help in Times Past
Psalm 78—Israel’s History from Moses to David
Psalm 79—National Persecution of Israel
Psalm 80—Israel’s Captivity
Psalm 81—Psalm about the Feast of Trumpets
Psalm 82—Psalm about the Feast of Tabernacles and God the Judge
Psalm 83—Conspiracy against Israel
Psalm 84—God our Protection
Psalm 85—God Delivers Israel from Slavery
Psalm 86—All Nations will Worship God in the Millennium
Psalm 87—All Nations under Godly Rule in Millennium
Psalm 88—In Deep Despair
Psalm 89—Psalm of Good News—God’s Covenant with David

Psalm 2:4:

“He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
“The LORD shall hold them in derision (*NIV*: “scoffs at them”;
Tanakh: “mocks at them”).”

The LORD is the one who sits in the heavens, and He laughs or scoffs or mocks at His enemies, knowing that their fight and rebellion against Him are futile and vain.

Job 3:20:

“Why is light given to him who is in misery,
“And life to the bitter of soul?”

Light and life are equal, and misery and bitterness of soul are identical as well.

Proverbs 27:2:

“Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;
“A stranger, and not your own lips.”

The identical parallelism might be clear in this example, but consider carefully the beautiful nuances here. “Another man” is equated with a “stranger,” so that the praise will be genuine and flattery will be excluded. “Your own mouth” is of course identical with “your own lips.”

Genesis 4:23:

“Adah and Zilla, hear my voice;
“Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech.
“For I have killed a man for wounding me,
“Even a young man for hurting me.”

Here we find another example of identical synonymous parallelism. “Adah and Zilla” are identified as the wives of Lamech (apparently, polygamy started with Lamech, and it is associated here with murder), and he states that he killed a man (who is then identified as a young man) for wounding or hurting him.

Zechariah 9:9:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

“Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.

“... Lowly and riding on a donkey,

“A colt, the foal of a donkey.”

This prophetic passage describes events that would take place in the life of Jesus, equating “rejoicing greatly” with “shouting,” and “Zion” with “Jerusalem.” Also, the “donkey” is identical to a “colt, the foal of a donkey” (compare John 12:14-15).

Numbers 23:7:

“... Come, curse Jacob for me,

And come, denounce Israel!”

“Cursing” equals “denouncing,” and Jacob is equated to Israel.

Numbers 23:21:

“He has not observed iniquity in Jacob,

“Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel!”

Again, Jacob is identified with Israel, and iniquity is the same as wickedness.

Numbers 23:23:

“For there is no sorcery against Jacob,

“Nor any divination against Israel.”

The same identification of Jacob and Israel is used, but another interesting aspect is emphasized: “Sorcery” is the same as “divination.”

Numbers 24:5:

“How lovely are your tents, O Jacob!

“Your dwellings, O Israel!”

Jacob and Israel are equal, and so are “tents” and “dwellings,” reminding us that our abode in this life, even though we should enjoy it, is only temporary.

Psalm 31—God our Fortress

Psalm 32—2. *Psalm of Repentance* (and Forgiveness)

Psalm 33—God’s Rule in Creation

Psalm 34—God’s Protection

Psalm 35—God Fights for His People

Psalm 36—Prayer for Protection from the Wicked

Psalm 37—The Temporary Prosperity of the Wicked

Psalm 38—3. *Psalm of Repentance*

Psalm 39—Human Temporary Existence

Psalm 40—Sacrifice and Offering Not Desired

Psalm 41—Prayer in Sickness

Second Book of Psalms

Psalm 42—Prayer in Discouragement

Psalm 43—Continuation of Psalm 42—Time of Trial

Psalm 44—Prayer of Congregation for Help

Psalm 45—Wedding between Christ and His Bride

Psalm 46—God Is our Refuge and Help

Psalm 47—Psalm about the Millennium

Psalm 48—The City of God

Psalm 49—Funeral Psalm

Psalm 50—Holy and Unholy Church Services

Psalm 51—4. *Psalm of Repentance*

Psalm 52—The Fate of the Wicked (the “Beast”)

Psalm 53—The Foolishness of Atheists

Psalm 54—Prayer for Help from Persecutors

Psalm 55—Human Reactions in Persecution

Psalm 56—Prayer for Relief from Tormentors

Psalm 57—Prayer for Safety

Psalm 58—Fate of the Wicked

Psalm 59—God’s Comfort in Persecution

Overview of the Psalms

First Book of Psalms

Psalm 1—Two Ways of Life

Psalm 2—God’s Victory over Ungodly Men

Psalm 3—Morning Prayer regarding Trials and God’s Help

Psalm 4—Evening Prayer regarding God’s Enemies

Psalm 5—Morning Prayer for God’s Lead

Psalm 6—1. *Psalm of Repentance*

Psalm 7—Prayer for Help from Enemies

Psalm 8—What Is Man?

Psalm 9—Prayer of Thanksgiving for God’s Intervention

Psalm 10—A Wicked Man

Psalm 11—Trust in God

Psalm 12—The Power of the Wicked

Psalm 13—Prayer for Help in Trials

Psalm 14—Folly of the Godless

Psalm 15—Who May Dwell on God’s Holy Hill?

Psalm 16—My Flesh Will Rest in Hope

Psalm 17—Prayer for Deliverance from Evil

Psalm 18—Thankfulness for God’s Deliverance

Psalm 19—God’s Glory in Creation and His Law

Psalm 20—Two Ways in Time of Trial

Psalm 21—The Glory of the King

Psalm 22—Psalm of Crucifixion of the Messiah

Psalm 23—The LORD Is my Shepherd

Psalm 24—Christ’s Return in Glory and Power

Psalm 25—Prayer for Forgiveness

Psalm 26—Prayer of an Innocent Person for Help

Psalm 27—Wait on the LORD

Psalm 28—Prayer for Help and God’s Intervention

Psalm 29—Praise to God

Psalm 30—God’s Deliverance

Numbers 24:17:

“I see Him, but not now;

“I behold Him, but not near;

“A Star shall come out of Jacob;

“A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,

“And batter the brow of Moab,

“And destroy all the sons of tumult.”

This statement is filled with identical synonymous parallelism. “Seeing” equals “beholding”; “not now” is the same as “not near.” The “Star” is the same as the “Scepter” (describing Jesus Christ, the Morning Star, who will have power and rule over the nations, and it possibly refers also to the star of Bethlehem at the time of Christ’s First Coming). “Come out” is the same as “rise.” “Jacob” is again identified as “Israel” (Jesus Christ was a Jew, having descended from Israel through the Virgin Mary, a descendant of King David). “Battering” equals “destroying,” and the “brow of Moab” is identified as “all the sons of tumult.” Jesus Christ will return and make an end to all rebellion against God. At the time Moses received this prophecy, Christ’s First and Second Comings were not near, but of course, His First Coming has since occurred—about 2,000 years ago—and His Second coming is now very near.

SIMILAR SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM

We will now look at two examples of “SIMILAR SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM,” a style which does not describe totally identical thoughts, but expresses one thought in the first line that is repeated in the second line, while another thought is added in the second line.

Psalm 36:5:

“Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens;

“Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.”

Both God’s mercy and faithfulness reach the clouds and the heavens. Mercy and faithfulness are not necessarily identical, but they are related.

Psalm 19:1:

“The heavens declare the glory of God;
“And the firmament [expanse of heaven] shows His handiwork.”

The heavens and the firmament declare God’s glory and His handiwork, but God’s glory and His handiwork are not identical. However, they are related, as one can see God’s glory IN His handiwork.

When considering the different devices used in Hebrew poetry, we need to understand that they were never used casually or simply for art’s sake (although Hebrew poetry is itself an art form). Rather, as commentators have pointed out, it was used for teaching, prophesying or worship. The style of Hebrew poetry was ideally suited for such tasks, since important ideas were repeated in different ways and in such variety that it was art in the truest sense of the word. The poetry of the Old Testament was never tiresome, but was a delight to read and recite, and even in subsequent translations, it gives us keys for a better understanding of a particular statement when properly analyzed and perceived.

We are now going to take a look at the styles of INTROVERTED and ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM.

INTROVERTED PARALLELISM

In another style, INTROVERTED PARALLELISM (aka chiasmus), the order of the thoughts is reversed. In the first line, thought 1 is followed by thought 2. In the second line, thought 2 is followed by thought 1.

Here are a few examples:

Psalm 51:1:

“Have mercy upon Me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness;
“According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgression.”

We see in this statement, that to “have mercy” (thought 1 in line 1) is identified with blotting out transgression (thought 2 in line 2), and lovingkindness (thought 2 in line 1) is equated with “the multitude of Your tender mercies” (thought 1 in line 2). When we have mercy,

Conclusion

In this booklet, we have seen that even from its structure, its poetic devices and use of certain numbers, the Bible contains much more beauty and relevant meaning than may meet the eye at first glance. We hope you enjoyed your journey into some hidden secrets in the Bible. You may also want to read our free booklet, *“The Mysteries of the Bible,”* which explains in an easy-to-understand presentation, numerous main teachings of God’s Word which have been hidden from or misunderstood by nominal Christianity.

For many, the Bible is a book “with seven seals”—a book which they seem to be unable to understand. Indeed, God must open our minds to see, but when He does, the Word of God will shine as a bright light in utter darkness, and it will truly reveal a whole world of previously unseen secrets which are not hidden any longer from those who want to understand...

The Psalms of Ascent

Most people may not realize that certain psalms are written in correlation with the annual autumn Holy Days. They are identified as “Psalms of ascents,” because they picture a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Mount Zion), and the Holy Days in the autumn accompany the pilgrim on his travel.

Psalms 120–128 are “Psalms of ascent,” which picture and could be read during the Feast of Trumpets. They show that Judah will be in captivity when Christ returns, but Christ will free them from slavery.

Psalms 129–130 are “Psalms of ascent,” which picture and can be read during the Day of Atonement. The 129th psalm is the 10th psalm following the first Psalm of ascent, as the Day of Atonement is the 10th day after the Feast of Trumpets.

Psalms 131–134 are “Psalms of ascent,” which picture and could be read during the Feast of Tabernacles. Psalm 134 describes the end of the pilgrimage, when one has reached Jerusalem. It is the 15th psalm following the first psalm of ascent, as the Feast of Tabernacles begins on the 15th day following the Feast of Trumpets.

we overlook and are willing to forgive and forget transgressions, and God's lovingkindness can be seen in the multitude of His tender (not brutal or cruel) mercies.

Psalm 51:3:

"For I acknowledge my transgressions,
"And my sin is always before me."

Here, "I acknowledge" (thought 1 in line 1) is identical with "always before me" (thought 2 in line 2), and "my transgressions" (thought 2 in line 1) is equated with "my sin" (thought 1 in line 2). This example shows us that the acknowledgement of transgressions is not just a temporary fleeting emotional sentiment, but it is strong and lasting, with recognition that all transgressions constitute sin and we would then be led to genuine repentance of what we have done and what we are.

Psalm 30:8:

"I cried out to You, O LORD;
"And to the LORD I made supplication."

"I cried out" (thought 1 in line 1) is identical with "I made supplication" (thought 2 in line 2), while "O LORD" (thought 2 in line 1) is repeated in the next line, "to the LORD" (thought 1 in line 2). Crying out and making supplication to God is equated, showing the genuineness and urgency of the prayer.

Proverbs 23:15-16:

"My son, if your heart is wise, My heart will rejoice—indeed,
I myself;
"Yes, my inmost being (kidneys) will rejoice When your lips
speak right things."

This is a remarkable example of introverted parallelism. The first thought in line 1 ("your heart is wise") is identified in the second thought in line 2 ("your lips speak right things"), and "my heart will rejoice" (second thought in line 1) is equated with "my inmost being will rejoice" or, literally, "my kidneys will rejoice." This statement

shows us that wisdom of the heart manifests itself in speaking right things, and that the heart (or the kidneys) may stand for the emotions of the person and the entire being (“indeed, I myself,” as it says at the end of line 1).

ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM

ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM is the direct opposite to synonymous parallelism. Actually, antithesis means, the direct opposite.

In this device of Hebrew poetry, the second line contrasts the first line. The second line expresses the opposite to the first line, while the order of the thoughts is maintained. Even in the English language, we may “rhyme” through opposites: “Give me liberty, or give me death.”

Let us review a few pertinent and telling examples of antithetic parallelism:

Proverbs 10:1:

“A wise son makes a glad father,

“But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.”

The second line expresses the opposite to the first line, while maintaining the order of the thoughts. “A wise son” (first thought in line 1) is contrasted with “a foolish son” (first thought in line 2), while “a glad father” (second thought in line 1) is contrasted with “grief of his mother” (second thought in line 2). This means, then, that a wise son makes *his parents glad*, while a foolish son grieves *his parents*. Father and mother need to be understood here as including both parents.

Proverbs 10:5:

“He who gathers in summer is a wise son;

“He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.”

In this example, the wise son who gathers in summer (line 1) is contrasted with a foolish son (a son who sleeps in harvest—line 2). And while the foolish son is described as one who causes shame (line 2), the opposite thought is not expressed for the wise son in the first line, but needs to be understood—the wise son does not cause shame, but praise and glory. Notice that another opposite is discussed here:

nations in the Middle East who, together with modern Assyria, are determined to destroy Israel and who want to eradicate Israel from the face of the earth. Their fate is described in verses 13–18, but it is emphasized that God’s punishment should lead to the result that “they may seek Your name, O Lord... that they may know that You, whose name alone is LORD, Are the Most High over all the earth” (verses 16, 18).

Psalm 84 continues the thoughts set forth in Psalms 81, 82 and 83, describing the punishment of the wicked nations and the deliverance of Israel.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF PSALMS

The **fourth book of Psalms** (Psalms 90–106) describes more and more the world tomorrow.

Psalm 90 makes reference to the Millennium, which lasts 1,000 years (verse 4). Moses was inspired to hint at the fact that God will rule for 1,000 years on earth, a time referred to as the Millennium.

Psalm 93 describes God as the Ruler, and so do Psalm 97 and Psalm 99.

THE FIFTH BOOK OF PSALMS

The **fifth book of Psalms** (Psalms 107–150) describes the glorious rule of God on earth.

A typical psalm is Psalm 119, showing the basis and foundation of God’s rule and explaining how God’s law will bring peace on earth. Psalm 138:2 shows that God’s Word and Promise have been magnified above His Name—what He promises, that He fulfills.

righteous will rejoice (verse 3), while the wicked will be driven away and perish as smoke at the presence of God (verse 2).

In **Psalm 72**, we are again encouraged by the fact that God will soon set up His Kingdom on this earth (verse 2–4, 7–8, 11, 16–19).

THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS

The **third book of Psalms** (Psalms 73–89) is a contemplation regarding God's works in the past, and His deeds in the future.

Psalm 76 speaks of the short time when God ruled in Jerusalem (verse 2), pointing to the rule of His future Kingdom in the Millennium, and beyond.

Psalm 79 describes how God dealt in the past, as a forerunner of His mighty acts in the future, and it shows what kind of problems man may have to go through before God intervenes. The “holy temple” in verse 1 can also be a reference to God’s Church. The Psalm describes the ancient and future destruction of “Jerusalem” (verses 2–3) and “Jacob” (verse 7); that is, the houses of Judah (the Jews) and of Israel (the ancient and modern descendants of Israel, including, today, the United States of America and Great Britain).

Psalm 81 relates to the annual Holy Day of the Feast of Trumpets (verse 3). It symbolizes Christ’s return at the blast of the seventh and last trumpet, and it shows in verses 4 and 5 that even at that time, the law of God will still be valid and will be enforced in Jacob and Joseph (father of Ephraim and Manasseh). The law against idolatry as the Second Commandment is mentioned (verse 9), showing that all of the Ten Commandments are still valid today (compare James 2:10–12).

Psalm 81 leads to **Psalm 82**, where God is pictured in verse 1 as “standing” in the congregation of the “mighty” and “gods.” As the margin of the *New King James Bible* explains, the Hebrew word for “mighty” is “El, lit. God,” and the word for “gods” is “elohim, lit. mighty ones or gods.” In verse 6, it is stated that God calls man “gods” and children of the Most High, pointing out the potential of man to become God beings in the Kingdom of God. Christ quoted this passage in John 10:34, confirming its validity and adding that the Scripture cannot be broken. In verse 5, the wicked are described as those who do not know God and who walk about in darkness.

In **Psalm 83**, it is more clearly revealed who the wicked are—certain

The wise son is one who gathers “in summer,” while the foolish son is one who sleeps in harvest. The idea expressed here is that the wise son is continuously working and busy and productive, while the foolish one is continuously sleeping and unproductive.

Proverbs 10:4:

“He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
“But the hand of the diligent makes rich.”

The poor and the rich are contrasted here, noting that slackness leads to poverty, while diligence leads to riches. This can also be applied to our spiritual lives. When we become slack or lukewarm spiritually, we will become spiritually poor, while diligence and zeal lead to eternal life and the true riches in the Kingdom of God.

Proverbs 10:12:

“Hatred stirs up strife,
“But love covers all sins.”

This is another beautiful example of antithetic parallelism: Hatred is the opposite of love, and while hatred causes strife, love avoids strife by covering all sins. What is also expressed here is the thought that hatred may be the result of sinful conduct of another person toward us, and to prevent hatred from taking a hold of us and leading to strife, we are to overlook, or cover the sins of others. Understand, though, that we can only do this with and through love—the love of God which was poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 11:3:

“The integrity of the upright will guide them,
“But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.”

Integrity is opposed to perversity; the upright is contrasted with the unfaithful; and “guide” is the opposite of “destroy.” When we are sincere and upright, we will be guided and led in the right way, but if we become perverse and unfaithful, we will be destroyed. Again, this passage needs to be applied in both spiritual and physical ways.

Proverbs 16:9:

“A man’s heart plans his way,
“But the LORD directs his steps.”

This example of antithetic parallelism (also indicated by the word “but” in the second line) shows us that man might devise plans which are of no value, but it is God who must direct man and lead his steps in order to reach success. It is not in man’s heart to direct his steps in the right way. Rather, it requires God’s intervention and guidance. It is our responsibility to acknowledge God in all our ways and submit to His Will and His lead.

Proverbs 29:27:

“An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous,
“And he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.”

As the righteous will not justify the conduct of an unjust person—it (the conduct, not the person) is an abomination to the just—so the wicked will not accept the conduct of a righteous person. A wicked person rejects the way of God, and he will persecute those who walk in it, while the righteous person will not be swayed by the wicked to follow his steps.

Psalms 37:9:

“For evildoers shall be cut off [destroyed],
“But those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.”

While evildoers will not live forever and inherit the earth, those who wait on the Lord to help and guide them, will live forever in the Kingdom of God, ruling on and over the earth under Jesus Christ. It is interesting that evildoers are contrasted with “those who wait on the LORD.” If we don’t wait for God, but try to “deal” with problems on our own, we might become evildoers by choosing “solutions” which are not right and just. A classic example is the idea that we must go to war to bring peace and democracy to other nations.

world. He will destroy the wicked (verses 5-6) and judge the nations (verse 8). While God is already a refuge today for His people (verses 9-10, 12, 14), the evil nations will meet their fate in God’s appointed time (verses 15-17).

Psalm 27 reminds us of the fact that we are still living in this evil world, and that we must sometimes wait for God’s help (verse 14).

Psalm 37 parallels Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in the fifth chapter of the book of Matthew. The Sermon on the Mount is of course part of the foundation of the New Covenant, and Psalm 37 shows us what our inheritance will look like. Psalm 37:11, 22, 29 tells us that the meek and those who are blessed by God will inherit the earth forever (compare Matthew 5:5); verse 21 speaks about the merciful (compare Matthew 5:7); and verse 37 speaks about peace (compare Matthew 5:9, 38-48).

THE SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS

Turning to the **second book of Psalms** (Psalms 42-72), we note the continuation of the story of the life of a Christian in this world, which he has to forsake symbolically.

Psalm 42 describes an event in David’s life when he worshipped God on a Holy Day (verse 4), and in times of trials, he remembers this and expresses his wish and desire to be always with God (verses 2, 5, 11).

Psalm 45 emphasizes the fact that God’s throne will stand forever, and that it will never be replaced (verse 6). It pictures Christ’s coming rule on this earth (verse 17), as well as our marriage with Him (verses 10-11, 14). This shows that it is good and comforting to think of our future during times of trial.

Psalm 47 introduces us again to Christ’s future rule over all the earth, which is *guaranteed* to occur (verses 2-3, 5, 7).

In **Psalm 51**, David reflects on past transgressions (verses 1-5) and the need for his repentance and his purification (verses 7, 17), realizing that without it and without God’s Holy Spirit within him (verses 11-12), he will not enter the Kingdom of God.

In **Psalm 55**, the importance of prayer is emphasized, which is necessary to cope in this life and to make it into the Kingdom of God (verses 1, 16-17, 22).

Psalm 68 shows that when God sets up His Kingdom on earth, the

stage and introducing the theme of the books. As mentioned, Psalm 1 explains two ways of life. While the righteous will blossom and be rewarded, the wicked and his way will perish. Psalm 2 describes and summarizes God's plan for man. While angry nations might want to revolt against God and His law, God's plan, including Christ First Coming (verse 7) and His Second Coming (Verse 9), will be carried out, and Christ will rule the earth.

Psalms 146-150 could be described as the conclusion of the book of Psalms. These are psalms of praise (all begin with "Hallelujah"), as now the plan of God has been fulfilled.

Each psalm has a headline. In the Jewish Bibles, as well as in many German Bibles, verse 1 (and sometimes verse 2) of a given psalm refers many times to the headline, while in the *Authorized Version* and the *New King James Bible*, the headlines are not designated in this way. (That is why a reference to Psalm 3:1 in the English Bible would be Psalm 3:2 in the German or the Hebrew Bibles). According to Jewish understanding, the headlines are part of the inspired text, showing us the reason why the psalm was written, as well as the prophetic significance of the psalm.

We will now focus on selective psalms and discuss a few highlights in the overall story flow of the entire book of Psalms.

THE FIRST BOOK OF PSALMS

In the **first book of Psalms** (Psalms 1-41), **Psalm 3** sets the character and stage for the entire first book, which describes the life of a Christian in this world. Psalm 3 describes the type of suffering which Christians must endure; it shows the world in which we live today, which is Satan's world, filled with our enemies; and it pictures the Christian who, through his conduct, gives the world an example as to how one should live. It records David's trust in God and His help—not in his own soldiers, weapons and human protection—and that God was the source of his strength, so that he did not need to be afraid.

Psalm 4 continues to describe the enemies which were introduced to us in Psalm 3. We learn that God makes us righteous (verse 1), and the question is asked how long evil men will persecute the righteous whom God has set aside for His holy purpose (verses 2-3).

Psalm 9 gives a hint as to how God will solve the problems of this

Psalm 20:8:

"They have bowed down [to their chariots and horses] and fallen;

"But we have risen [in prayer to God] and stand upright."

While pagan and Gentile nations bow down to and trust in their self-made gods, idols and the works of their hands and fall as a consequence, we pray to God and stand. But more is expressed here: They bow down (in their false worship), while we rise (in prayer); they fall and we stand upright. This is not talking about in what position we ought to pray (standing, kneeling, etc.), but it speaks of an attitude. When we pray to God, we expect an answer. We come boldly before the throne of God when we are in need of help. On the other hand, they bow down in anxious superstitious conduct, enslaved to their own inventions and laboring under a yoke. And so, while we are free from bondage of wrong ideas and while we have become friends of Jesus Christ, they are held captive by Satan the devil to do his will.

COMBINATION OF INTROVERTED AND ANTITHETIC PARALLELISM

Here are two examples which combine INTROVERTED and ANTI-THETIC PARALLELISM. In these examples, the second line contrasts the first line, and the order of the thoughts in the first line and in the second line is reversed as well:

Psalm 1:6:

"For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

"But the way of the ungodly shall perish."

In this example, the order of the thoughts in the first and second lines is reversed. The way of the righteous (thought 2 in line 1) is contrasted with the way of the ungodly (thought 1 in line 2), and the knowledge of the LORD (thought 1 in line 1) is contrasted with "shall perish" (thought 2 in line 2).

God knows (in the sense of approves of) the way of the righteous, but He does not approve of the way of the ungodly, and the ungodly and his way will perish. When God approves of our way, we will succeed

and endure; when He disapproves of our way (because we have become ungodly), we will perish. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. But God does not give us this gift of eternal life, if we show through our evil conduct that we do not want to be obedient to Him. God does not want us to live forever in misery and pain.

Proverbs 13:24:

“He who spares his rod hates his son,
“But he who loves him disciplines him promptly (early).”

This is another beautiful example of a combination of introverted and antithetic parallelism, where the thoughts are reversed. “Hates his son” (thought 2 in line 1) is contrasted with “loves him” (thought 1 in line 2). Also, “sparing his rod” (thought 1 in line 1) is opposed to “disciplines him promptly” (thought 2 in line 2).

We actually hate our children if we spare the rod, but we love them if we discipline them promptly or early—that is, immediately at the time of a transgression or rebellious conduct. When parents wait too long with discipline or are inconsistent or threaten the children with discipline without carrying it out, they really do not show the love for their children that they ought to have by training them in the way they should go. The liberal anti-authoritarian education especially in the Western World has produced terrible fruits for lack of proper child-rearing and does not reflect the love which parents ought to have for their children. Even though in some countries, spanking is forbidden, God tells us that in certain cases, it is biblical. But “the rod” must never be used to inflict bodily harm on the child.

In addition, we point out the following in our free booklet, *“The Keys to Happy Marriages and Families”*: “Since using the rod is compared with prompt or early discipline, it is clear that this passage includes the concept of spanking, where and when appropriate. Of course, we don’t spank a teenager or an adult, so the spanking needs to be done early in the life of the child. But note, again, we discipline our children because we LOVE them. If we discipline our children for any other reason or because of any other motive, we do NOT follow God’s instructions. Spanking should never cause physical injury to a child. The intent is to break a rebellious spirit, not to bruise skin.”

dwelling in tabernacles (temporary dwellings)... Moses, who led physical Israel to the physical type of God’s Kingdom, the promised land, tells about our eternal dwelling place: ‘Lord, You have been our dwelling place [tabernacle] in all generations’ (Psalms 90:1). How long shall this age of the Kingdom last? ‘For a thousand years’ (verse 4). We see the whole world rejoicing at the rulership of God: ‘The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad!’ (Psalms 97:1)...

“Deuteronomy parallels **Book V of Psalms** in the theme of complete salvation for man. Deuteronomy literally means ‘the second law,’ concluding and summarizing the first four books of the law, just as Book V of Psalms concludes the plan of God. On the theme of Deuteronomy the Jewish Publication Society states, ‘The single theme of Deuteronomy is the concept of oneness and universality of God and the unity of mankind.’ The universality of God will be achieved when every person has had a chance to be in the Kingdom of God. Psalms, Book V, celebrates the complete salvation of mankind. Joyful shouts of thankfulness ascend to God: ‘Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy’ (Psalms 107:1-2)... But what about the one who caused all of the world’s problems in the first place — Satan the devil? What will finally happen to him? Satan, the king and god of this present world, receives, along with his demons, his punishment by judgment of the saints: ‘To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment — this honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord!’ (Psalms 149:8-9). Yes, you will judge and send Satan and his demons to their final fate, never again to deceive man (1 Corinthians 6:3, Revelation 20:10)... Every book of Psalms ends with an ‘Amen’ except Book V. Why...? Because, ‘Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end ... from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this’ (Isaiah 9:7)...”

In addition to the foregoing statements, we will now review the (somewhat hidden) message of the book of Psalms in more detail.

Focusing again on *Psalms 1 and 2*, these two psalms could be viewed as the introduction to the entire book of psalms, setting the

“In the book of beginnings called *Genesis*, God records that He presented two ways of life to Adam and Eve in the form of two trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9)... The book of Psalms echoes the message of the two ways [note Psalm 1:1-6, speaking of a tree planted by the rivers of water and the way of the righteous, in contrast to the way of the ungodly.]... The first psalm of **the first of the five books in Psalms** explodes with meaning. The tree referred to here is the tree of life. God intended for humans to eat of that tree by living the give way. The river in Psalms is the same river in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10). The tree gets its life from the river... The water symbolizes God’s Holy Spirit.

“**Book II of Psalms** highlights God’s relationship with His Church. *Exodus*... parallels Book II of Psalms in its Church theme. In *Exodus* God calls His Church (ancient Israel) and leads them. *Exodus* actually means ‘going out from.’ God called Israel out of Egypt just as He calls Christians out of this worldly society... The psalmist desires to be in God’s Church: ‘Let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle’ (verse 3)... Read his prayer: ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me’ (Psalms 51:10-11). The writer of Psalms looks to Jesus Christ as the foundation of the Church: ‘Be my strong habitation ... for You are my rock and my fortress’ (Psalms 71:3). Jesus Christ told Peter, ‘And on this rock I will build My church’ (Matthew 16:18). Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the Church stands (I Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 2:20)...

“The theme of **Book III of Psalms** reeks of destruction... This section of Psalms was mostly written by Levitical priests. It parallels the book of *Leviticus* in the law. In *Leviticus* are prophecies of the coming destruction of Israel in the Great Tribulation... The psalmist also sees the coming destruction of our society... Some of the saints are martyred. ‘The dead bodies of Your servants they have given as food for the birds of the heavens, the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth’ (Ps. 79:2)...

“The book of *Numbers* in the law parallels **Book IV of Psalms**. They tell the story of the peaceful, prosperous reign of God’s Kingdom on earth. *Numbers* records Israel’s journey through the wilderness,

SYNTHETIC PARALLELISM

SYNTHETIC PARALLELISM is also sometimes referred to as constructive or epithetic parallelism.

In Synthetic Parallelism, the word “synthesis” describes a combination of separate parts or elements into a whole. In other words, thoughts are built upon each other.

In Synthetic Parallelism, the second thought adds something fresh or new to the first thought, or it may explain the first thought.

We can divide this concept further.

First, we are going to review two examples in which a thought in the first line is complemented by another related thought in the second line.

Psalm 2:6:

“Yet I have set My King
“On My holy hill of Zion.”

In this passage, the first thought in the first line needs to be complemented by the second thought in the second line, in order to express a complete statement and give a complete sentence. In this meaningful statement, God the Father explains to the nations and the kings of the earth, who are scoffing at God, that He has already set “His King” on “His holy hill of Zion.” The King is a reference to the Son, the Anointed One, Jesus Christ (compare verses 2, 7 and 12). Long before Jesus Christ would be born as a human being, it was clear to the Father that He would qualify as Ruler of the coming Kingdom of God. When the Father says, “My King,” He did not mean that Jesus would be superior to Him, but just the opposite: Jesus is the Father’s King—He belongs to and is under the Father.

Psalm 138:4

“All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD,
“When they hear the words of Your mouth.”

In this passage, the first thought in line 1 is complemented by a second thought in line 2: All the kings of the earth will praise and give glory to God when they hear His words. The context is the Millennium

when the glorified Jesus Christ will rule the earth (verse 5)—it will be *then* that they will understand what God is telling them, and *then* they WILL praise Him for the truth.

Let us focus now on one example of Synthetic Parallelism where the thoughts in both lines are compared or contrasted with each other.

Proverbs 15:17:

“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is,
“Than a fatted calf with hatred.”

The contrast or comparison can be clearly seen by the phraseology, “better ... than.” It is *better* to have little with love *than* much with hatred. Solomon contrasts a dinner of herbs with a fatted calf, but points out that such physical riches are never satisfying when there is no love in the house.

As a third variation, we see two examples where the thought in the second line explains the thought in the first line. This is an important device to understand; otherwise, we might not fully grasp the intended meaning of a particular statement.

Proverbs 26:4:

“Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
“Lest you also be like him.”

In this passage, the thought of the first line is explained by the thought in the second line. If answering a fool according to his folly would result in us becoming like him, we should refrain from doing so.

Proverbs 26:5:

“Answer a fool according to his folly,
“Lest he be wise in his own eyes.”

In this passage, the thought in the first line is also explained by the thought in the second line, but in contrast with the previous example, we are told here that we are to answer a fool according to his folly, if he might otherwise think that he is wise and that we are unable to respond to him. So, depending on the circumstances, we ought not

Part 3

The Hidden Message in the Book of Psalms

Most people regard the Book of Psalms as more or less an arbitrary collection of verses to be read for inspiration when needed. What they do not realize is that it contains a hidden message in the form of a story flow that actually reveals God’s plan of salvation for all of mankind.

The Book of Psalms is divided into five books. Each book covers a certain theme and is to be read within context of the previous book in order to see the story develop.

In the Worldwide Church of God’s *The Good News* magazine, April 1984, pages 5-8, this story was nicely explained, *and remarkable parallels between the Book of Psalms and the Torah* were pointed out:

“Millions have turned to the Psalms for inspiration and solace. But the Psalms are more than pleasant poetry. The book of Psalms proclaims powerful prophecy!... King David, a man ‘after God’s own heart’ (Acts 13:22), wrote many of the Psalms, according to Jesus Christ and His apostles (Luke 20:42, Acts 4:25, Hebrews 4:7). Some of the Psalms, though, date all the way back to the time of Moses (Psalm 90), while others were written decades after David’s death, up to the Babylonian captivity, during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Psalm 137). It is commonly believed that Ezra compiled the Psalms and arranged them in their present order.

“The Psalms break down into five separate books, Book I comprising Psalms 1-41; Book II, Psalms 42-72; Book III, Psalms 73-89; Book IV, Psalms 90-106; and Book V, Psalms 107-150. The ancient and respected Jewish Midrash, a commentary, states: ‘Moses gave Israel the five books of the Torah [Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy], and correspondingly David gave them the five books of the Psalms.’ The five books of the law, or Torah, combine with the five books of Psalms to deliver one powerful prophecy — the salvation of mankind!...

answer a fool according to his folly so that we do not become like the fool, but we should answer him according to his folly if the fool would otherwise think that he is wise.

In verse 4, we are told not to answer a fool, "...Lest you also be like him." We are admonished to avoid a pointless argument, wasting fruitless time and energy on foolishness, and to avoid responding approvingly by like folly. However, in verse 5, we are told to answer a fool, "... Lest he be wise in his own eyes." There is a time when we cannot give tacit approval by silence. There is a selective time to stand up and not close our eyes to damage.

CLIMACTIC PARALLELISM

Let us continue by focusing on the concept of CLIMACTIC PARALLELISM in Hebrew poetry. In certain commentaries this concept is also referred to as comprehensive parallelism, stair-like parallelism or anaphora parallelism.

Climactic Parallelism describes the concept that a thought in the first line becomes greater and more comprehensive in the second line. The second line reaches a climax. A thought in the first line is repeated in the second line, but a new and climactic thought is added (like stepping on the next step of a stair), making the entire statement more comprehensive.

Psalm 29:1:

"Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,
"Give unto the LORD glory and strength."

The first thought in line 1 ("Give unto the LORD") is repeated in line 2, but then line 2 adds what is to be given—"glory and strength." The "mighty ones" could refer to angels. It could also refer to humans whose potential it is to become God beings, but all are to give glory and strength to God. In using this poetic device, it is emphasized WHAT everyone is owed to give to God.

Psalm 29:8:

"The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
"The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh."

In the second line, the wilderness is identified as the “wilderness of Kadesh,” making this a climactic statement in reference to the spies giving their report to Moses upon their return from Jericho to Kadesh in the wilderness (Numbers 13:26). The fact that the LORD’s voice shook the wilderness of Kadesh shows His displeasure with the evil report that the spies brought back with them.

Psalm 1:2:

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
“And in His law he meditates day and night.”

This example of Climactic Parallelism is also an example of *Introverted Parallelism*, showing that sometimes, different devices are used in one particular passage. The climax here is expressed by the fact that the person who delights in the law of God meditates on it day and night. It is also an example of *Introverted Parallelism*, as the order of the thoughts is reversed (thought 1 in line 1 [“delight”] is expressed in thought 2 in line 2 [“meditates day and night”]).

EMBLEMATIC PARALLELISM

Another device in Hebrew poetry that is used in the Bible is that of EMBLEMATIC PARALLELISM.

The word “emblem” describes a symbol or a design that represents something; for instance, a dove is oftentimes used as a symbol of peace.

This is an important device in Hebrew poetry and is identifiable when a literal statement in one line is contrasted with a metaphor or a simile in another line.

A metaphor indicates something different from the literal meaning, such as, “You will eat my words,” or, “You have a heart of stone.” A simile compares one thing to another, such as, “He is as brave as a lion,” or, “childhood is like a passing dream.”

We distinguish between *Emblematic Parallelism with a link* and *Emblematic Parallelism without a link*. Many times, in the Hebrew text, the link is designated with the word “so,” connecting the different thoughts and making the contrast with a metaphor or simile quite clear.

Judges 3:11 under Othniel; Judges 5:31 under Deborah; and Judges 8:28 under Gideon).

We read that Eli judged Israel for forty years (1 Samuel 4:18), but he had not done so perfectly. King Saul ruled Israel for forty years (Acts 13:21), but he failed miserably. On the other hand, King David—a man after God’s own heart—reigned over Israel for forty years (1 Kings 2:11; 1 Chronicles 29:27). He was followed by Solomon, who also ruled Israel for forty years (2 Chronicles 9:30), but he did not follow God fully, as his father David had done. Later, King Joash or Jehoash ruled in Jerusalem for forty years (2 Chronicles 24:1; 2 Kings 12:1). He began ruling in a godly way, but ended up rebelling against God (2 Chronicles 24:22). We also read that because of sin, Egypt would be uninhabited for forty years (Ezekiel 29:11-16).

Finally, we read that after Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He spoke to the disciples for forty days about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). After these forty days, He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11).

In conclusion, not all numbers used in the Bible are of equal importance, and some numbers are of no importance at all. However, as we have seen in this section, there is most certainly important significance which we must apply to certain selected numbers, and God purposely recorded them in His Word to teach us valuable lessons.

Significance of Biblical Numbers

Number 1—Careful! Can describe unity, but does not have to.

Number 2—Can describe duality or contrast

Number 3—Careful! Can describe perfection or completeness, but does not have to.

Number 4—God’s revelation

Number 5—God’s grace and power

Number 6—Man’s alienation from God; needs completion

Number 7—Completion and perfection

Number 10—Godly judgment

Number 12—Foundation

Number 40—God’s revelation in judgment and testing man

during the next forty years in Midian; and during the last forty years in the wilderness with the Israelites.

We read that Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights on the mountain to receive from God the two tablets with the Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:18), which he subsequently broke in his wrath. He then fasted again for forty days and forty nights on the mountain until God again gave him the Ten Commandments, which He had written on two tablets of stone that Moses had to cut (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25; Exodus 34:1, 4).

We read of two more occasions when holy men of God fasted for forty days and forty nights—Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) and Jesus (Matthew 4:2).

When Moses sent the twelve spies to the Promised Land, only Joshua and Caleb gave a good report. Caleb was forty years old at that time (Joshua 14:7). The other spies gave bad reports, and Israel believed them and disobeyed God. Due to Israel's rebellion, they had to wander and were tested and judged by God in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 14:33; Deuteronomy 2:7; 8:2-6; compare Joshua 5:6; Acts 13:18; Hebrews 3:9, 17; Psalm 95:10; Amos 2:10; 5:25). During this time of their journey in the wilderness, they ate manna for forty years (Exodus 16:35), but there were times when they complained about God's bread from heaven (compare Numbers 11:5-6).

Because of their rebellion, God decreed that they had to bear their guilt for forty years according to the number of the forty days in which they had spied out the Promised Land (Numbers 13:25; 14:34). This important prophetic principle—one year for one day—is critical to recognize; the reverse—one day for one year—is also correct. In Ezekiel 4:6, we read that Ezekiel was to "bear" the iniquity of the people of Judah for forty days, according to the forty years of their iniquity. God said that He laid on Ezekiel "a day for each year."

We read that Aaron (as well as Moses and Miriam) did not enter the Promised Land due to sins they committed. Even though they bitterly repented of their sins, they still had to live with the consequences. Aaron died in the fortieth year after Israel left Egypt (Numbers 33:38).

In Judges 13:1, God plagued Israel for forty years because they did evil in the sight of the LORD. However, when they were under the rule of righteous judges, Israel had rest for forty years (compare

EMBLEMATIC PARALLELISM WITH A LINK

Psalm 42:1:

"As the deer pants [longs for] the water brooks,
"So pants my soul for you, O God."

The word "so" indicates here that the thought in line 1 is contrasted with the thought in line 2. While line 1 describes a literal occurrence (the thirsty deer longs for water), line 2 describes an emblem—a simile or a metaphor: David's soul—his entire being—longs for God.

Proverbs 25:25:

"A cold water to a weary soul,
"So [is] good news from a far country."

Here we find another contrast between something literal (cold water for a weary person) and something emblematic (good news from a far country). Even though good news from a far country can be quite real, it is contrasted here symbolically with the effect of cold water for a weary soul.

In the next example, no link to a metaphor or simile is given, but it is clear that a link is intended in the Hebrew.

EMBLEMATIC PARALLELISM WITHOUT A LINK

Proverbs 11:22:

"[As] a ring of gold in a swine's snout,
"[so is] a lovely woman who lacks discretion."

In the Hebrew, the words "as" in the first line and "so is" in the second line are not in the Original, but it is obvious that they must be added (as the translators did) to make the meaning clear. The literal statement ("a ring of gold in a swine's snout") is contrasted symbolically with a lovely woman ("the ring of gold") who lacks discretion ("the swine's snout").

PALIOLOGICAL PARALLELISM

Another device of Hebrew poetry is called PALIOLOGICAL PARALLELISM.

The word “palilogy” refers to the repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis. In Palilogical Parallelism, one or more words within the first thought are repeated, as an echo, in the second or third thought. As we will see, especially with this device, other devices may also be used. This is important to understand if we want to grasp the full meaning of a particular statement.

Psalm 72:17:

“His name shall endure forever;

“His name shall continue as long as the sun.

“And men shall be blessed in Him;

“All nations shall call Him blessed.”

This example combines several devices of Hebrew poetry. First, it incorporates the concept of *Palilogical Parallelism*. The thought of “His name” in line 1 is repeated, as an echo, in line 2, and the concept of being blessed in line 3 is repeated, as an echo, in line 4. In addition, we find here also an example of *Synonymous Parallelism* in lines 1 and 2. The concept of “endur[ing] forever” in line 1 is equated with the concept of “continu[ing] as long as the sun.” This is interesting in light of the fact that Jesus also said that as long as heaven and earth remain, the law of God will remain in force as well (Matthew 5:18). So, since God’s name will endure as long as the sun continues, so will His law.

Nahum 1:2:

“God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;

“The LORD avenges and is furious.

“The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,

“And He reserves wrath for His enemies.”

The thought in line 1 (“the LORD avenges”) is repeated as an echo in line 2. In line 3, it is almost repeated (“the LORD will take vengeance”), and the thought of Him being “furious” in line 2 is equated with His

be adorned with twelve precious stones (verses 19-20), and the twelve gates will be twelve pearls (verse 21). Finally, we read that a “river” will proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, and that in the midst of the street and on either side of the river “was the tree of life which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month”—or twelve times a year (Revelation 22:1-2).

NUMBER FORTY

Another meaningful number is **number forty**. It is a combination of the *number four* (*God’s revelation*) and the *number ten* (*Godly judgment*), and it is widely understood as symbolizing God’s revelation in judging and testing man.

The many occasions when the number forty plays a major role in the Bible should convince even the skeptic that these incidents are not merely “coincidental.” In fact, there are too many examples to list, but we are going to point out those which are most remarkable.

God’s flood at the time of Noah lasted for forty days. God sent the flood to show His judgment of a rebellious world (Genesis 7:4, 12, 17; 8:6). In a somewhat related context, the punishment of a judged and condemned criminal could not exceed forty blows or stripes (Deuteronomy 25:3).

We read that Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah (Genesis 25:20). This was a good and godly-ordained marriage. Sadly, Isaac and Rebekah’s son, Esau, married two wives when he was forty years old (Genesis 26:34), but this marriage was not good or God-ordained. We read that Esau’s two wives “were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah” (verse 35).

The Bible reveals the predominant role of the number forty in the life of Moses, and it also plays a role in the lives of Aaron and Caleb. Acts 7:23 tells us that Moses was forty years old when he visited the Israelites and slew the Egyptian, forcing him to flee from Egypt (verses 24-29). Acts 7:30 adds that Moses stayed for forty years in Midian, tending the sheep of his father-in-law. We are also told that he was with the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness (Acts 7:36). Moses died when he was 120 years old (Deuteronomy 31:2; 34:7), which means that God revealed Himself in the testing and judgment of Moses during three different time intervals: during the first forty years in Egypt;

22:3). Therefore, after Judas' betrayal, another disciple was chosen to replace Judas and become an apostle, to be numbered with the eleven, whose name was Matthias (Acts 1:15-26). From that time on, the Bible includes Matthias (no longer Judas) as part of the twelve apostles (compare 1 Corinthians 15:5; Revelation 21:14). Even before Judas' actual betrayal, Jesus spoke in Matthew 19:28 of twelve thrones on which the apostles will sit (those who truly followed Him—not Judas, but Matthias), to judge the house of Israel.

Jesus said in John 17:11-17 that His Church was to be kept in the name of His Father. The Father's name is GOD (compare John 20:17; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 3:4-15). We find twelve passages in the New Testament where the true Church is named "the church of God" [as the collective Body] or "churches of God," [referring to the total of all local congregations]—sometimes also in connection with a place or location, or with the addition of an attribute describing characteristics of God the Father. The twelve passages are as follows:

"The church of God" (six times, namely: Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 1 Corinthians 11:22; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 3:5); "The church of God which is at Corinth" (two times, namely: 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1); "The church of the living God" (one time, namely: 1 Timothy 3:15); and "The churches of God" (three times, namely: 1 Corinthians 11:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; and 2 Thessalonians 1:4).

We read that when Christ fed five thousand men, besides women and children, "twelve baskets full of the fragments" of the multiplied loaves of bread remained (Matthew 14:20), and when Peter was anxious to defend Christ with a sword, Christ told him to put his sword away, as He could ask His heavenly Father to send Him more than twelve legions of angels to protect Him (Matthew 26:53).

When focusing on the New Jerusalem that will descend from a new heaven to a new earth after the third resurrection (Revelation 21:1-2), we are told that that spiritual city—the bride, the Lamb's wife—will have twelve gates, with twelve angels at the gates, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on them (verse 12). The wall of the holy city will have twelve foundations, on which will be written the names of the twelve apostles (verse 14). The city will be twelve thousand furlongs in length (verse 16). The foundations of the wall will

"wrath" in line 4, while His "adversaries" in line 3 are equated with His "enemies" in line 4, showing that when man acts adverse to the Will of God, God is angry with man and regards him as His enemy.

Judges 5:27:

"At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;

"At her feet he sank, he fell;

"here he sank, there he fell dead."

Certain words in line 1 ("at her feet he sank, he fell") are repeated as an echo in line 2, and to an extent in line 3, but other thoughts are added: "he lay still" in line 1 is repeated, as an identical thought, in line 3 ("he fell dead"). This shows that a dead person lies still—there is no continuation of life or consciousness when one dies.

THE ACROSTIC DEVICE

Before concluding this chapter, we will address one more device in Hebrew poetry. It does not fall under the concept of Parallelism, but rather it is known as the "Acrostic" device. "Acrostic" literally means, "beginning of the line." It refers to instances when each line—or each series of lines—begins with a new letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which has 22 letters.

For instance, Psalm 119 has 176 verses. Each verse of the first eight verses begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; each verse of the second eight verses begins with the second letter of the alphabet, and so on. Each verse of the last eight verses of the psalm begins with the last or 22nd letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Many translations, such as the *Authorized Version* or the *New King James Bible*, have these passages marked and designated in Psalm 119. Each verse of the first eight verses begins with the letter "Aleph," followed by the second stanza of eight verses with the letter "beth," and so on. The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the letter "tau," is prominent in verses 169-176, where each verse of these last eight verses begins with the letter "tau."

There are additional acrostic poems in the Bible.

Psalm 34:1-22 is an acrostic psalm, and so is Psalm 25, where with "minor exceptions, each verse of this alphabetic acrostic psalm begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet" (compare *Ryrie*

Study Bible, comments to Psalm 34 and 25). In addition, Psalm 37 is an “alphabetic acrostic [in which] every second verse [begins] with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet” (compare *Ryrie Study Bible*). Other acrostic psalms can be found in Psalms 9 and 10 where “every alternate verse (for the most part) [begins] with the next successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet” (*Ryrie Study Bible*).

Proverbs 31:10-31 is an acrostic poem as well, and much of the book of Lamentations contains acrostic poems. (For instance, the Jewish Bible, Tanakh, designates quite nicely the different original letters of the Hebrew alphabet in these passages in the English translation). The *Ryrie Study Bible* explains that “the book [of Lamentations] consists of five poems, one for each chapter, the first four being written as acrostics (each verse begins with a word whose first letter is successively one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet—except in chapter 3, where three verses are allotted to each letter).”

To summarize, recognizing the different devices of Hebrew poetry, as used in the Holy Bible, should give us a deeper understanding of the intended meaning of certain passages and also additional appreciation of the beauty contained in those passages. The Bible is a living book—the Word of the living God—and its richness should fill us with amazement and thankfulness, always reminding us that man does not live by bread alone, but by EVERY Word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).

other created thing can separate us from God. God’s judgment is on us today (1 Peter 4:17), and if we live worthy of our calling, we will be judged worthy of eternal life in His Kingdom.

NUMBER TWELVE

Number twelve is generally understood as being the number of foundations. Twelve is a combination of the *number two* (which can symbolize union) and the *number ten* (which symbolizes godly judgment).

Jesus tells us that a day has twelve hours (John 11:9)—referring to the daylight portion—adding that the day is followed by the night (verse 10)—another period of twelve (dark) hours.

In the first book of the Bible, we are introduced to Jacob (later renamed Israel) and his twelve sons, who are the foundation of the tribes of Israel (Genesis 35:22-26; 49:28; compare Acts 26:7; James 1:1). To be protected from the plagues of the Lord, God will seal 144,000 Israelites (12 times 12)—twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes (Revelation 7:1-8; since Dan is not mentioned, Joseph is listed with his son Manasseh, reaching again the number twelve).

Moses and Aaron numbered the people “with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father’s house” (Numbers 1:44). Moses sent twelve leaders as spies into the Promised Land (Numbers 13:1-16), to indicate the potential future foundation or establishment of the nation of Israel in Canaan, but due to the rebellion of ten spies, they had to wait forty years before being allowed to possess the land.

We also read about twelve judges in the Old Testament, beginning with Othniel and ending with Samuel. In Samuel’s time, the people demanded to be led by a king. Even though God never intended for Israel to have a human king, He let them have their kings, the first king being Saul. King Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, and each one made provision for one month of the year (1 Kings 4:7).

We are told that Jesus was twelve years old when He was found in the Temple discussing God’s Law with the teachers (Luke 2:42-47). He told His surprised parents that He had to be about His heavenly Father’s business (verse 49).

Later, Jesus called twelve apostles (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:13-16). But He knew from the beginning that one of them, Judas Iscariot, would be “a devil” and would betray Him (John 6:64, 70-71; Luke

In Christ's famous parables about the talents or the minas, the number ten again plays a dominant role. In Matthew 25, the kingdom of heaven is compared with a man who gives talents to three servants—one receives ten talents, one two talents, and the third one receives one talent. The man expected his servants to trade with the talents, and while the first two doubled their talents, the third one did not do anything with his talent, but hid it in the ground. When the master returned, he rewarded the first two servants equally, but decided to take the one talent from the lazy servant and give it to the one who had been given ten talents at the outset. His achievement—to double the ten talents—was judged to be worthy of a greater reward than the achievement of the one who had been given five talents and who had gained five more.

In the parable in Luke 19—the parable of the minas—we are introduced to ten servants. Each one receives one mina, and during the master's absence, nine trade with the money and achieve different results, but the lazy servant hides the money in the ground. At his return, the master rewards his servants in proportion to their achievements, and he takes away the mina from the lazy servant and gives it to the servant who has gained ten minas. He judged the one who traded the most as being most competent to receive an additional reward.

We read about ten virgins in the end time—five of them are judged as being foolish, and five as being wise. The five foolish ones are not too concerned with using the Holy Spirit that had been given to them, while the five wise virgins—even though they also fell asleep with the others—had still enough Holy Spirit within them to be able to prepare and make themselves ready for their Master's return. The church in Smyrna was to be tested for ten days, but if they were judged to be faithful, they would inherit eternal life (Revelation 2:10).

We are warned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 that according to God's righteous judgment, ten categories of unrighteous people will not inherit the Kingdom of God—fornicators; idolaters; adulterers; homosexuals; sodomites; thieves; covetous; drunkards; revilers; and extortioners. On the other hand, we are told that nothing can separate us from the love of God, and ten things are listed to emphasize this fact: Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any

Hebrew Poetry

PARALLELISM

Synonymous Parallelism—second line repeats idea of first line

Identical Synonymous Parallelism—repetition of identical thoughts

Similar Synonymous Parallelism—repetition of similar thoughts with addition

Introverted Parallelism—reversal of identical thoughts in first and second line

Antithetic Parallelism—second line expresses opposite to first line

Synthetic Parallelism—thoughts are built upon each other; compared, explained or contrasted

Climactic Parallelism—thoughts become greater and more comprehensive in second line

Emblematic Parallelism—literal statement is contrasted with a metaphor or simile

Emblematic Parallelism with a link—contrast in second line indicated by "so" or "as"

Emblematic Parallelism without a link—"as," "so" missing, but understood

Palilogical Parallelism—repetition of word or phrase for emphasis, like an "echo"

ACROSTIC POEMS

Verses or groups of verses begin with successive letters of Hebrew alphabet

We find in Daniel 1:12-15 that Daniel and his three friends were tested for ten days to see whether their refusal to eat meat (i.e., unclean meat or meat sacrificed to idols,) would harm them in any way, and the judgment was that it did not. Further, the king of Babylon examined them in “matters of wisdom and understanding” and judged that they were ten times better than all his magicians and astrologers (Daniel 1:20).

God brought judgment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians and their false religion (Exodus 12:12; Numbers 33:4), by striking them with ten plagues—the tenth plague being the death of every Egyptian firstborn. God told Abram that He would not destroy Sodom if ten righteous were to be found in it (Genesis 18:32), but Sodom was judged as lacking even ten righteous people. We also read that during God’s judgment, only ten out of one hundred people (that is, 10%) will be left in the cities of Israel (Amos 5:3).

There are ten generations from Adam to Noah (Genesis 5), and God judged the world at the time of Noah when He destroyed it in a Flood. There are also ten generations from Shem (one of Noah’s sons) to Abram (Genesis 11). We do not read about anyone after Shem and before Abram who was called in this life for salvation. But even though Abram was to become a chosen vessel in the service of God, that does not mean that he was perfect. After having resided for ten years in Canaan, he and his wife Sarai concluded that they had to produce offspring through Sarai’s handmaid Hagar, lacking the faith that God could fulfill His promise to give Abram and Sarai a son (Genesis 16:3-4).

In later generations, Jacob deceived his father Isaac, and was subsequently deceived himself ten times by his uncle Laban (Genesis 31:7, 41), showing the righteous judgments of God.

At the time of Moses, the children of Israel rebelled ten times against God in the wilderness (Numbers 14:22), judging themselves as unworthy to enter the Promised Land (verse 23).

When Christ was here on earth, He cleansed ten lepers, but only one returned and thanked and gave glory to God, and he was a Samaritan (Luke 17:11-18). While he was judged as having been “saved by faith,” (verse 19, *New Jerusalem Bible* and *New American Bible*), the others were not described in this way.

Number Nine

The following article was written by Delia Messier (Canada):

Many of my spring, summer and fall daylight hours are spent working outside in the vegetable and berry gardens and flower beds, as well as tending to the fruit trees—and watering is one of my daily chores.

One early summer day, several years ago, I was having a hard time getting it done as my health was bad, and handling the hose was difficult. Like the canary that had been accidentally sucked into the vacuum cleaner hose and spit back out again—that was me—only a few feathers left with a broken chicken heart!

A serious time in my life!

As I was snailing along on the job, I noticed a beautiful all-powder blue bird, then another and another. They were happily flying around in and out of the cat tail pond, singing to each other, fearless of me being so close. They stayed and played and bathed for several long minutes—what a treat to watch. I decided to count them. There were nine of them. Finding this an odd number, I counted them again a few times.

These little birds lifted my spirit and brought me joy. It was like getting a hug! It wasn't till much time and some years had passed that I realized what a blessing it was to have seen those blue birds at that crucial time for me.

Now, when I might begin to get discouraged, I think of my nine powder blue birds—and remember that My Father knows what I need and comforts me and doesn't let me have more than I can handle; and that He is giving me the nine character traits of the fruit of His Holy Spirit. Nothing in this world can compare with this, no matter the losses or the hardships.

We have lived here for over 18 years, and I have never seen these little powder blue birds before or since that day.

The nine character traits of the fruit of the Holy Spirit are mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23, which are: love; joy; peace; longsuffering; kindness; goodness; faithfulness; gentleness; and self-control.

NUMBER TEN

The biblical **number ten** is also of great significance.

This number stands for godly judgment.

For instance, God gave us the law of the Ten Commandments, which is still in force and effect today, and it is by that law that we will be judged. God also asked us to pay Him the tithe—ten percent of our increase—and we will be judged as to how diligent we are in fulfilling His command.

Part 2

Significance of Certain Numbers in the Bible

Even though one has to avoid the “temptation” to attach a symbolic meaning to just about every number or combination of numbers used in the Holy Scriptures, there can be no doubt that a particular significance does exist in regard to *certain* numbers or numerical combinations. This concept is known as biblical numerology. The Bible itself makes this clear when it talks about the famous figure “666” (as will be discussed later)—the number of the end-time beast in the book of Revelation—or when it refers to certain numbers in the book of Daniel (for instance, 1260 days, 1290 days, and 1335 days).

In this section, we will discuss obvious significance associated with certain numbers, and we will see that the biblical use of those numbers in a particular context is by no means “accidental.” The lists are not meant to be exhaustive, but can be used as a guideline or basis for considering other instances where these numbers are mentioned in the Bible. We will also show that some people ascribe “significance” or “interpretation” to certain numbers where, in fact, they should not do so.

NUMBER ONE

One of the more obvious numbers which can lead to a wrong interpretation is the **number one**.

Some point at the number one as always describing unity or singularity. They are wrong on both counts.

We read that God is one in the sense that the Father is one Being, but that does not exclude the fact that God is a Family, and that the God Family presently consists of TWO Beings (see below), and that it is the potential of man to enter the God Family or the Kingdom of God. It is also true that the number one may describe unity between two members, but also between many members. God is one in the

sense that the Father and the Son are completely unified, and God's disciples are to become one or unified as well (John 17:11; compare Galatians 3:28). We read of one baptism (Ephesians 4:5)—again, describing unity—as there are many who have been baptized over the years, being baptized in the one Body of Christ—a spiritual organism consisting of many members (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

We read about one Spirit, because it is unified. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but it is the power and mind of God which emanates from both the Father and the Son (Romans 8:9), and it dwells in all of God's true disciples. By forgiveness of sins, Christ has made "one new man from the two"; that is, from Gentiles and Israelites (Ephesians 2:15-16). Unity is also expressed by the fact that a man and a woman, when they get married, become "one flesh" (Matthew 19:4-6; compare Ephesians 5:31-32, showing that in a spiritual sense, Christ and His church become one spirit, note 1 Corinthians 6:17). A man who has sexual intercourse with a prostitute becomes "one" with her (1 Corinthians 6:16)—the wrong kind of "unity."

So we see that the number one can, at times, refer to more than one person in denoting unity between those persons. On the other hand, there are countless examples in the Bible when "one" person or concept or event is described without referring to unity or unification. So then it becomes clear that to always ascribe singularity or unity to the number one would be misleading.

NUMBER TWO

The **number two** is sometimes associated with union, but also with division. It signifies duality as well as contrast.

In many cases, biblical prophecies have dual meaning—they might find a prior, preliminary fulfillment, as well as a climatic end-time fulfillment. Christ spoke of developments at the time of His First Coming, or even prior to that, but in the same context, He pointed out that a correlating major fulfillment should be expected in the latter days. He compared the times of Noah with the end time; He spoke of the destruction of the second temple at around 70 A.D., but also explained that apparently, another destruction of a rebuilt temple would occur during the time of the Great Tribulation. He prophesied that the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel,

God" (compare 1 Kings 13:1; 1 Kings 20:28; 2 Kings 23:17), but they are not identified by name. In the New Testament, Timothy is identified one time as a man of God (1 Timothy 6:11), but every true Christian is also referred to as "man of God" (2 Timothy 3:17).

Seven pairs of clean animals survived the flood in Noah's ark in order to keep the species alive (Genesis 7:2-3). We also read in the New Testament that seven miracles were performed by Christ on the Sabbath. Seven demons were cast out of Mary Magdalene by Jesus (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2), as He had cast out seven nations from the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 15:1). All of this shows Christ's complete and perfect dealing with men, both from a physical and also a spiritual standpoint.

We read of seven things which spiritually defile a man (Matthew 15:19; namely: evil thoughts; murders; adulteries; fornications; thefts; false witness; and blasphemies); and there are seven things which are an abomination in God's eyes (Proverbs 6:16; namely: a proud look; a lying tongue; hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that devises wicked plans; feet that are swift in running to evil; a false witness who speaks lies; and one who sows discord among brethren).

On the other hand, God lists seven spiritual gifts which we can use for the benefit of others (Romans 12:6-8; namely: prophecy or inspired speaking; ministry or ministering to or helping others; teaching; exhortation; giving; diligent leading; cheerful mercy). There are seven points showing unity in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6; namely: one body; one spirit; one hope; one Lord; one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all).

We can be sure that God's Word is always true, as it has been purified seven times (Psalm 12:6), and the Psalmist praised God seven times a day (Psalm 119:164). This is not to say that we need to carefully count the times in order to cease praising God when we have done so seven times. Rather, it expresses completion and perfection in that we always have to be in a prayerful and thankful attitude. We have to forgive our brother not just seven times, but up to seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22)—that is, always, when the brother who sins against us repents and asks for our forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4).

The righteous may fall seven times (so it may appear that he has been thoroughly defeated), but he will rise again every time (Proverbs 24:16), because God will raise him up.

(John 10:11, 14); “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25); “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6); and “I am the true vine” (John 15:1). Unless we are close to Jesus Christ, accept Him as our personal Savior and are part of His Body, the Church, which is a spiritual organism, we will not inherit eternal life and salvation.

The perfect armor of God consists of seven parts, namely truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the word of God, and prayer (Ephesians 6:14-18). It is this godly armor which helps us to fight against Satan and his demons.

The Church of God consists of seven church eras, as described in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation. Also, we read that the first deacons who were ordained in the New Testament Church were seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:1-3).

The book of Revelation speaks of seven seals, containing prophetic events; of seven trumpets; and of the seven last plagues.

The physical nourishment in the Promised Land was described as consisting of seven parts, namely wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey (Deuteronomy 8:8). Likewise, God lists seven physical gifts for ancient and modern Israel, namely grain, new wine, oil, silver, gold, wool and linen (Hosea 2:8-9). In Matthew 15:36-37, Christ multiplied seven loaves of bread to feed 4,000 men, besides women and children, and after they had eaten, seven large baskets full of the fragments were left. All of this shows that God’s gifts are good and complete.

God reveals seven names of those who wrote the book of Psalms. Most were written by David (including Psalm 1-41; 51-59; 61-65; 67-70; 86; 101; 103; 108-110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138-145), but other identified authors are the sons of Korah (Psalm 42; 44-49; 84-85; 87), Asaph (Psalm 50; 73-83), Heman (Psalm 88), Ethan (Psalm 89), Moses (Psalm 90) and Solomon (Psalm 72). All the psalms (as well as all the other passages in the Bible) are inspired of God, no matter who the human author might have been.

Seven men (identified by name) are called “man of God” in the Old Testament, namely Moses (Deuteronomy 33:1); David (2 Chronicles 8:14); Samuel (1 Samuel 9:6); Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22); Elijah (1 Kings 17:18; 2 Kings 1:9); Elisha (2 Kings 4:7); and Igdaliah (Jeremiah 35:4). There are other men mentioned who are also called “man of

would occur, as a forerunner, in the first century, but more importantly, that it would occur again in the end time (Matthew 24:15-21). In addition, He explained that as ancient Israel was defeated in war in Old Testament times, so it would happen again for modern Israel just prior to His Second Coming.

Specifically focusing on the number two, we should note the following by the way of contrast or opposites:

We read about light and darkness (Genesis 1:18; compare Ephesians 5:8), as well as the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These two contrasts are highlighted by the fact that we either build our lives on the foundation of Christ—the house built on a rock—or on another foundation—the house built on sand (Matthew 7:24-27). In other words, if we build our lives on any other foundation than on Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), we have built on sand. There are only two ways—the way which leads to death, and the way which leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14). It is either God’s Way (Acts 18:26) or the way of Cain (Jude 11), and so we read about two brothers—righteous Abel and unrighteous Cain. We read that two cannot walk together, unless they are agreed (Amos 3:3), and that righteousness has no fellowship and communion with lawlessness (2 Corinthians 6:14). In this context, we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). If we don’t serve God, we are serving something or someone else, summarized as “mammon.” We read about two goats during the ancient Atonement ceremony—the one (“to the LORD”) symbolizes Jesus Christ; the other—Azazel—symbolizes Satan the Devil (Leviticus 16:7-8).

A slightly different way, that of contrast, is depicted in the following examples. Note, however, that while they do not necessarily represent opposites, they still express different thoughts or concepts.

We read about two covenants—the old covenant and the new covenant. We also read about Jesus Christ, the last or second Adam and the second Man (1 Corinthians 15:45-47). The Bible also refers to Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom), as well as Isaac and Ishmael.

On the other hand, the number two also signifies complete harmony and necessary connection.

God consists of two Persons or Personages, and the whole law can be summarized in two commandments (Matthew 22:40). Also, the Ten Commandments were written on two tablets of stone. The testimony

of two witnesses is true (John 8:17), and some words are repeated or mentioned twice to show their significance, such as, “Truly, truly, I say to you...” God’s Word is sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12; compare Revelation 1:16; 2:12).

We also find that Christ sent out His disciples two by two (Mark 6:7); that Christ dealt at times with two brothers (Moses and Aaron; James and John); and that Joshua and Caleb were the only two persons who gave a good report of the Promised Land (Numbers 14:6-7).

We also read about the two end-time witnesses, as well as two persons (Moses and Elijah) who appeared in a vision to Christ and His three disciples on the Mount of Transformation (Matthew 17).

On a human level, a person has two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears, and we read that a man and a woman (two persons) should marry and become one.

We read that God gave specific instructions to Noah with regard to gathering the animals into the ark: “Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two, they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah” (Genesis 7:8-9).

NUMBER THREE

Many assign special godly significance to the **number three**, claiming that it stands for perfection or completeness. There are occasions when the number three has such significance (compare 2 Corinthians 12:8; Deuteronomy 17:6; Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 John 5:7-8). However, note that in the last Scripture, the original does NOT contain the words: “in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one...” These words were added in later centuries to support the unbiblical teaching of the Trinity—“One God Person in three God Persons.”

Also, in Deuteronomy 16:16, we are told to appear “three times a year” before God to keep His annual Festivals. But it is interesting that this passage only refers to the three Holy Day seasons (Days of Unleavened Bread in the spring; Pentecost in early summer; and the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in the autumn), while all the individual Holy Days consist of seven days—the number of completeness (as we will discuss below).

As we already mentioned previously, the number six can refer to something which lacks completion. For instance, God’s re-creation week was only completed on the seventh day with the institution of the Sabbath. Jericho was destroyed on the seventh day, after the Israelites had marched around the city for six days. Man was given six “days” of 1,000 years each to rule himself, but God will begin His rule over man and this earth with the Millennium (the seventh “day” of 1,000 years). In Old Testament times, individual debts were cancelled every seven years (Deuteronomy 15:1).

God also gave us seven Days of Unleavened Bread during which no leavened products (symbolic for sin) are to be consumed, as well as seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles (symbolizing the Millennium); and God has made holy seven annual Feast Days (First and Last Days of Unleavened Bread; Pentecost; Feast of Trumpets; Day of Atonement; First Day of Feast of Tabernacles; Last Great Day).

The very first sentence in the Bible (Genesis 1:1) contains seven words in the Hebrew, showing that God’s initial physical creation of the heavens and the earth was perfect. The earth was not created in a state of confusion and destruction, but the earth became void and empty because of Satan’s rebellion against God.

When reviewing Christ’s last sayings on the cross, as related to us by the four gospel writers, we find that He made important pronouncements on seven occasions (Luke 23:34; Luke 23:43; John 19:26; Matthew 27:46; John 19:28; John 19:30; and Luke 23:46). These sayings show that Christ had finished or completed the work which the Father had given Him to do while He was a human being on this earth.

We also find that the book of John recorded seven miracles by Jesus Christ during His life as a human being (John 2:1-11; John 4:46-54; John 5:1-9; John 6:1-14; John 6:15-21; John 9:1-12; John 11:1-16, 25-26, 41). John recorded those miracles as sufficient, complete and perfect evidence for us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, leading to eternal life (John 20:30-31).

Jesus identified Himself in the book of John as the “I am” (John 8:58-59)—the YHWH or God of the Old Testament—and He describes in seven ways how this applied to Him. He said: “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35); “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12; 9:5); “I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7); “I am the good shepherd”

NUMBER SIX

Number six is the number of a man who is far from God or alienated from Him. It can also refer to the fact that something is not perfect or needs to be completed.

The most famous combination of the number six is perhaps the number of the beast in the book of Revelation, namely 666. In the Greek, this number is written as 600 and 60 and 6. This number stands for total separation from God and the unconditional submission to Satan the Devil. Most people will be so deceived that they will worship Satan and his human instruments—the beast and the false prophet—while rejecting the true God and His Law.

The sixth commandment forbids murder in all of its different forms (Exodus 20:13), but man, separated from God, thinks that some kinds of murder are permitted, such as killing in war. The descendants of unrighteous Cain, who slew his brother Abel, are only listed until the sixth generation.

God has allotted to man 6,000 years to rule himself, under the influence of Satan [which will be followed by God's rule—the peaceful "rest" of the Millennium (Hebrews 4:1, 11), or the seventh "day" which consists of 1,000 years; compare 2 Peter 3:8].

Man was created on the sixth day (but the week was only completed and perfected with the creation of the Sabbath); and while man is to do his work on six days, he is to rest on the seventh day (Exodus 16:26; 20:9-11; 23:12; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Mark 2:23-28).

God commanded Joshua and the Israelites to march around the wicked city of Jericho for six days (Joshua 6:3, 14), but it was on the seventh day, after having circled the city seven times, that it would be destroyed (verses 4, 16-17).

Old Testament Israel received six things from their lovers or political allies, namely bread and water, wool and linen, oil and drink (Hosea 2:5). In this, they became more and more alienated from God.

Jesus said six times to the Jews, "Have you not read?"

NUMBER SEVEN

Number seven is one of the most important numbers in the Bible.

It stands for completion and perfection, and is generally understood and recognized in this way.

There are examples where the number three does not signify completeness (compare Luke 13:6-9, especially verses 7-8). The real basis for the claim that the number three always describes completeness or perfection lies in the erroneous perception that God is a Trinity. Some even try to support this false claim by referring to the angelic words of "holy, holy, holy" in Isaiah 6:3. This argument is to be rejected for the simple reason that angels say the same words to God the Father, while Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is present as well (Revelation 4:8; 5:6). The Bible teaches that God consists of TWO Persons or Personages or Spirit Beings—the Father and the Son—while, as mentioned, the Holy Spirit is NOT a person, but it is the power and mind emanating from both God Beings.

On the other hand, it is interesting that most deny a more significant aspect that does include the number three; namely, that Christ was three days and three nights in the grave, just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster (Matthew 12:40). Jesus did, in fact, fulfill this crucial sign of His Messiahship, in that He was placed in the grave on Wednesday afternoon, just before sunset, and He left the grave on Saturday afternoon, just before sunset, after having been dead in the grave for exactly seventy-two hours, or three days and three nights. Those who believe in a Friday afternoon crucifixion and a Sunday morning resurrection ignore the fact that the accumulated time for Christ being in the grave would only be one-and-one-half days, thus contradicting what Jesus said.

NUMBER FOUR

The **number four** is used many times to signify God's revelation. God will often reveal something about Himself, or about something or someone else in this way.

The Bible contains four gospel records, in which the human life of Jesus Christ and His preexistence is revealed. It is interesting, too, that Christ was born in the year 4 B.C. The Holy Scriptures are helpful and profitable for four things, as 2 Timothy 3:16 explains, namely "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness."

We read about four living creatures or angelic beings in Revelation 4:6, and about four cherubim in the book of Ezekiel (1:10-12; 10:20). We also read about God's revelation to Daniel that four great beasts

would appear on the earth, representing human governments, but that Christ would return to make an end to human rule.

We find that God changed the names of four human beings: Abram's name was changed to Abraham (Genesis 17:5); Sarai's name was changed to Sarah (Genesis 17:15); Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28; 35:10); and Pashhur's name was changed to Magor-Missabib (Jeremiah 20:3). [We also read that God will give all of His disciples a new name (Revelation 2:17), and that Jesus Christ was given a name that is "more excellent" than the name of any angel (Hebrews 1:4), and that only He knows His new name (Revelation 19:12; compare Revelation 3:12).]

In Old Testament times, God sometimes revealed His Will through His prophets, and it is remarkable that four Old Testament prophetesses are mentioned by name: Miriam (Exodus 15:20); Deborah (Judges 4:4); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); and Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14) [There are of course other prophetesses mentioned in the Old Testament, such as the wife of Isaiah (8:3), but they are not identified by name. There is also a reference in the New Testament to the prophetess Anna, in Luke 2:36, but it is interesting that after the founding of the New Testament Church, no further mention is made regarding a prophetess or the office of a prophetess, while there were some women "who prophesied" (Acts 21:9).]

By contrast, Eve is also mentioned four times in Scripture (Genesis 3:20; 4:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3; and 1 Timothy 2:13).

In the book of Zechariah, the number four figures prominently in the prophecies about the four horns (1:18), the four chariots with the four horses (6:1-2, 5); and the four craftsmen (1:20). We also know, of course, about the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

In addition, God created everything that exists, including the four regions (north, east, south and west). (In the Bible, there is no word for "northeast" or "southwest"; therefore, it may sometimes speak of "north and east," meaning "northeast"; or it may just speak of "north" with the understanding that "east" is included).

God has also created the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter; compare Genesis 8:22). In this context, four angels standing at the four corners of the earth hold the four winds of the earth, until 144,000 Israelites are sealed to be protected from the wrath of the Lord (Revelation 7:1-3).

NUMBER FIVE

Focusing on **number five**, there seems to be wide-spread recognition that it is often used to describe God's grace and power.

The Torah consists of five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

When Abram's and Sarai's names were changed to "Abraham" and "Sarah," the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet was added in both cases to their new names ("h" in English).

In Old Testament times, five types of animals were sacrificed to God: goats, sheep, cattle, pigeons and doves. Animal sacrifices did not forgive sin, but they made it possible to restore a physical relationship with God.

Following the four worldly kingdoms described in the book of Daniel, the Kingdom of God—the fifth Kingdom—will be established on earth.

Christ used five loaves of bread to feed 5,000 men (Matthew 14:17, 21; 16:9).

Paul said he would rather speak five words with understanding, that he may teach others God's Word, than ten thousand words in a tongue (a foreign language which the listeners could not understand) (1 Corinthians 14:19).

Some have raised other concepts which supposedly show God's grace in the number five, but they are highly suspect or erroneous.

For example, one commentary claims that "Five Greek words form the acrostic phrase 'Jesus Christ, God's Son Savior,' taking the first letter in Greek from each word [which form] the Greek word for 'fish': Iota, Chi, Theta, Epsilon, Sigma = (ichthys) 'FISH', which became a symbol for Christ and a secret symbol for identifying Christians." However, true Christians never identified themselves with the symbol of a fish, as pagans worshipped a fish god, Dagon, and true Christians would have been abhorred by the idea of applying such a heathen symbol to Christ or to themselves. In passing, they never used a cross for their worship. The cross was an abominable pagan symbol. True Christians never wore a cross, nor did they place the symbol of a cross in their homes. In addition, it is highly unlikely that the Romans nailed Christ on the type of cross used today by nominal Christians in "remembrance" of Christ's death.