



October 21, 2007

The Numbers Of God: Seven

Just about anyone who is familiar with the scriptures is aware of the prominence of the number seven. As we look at the numbers used by God to convey meaning, we find that this is one of the most significant. The Bible shows that God mirrors spiritual reality and meaning in the physical creation. In this manner God is then calls upon these things to represent and prove his power. In the beginning God created the world in seven days (**Gen 1**). From the creation God also set a precedent of reserving or sanctifying time for himself and his purpose. To that end he set aside, or sanctified, the Sabbath day and purposed it as a day of rest (Note: *the word Sabbath means rest, not seventh*). God reminded the Children of Israel that they should remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (**Ex 20.8**). God later uses his power and the number seven as the final warning prior to the flood in the days of Noah (**Gen 7.4**). In preparation for the flood the clean animals were sent to Noah in sevens as well (**Gen 7.2**) while those that were unclean animals were taken in by twos. God's power was demonstrated at the end of the final seven days as the waters came upon the Earth as God stated. Jacob, the patriarch chosen to carry the promise of God, fled to the land of his relatives and there worked for a wife for seven years (**Gen 29.15-30**). Being defrauded by his father-in-law, Laban, Jacob worked another seven years for his true love, Rachel. God's power was at work in this as God used this family to give birth to the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was this family that would form the nation through which God would bless the entire world as God promised Abraham. There are other examples of the power of God at work in the world to deliver or render judgment against those who did not respect His authority. During the days of Joseph, Pharaoh dreamed of seven fat cows consumed by seven lean cows and seven full ears devoured by seven lean ears. Joseph interpreted this to mean that God was warning of a famine that would follow seven years of plenty. God used this dream, and the presence of Joseph in Egypt to save not only the Egyptians but his own family and therefore set the stage for the events

that would bring the nation of Israel into being. (**Gen 41.1-46**). Nebuchadnezzar was a good example of this. In spite of the fact that he had seen the work that God had done, not to mention that fact that his conquest of Judah had been allowed by God (**Hab 1.6**) he became arrogant. God pronounced a judgment against him and condemned the proud king to spend seven years living with the beasts of the field (**Dan 4.10-34**). As the army of God entered the promised land they were to march around the city of Jericho for seven days at the end of which God delivered the city to them by causing the walls to fall down (**Joshua 6**). The nature of God is also demonstrated in the description of the coming Messiah. Isaiah describes the promised one stating, "*And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD*" (**Isa 11.2**). John describes Christ as having the "*seven spirits of God*" (**Rev 1.4, 3.1**) demonstrating that Christ is the fullness of God and his plan to save mankind. The power of God was demonstrated during the days of Christ as he performed miracles to show that he was the son of God. One of those had to do with feeding a multitude who had been following him to hear the things he taught. Using seven loaves and a "*few fishes*" Christ fed four thousand men beside the women and children that were gathered. The idea of completion or fullness is also carried in the number seven. The seven churches of Asia (**Rev 1-3**) represent the sum of all churches in the area, and the world, and carried warnings and exhortations to do what was right in the sight of God. Again there is no magic in the number itself. It is God who is at work and he uses this to let us know that he indeed is exercising his power.

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