

Bible Numbers 1 & 2

Numbers in the Bible

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Bible Text: Psalm 147:1-5

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We're turning tonight, if you have your Bibles, to the 147th Psalm. We want to read the first verse,

“Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.”

Let's ask the Lord's blessing on his Word.

Our Father, as we come to this thy Word of Truth tonight, we are grateful indeed for the truth of the Word that we've just read. That our Lord is, indeed, one who has great power. That you are one whose understanding is infinite and we praise thee and thank thee that we can come in the light of this knowledge realizing that you're also our heavenly Father who loves us, is willing to lead us and guide us into all truth. We thank thee for our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank thee that he was willing to come to this world to die on Calvary's cross to make this meeting possible tonight. And we pray that as we come now to look into the pages of thy Word that you'll open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law. We pray these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

We're beginning tonight what I hope is going to be a series of four messages on Bible Numbers. And when we come to talk about the numbers in the Bible, we are talking about a very vast subject indeed. It's one that's been abused and also one that's been greatly neglected when it comes to the study of the Word of God. And yet, it is something that I believe can add a great deal of interest to your study of the Word of God on a personal basis.

Now, basically there are two thoughts to keep in mind as we come to these studies: first of all, God would have us take an interest in the study of Bible numbers. If this were not the case, they wouldn't be in the Bible. As we've been seeing often in recent weeks, “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect or complete truly furnished unto all good works.” We have set before us tonight in every line, in every word, a Word from God that is profitable. This, of course, includes the numbers in the Bible.

But in the second place, we need to remember that the study of Bible numbers is not an exact science. You can't build doctrine on the numbers in the Bible; they are not like the basic truths that are to be found, the fundamentals of the faith that we find spread throughout the Word of God. But, they are very much like the typology of the Scriptures. They are something that God has placed here for the blessing of his people, for edification, to give us understanding of these mysteries that are beyond the understanding of the natural man. They are not here to prove points; they are not here to teach theology; they are not here to reveal to us the Antichrist or anything of that nature. I'm sure that Bible numbers are an exact science as far as God is concerned but we're dealing here with a translation of the Word of God. We're dealing with another language and we're dealing with limited intelligence.

And there are many other factors that make this subject far beyond our comprehension as human beings. For example: there is an ancient study of numbers and letters that's known as gematria. It's especially popularized by the Greek and in gematria the letters in the alphabet are given a numerical equivalent. When I was a little boy in school, we used to do something very similar to that. We had a secret code. Number one would represent "A." Number two would represent "B." Number three would represent "C," and so forth. And we'd use this very secret code to pass notes around the room and we never could understand why the teacher could always break the code and read the notes.

But, there are many people who, in the past, have gone to great lengths to show that the numerical equivalent of the name of some political leader is 666 in order to indicate that, perhaps, he might be the Antichrist. Now, all that is pointless. It has not relationship to the original Greek and Hebrew and even if it did, it proves nothing because that wicked one is not going to be revealed to you or me or anybody else until the Spirit of God is removed from this earth and I trust that you'll be leaving just about that time if you know the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's no doubt in my mind that God does, indeed, have a system of gematria. In Job 14:16 he tells us that he numbers our steps. And Matthew 10:30, God tells us that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, about 180,000 of them on the average head. The Scripture tonight, as we've read it in Psalm 147:4, tells us that God has numbered the stars. And this gives us some indication of how God delights in numbers and how he places an emphasis on them in the universe in which we live. There are about 6,000 stars that are visible to the naked eye but, beloved, there is no way that we can comprehend the depth of this statement that we have right here in Psalm 147:4.

In recent years, vast strides have been made in the studies of astronomy. I was reading just in the last few weeks in National Geographic magazine a statement that says,

“Today we know that galaxies are as common as blades of grass in a meadow. They number perhaps 100 billion. The world’s largest telescope can see as many as a million galaxies inside the bowl of the Big Dipper alone.”

A galaxy is an area of the heavens that is measured by astronomers. The Milky Way Galaxy, for example, has about 100 billion stars in it, by the estimation of the scientists, and, as you can see on the back of this Bible study sheet, there are quite a few stars up there in the heavens. This photograph was taken, of course, through a telescope, but as you’ll see down at the bottom, this is only a small portion of one of the nearly 2,000 photographs that it takes to have a map, an atlas, of what’s happening up there in the sky. And this is what man has understood just in the last few years. It used to be in ancient times that man thought that the only stars in the sky were the ones that could be seen with the naked eye, but the Word of God tells us several times that it is impossible for man to number the stars. And when we begin to think in terms of the fact that there are 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy alone, when we think about the fact that there may be as many as a million galaxies inside the bowl of the Big Dipper, and when we look at a photograph such as this and know that this is less than 1/2000 of the heavens even as they are known to man today, we begin to get some picture of what God is talking about when he says that he tells the number of stars and he calls them all by their names.

Imagine that the thickness of this Bible study sheet that I have given you tonight represents the distance from the earth to the sun, 93 million miles. The thickness of this paper. The distance from here to the nearest star would be represented by a stack of this paper 71 feet high, if the thickness represents 93 million miles. If we were talking about the distance across our galaxy, we’d be talking about a stack of this paper 310 miles high. And if we were talking about the distance to the farthest star that man can see with a telescope out there in the sky, we’d be talking about a stack of this paper that is 31 million miles high. Now, all out there, there are stars just as thick as you see them right here on the back of this Bible study sheet.

So, God is telling us here that he tells the number of the stars and he calls them all by their names. He has every one of them numbered and he has every one of them named. That’s a wonderful thing to know, that we have a Father like that. It’s a wonderful thing to know that we have a Savior who spoke a word and a trillion, trillion stars and more came into being. That’s the kind of Savior we need to get rid of the kind of sins that we have. But it seems completely incomprehensible to me that God would number the stars of creation, that he’d number our steps, that the very hairs of our head would be all numbered and that this Word, here, wouldn’t be numbered. Every jot and tittle of it. I’m sure it is. I’m sure that every inflection mark, every tiny portion of every letter has a number on it here within the Word of God if we had the intelligence to understand it.

It’s wonderful to know that God is setting before us here in his truth things that we can understand. We can go into complicated things when it comes to Bible numbers. I read books that dealt mainly with the Greek and Hebrew which I don’t know anything at all about. I read books that go into great fantasy about Bible numbers and they’re a waste of

time as well. I read very little that's helpful as far as the study of the numbers in the Word of God is concerned. Now, one thing that I did read that impressed me, was a little article from Letourneau College that came into my hands several years ago. It's talking about Bible numerics and it's telling about the original languages, something that I know nothing about, but it says this,

“There's a mathematical structure in the original Hebrew and Greek languages which proves the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible. Those who have studied Hebrew and Greek know that every Hebrew and Greek letter also stands for a number and the significance is very revealing to all that make a study of it. Take for example, the first sentence of the Bible: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In the original Hebrew, the number of words in this first verse is seven. These seven words have 28 letters or 4×7 . These 28 letters are divided into the first three words and the last four words which is 7: the first three words have 14 letters or 2 sevens; and the last four have also 14 which is 2 sevens. The last four words are in their turn subdivided thus: the fourth and the fifth words have seven letters; the sixth and the seventh have also seven. There isn't one chance in a million that these things could have happened accidentally.”

Now, they go on, of course, to explain how this is the case throughout the pages of the Word of God. I've mentioned to you many times that God always does things by sevens and apparently he does in the writing of the original languages of the Scriptures. But I don't know anything about that, I'll just have to take the word of these men who love the Lord Jesus and who love the Word of God and who wrote this article.

What I want to give you is a basic view of the use of the numbers in the Bible so that we can understand something about it. Again, I want you to be clear on what this study is not. This is not an exact science with our limited knowledge. This is not a basis for Bible doctrine. The number of times that something is found in a particular chapter means absolutely nothing because God didn't put the chapter headings in this book. The numerical equivalent of any name means absolutely nothing because we simply don't know how that relates to the language that we use today.

What is important is the way God consistently uses a number here within his Word. Now, let me emphasize this because many people ask me, they say, “Where does it say that the number five in the Bible is the number of grace?” Well, it doesn't say that in the Bible anywhere. The only way to discover the meaning of any given number is to study the use of that number in the many places that it appears throughout the Word of God and in some instances, that's an awful lot of places.

Now, I've reached these conclusions that I'm going to be giving you in these next few studies on the numbers in the Bible not from somebody's book because, as I said, I read some of those and they've been very confusing, but it's something that I've been discovering as I've been studying the Word of God over the last few years. These things

have been a great blessing to me, a great help to me in understanding what I believe, to my limited understanding at least, to be some very complicated portions of the Word of God. If you've heard me preach often, you know that I'm very interested in Bible typology and symbolism and the numbers fit in very well with this truth of symbolism and the like because I believe that there are vast portions of the Bible that make absolutely no sense at all apart from just a bland historical record unless you understand the symbols that God uses to confound the natural man and to delight his people.

For example, I might ask you tonight: Why was it that Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years? It could've been seven years; it could've been 12; it could've been 26; it could've been any number at all. It didn't have to be 40, it doesn't seem like, unless there's a particular significance to that number. Or we might ask ourselves: Why was it that David chose five stones when he went out to fight the giant? Didn't he believe that God was going to be able to kill him with one? Why would he have chosen five? Or we might ask ourselves: Why did Jesus choose 12 disciples? Why not three? Or six? Or eight? Why would it have been 12? Or we might ask ourselves: Why is the number of the Antichrist the number 666?

Now, don't tell me that these things are not important because the Lord Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Every word in this book is important and every inclusion of every number, of every fact, of every figure has a significant and God has told us to "study to show ourselves approved.:

Now, we'll answer all those questions as we go along in this series. And, of course, there are many other questions that are going to remain unanswered because we can't number the stars and we don't know all about God's use of numbers in the Bible, at least I don't. But we can learn some things that will shed a great deal of light on hundreds of verses in the Bible, I believe, that heretofore are without understanding unless you know what these numbers mean.

Basically, we're going to be considering the primary numbers 1 through 13. We're going to look at a few of the others to give you something to think about but only briefly because mainly everything centers around these first 13 numbers. When you get beyond that, you're getting into multiples of the first 13 and it's much easier just to study these basic numbers and then take it from there on a personal basis.

After that long introduction, we want to begin tonight with the number one and the number one, as you have it here at the beginning of this Bible study sheet, is the number of singular importance. Being first, it signifies to us that which is first and that which is singularly important. Number one and its derivatives are to be found over 2,000 times in the Bible, more than any other number, so that immediately puts it in first place in that regard. But when we think of the number one, there are two thoughts that are involved: 1. is in the sense of being unique, the only one. Or we could be talking about something that's the first among many others. The number one stands out in the Bible as speaking of the number of singular importance.

Let's begin with a very simple example. Let's turn to 1 Timothy 2. Notice what we read in the 5th verse, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." There, very obviously, as we see this number one used in two situations, we see how it stands out to us as the number of singular importance. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Of course, when we're speaking of these things, we're speaking from God's point of view. We're talking about the fact that as far as God is concerned, there's only one God, there's one of singular importance and there's one mediator between God and me, the man Christ Jesus. Man, of course, has many gods. He's worshiped the sun, the moon, the stars, little statues of men and animals, all types of gods that actually exist and that are mythical. But speaking from God's point of view, there is one, the one true and living God, the one who is singularly important and there's one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

That seems quite obvious in the light of what we know to be the truth but let's turn over just a few pages to Hebrews 10 and I believe we'll see how this number one aids our understanding a little more when we come to something that might be disputed as far as other religions are concerned at least. The Book of Hebrews is a book about sacrifices. It's talking to us about the many sacrifices in the work of the priest in connection with the offerings and the sacrifices. And we see set before us here, in Hebrews 10:12 a very important statement. Speaking of the Lord Jesus, we read, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Now, we know that there were a great many other sacrifices; we're told about the sacrifices and the offerings here in the Book of Hebrews. But here we're pointed to the fact that there is a singularly important sacrifice. There's one that stands out far and away above all the others and that's the one sacrifice for sins forever that was made by the Lord Jesus Christ. He presented himself as a sacrifice in order that you and I might be saved.

Now, notice what we read in Hebrews 10:14, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." So you see that it's not only one sacrifice for sins forever but it's one offering and it all points us to the offering, to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Out of all the countless hundreds of thousands of offerings there in the Old Testament times among the children of Israel, there was one of singular importance that was being pictured in all of those and that sacrifice, that offering took place when the Lord Jesus was offered as he laid down his life on Calvary's cross.

Let's turn back, if you will, to the Gospel of Luke and we'll see another situation. Luke 2. Not only do we notice the situation such as the ones that we've just been observing where the word "one" is used in connection with the one God, the one mediator between God and men, the one sacrifice for sins forever, the one offering presented by the Lord Jesus but when we come to Luke 2:49, we're talking about something that also relates to the number one because when we come to this verse, we have here the first words of the Lord Jesus recorded after he became a man, the first words recorded as he became a babe in Bethlehem and came into this world. In fact, we're talking here about one sentence that's recorded out of 29 years of the Lord Jesus walking here on the face of the earth.

Now, this is one of singular importance. This is one that explains to us what it's all about when it comes to the life of the Lord Jesus. We read here in verse 49, "And he said unto them," speaking of his mother and his earthly father, "He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

He was pointing out to them, for example, that he was God. He said, "There you are, Joseph, I see you. I recognize the fact that you're here, that you're with my mother, Mary. But don't you understand that I must be about my Father's business?" You see, his father was not Joseph because he was born of the virgin Mary. His Father was the God of glory. And he said, "I must be about my Father's business."

It's important that we see this as being the statement of singular importance in the life of the Lord Jesus because this was the reason that he came into the world. He came to be about his Father's business. He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, he said, "I delight to do thy will, O God," speaking of his Father in heaven.

These were the first words of the Lord Jesus telling us that he'd come into the world to do his Father's business. The last words, of course, are very significant. The last recorded words that he spoke, he said, "It is finished." What was finished? Well, the Father's business, of course. The work that he'd come into the world to do, that singularly important work of coming into the world to redeem lost sinners to purchase your pardon and mine as he hung there on the cross of Calvary. So it is, indeed, important to notice this first statement. The number one. The one that's here presenting to us the first words of the Lord Jesus as he'd come into the world.

This is just an example of the fact that a knowledge that the number one is the number of singular importance opens up as we study this word together. It implants in our mind all sorts of new things to think about and new insight to gain into God's way of thinking. Now, for example, we might be trying to study the Word of God and we ask ourselves: Now, what is the most important book in the Bible? Why, it's the one of singular importance: it's the first one. It's the Book of Genesis, the seed plot of the Bible back there in the beginning. All the first things are contained right there. Every major doctrine to be found in all the rest of the Word of God can be found in factor, in type or shadow there in the book of singular importance, the Book of Genesis.

That's why you'll find that when liberal theology begins, it begins with tearing down the first 11 chapters of Genesis. The devil knows what's most important. He knows it's the seed plot of the Bible. And if he can do away with those first 11 chapters, you've done away with every major doctrine in the Word of God practically, every one that relates to the redemption of man, anyway. And so, this is where the devil comes. He comes to the place of singular importance, to the Book of Genesis and it's there that he attacks the Word of God.

Of course, we can't build this doctrine completely on numbers. Turn to John's Gospel, chapter 5 and you'll notice that the Lord Jesus is pointing out the same thing. John 5 and

notice what we read in verse 45, “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.” He’s speaking to the Jews here. “For had ye believed Moses,” talking about the writings of Moses now, the Pentateuch, the opening books of the Bible, “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” You see, if a man won’t believe the writings of Genesis, he won’t believe John 3:16. If he won’t believe the truth about Christ as the Creator, as we have in there in the seed plot of the Bible, in the book of singular importance, he’s not going to believe his words here in the New Testament Scripture. Now, he might claim to believe them but I’m talking about believing unto salvation. I’m talking about acknowledging these things in his heart and giving his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the Book of Genesis is the most important book in the Bible, what’s the most important statement of the Bible? It must be the first one. It must be number one, the one of singular importance. Let’s take a look at it in Genesis 1:1. We read here, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Dr. M. R. Dehann used to say, “If you can’t get past Genesis 1:1 there’s no point in reading the rest of the Bible.” Because, you see, this is where it all begins. Without faith, it is impossible to believe in God. “For he that cometh to God must believe that he is,” that he exists, “and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” That’s the basis for faith, that’s the foundation for faith, to believe in God and to believe that he is the reward of them that diligently seek him.

That’s what we see here in the beginning. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Now, I was preaching you a message just recently called “Hope for the Heathen” and we were talking about these people out there in darkness in foreign lands and how they’ve never heard the Gospel and we were talking about how all this could possibly relate to the love of God and the grace of God as it’s supposed to exist in the world. And we were thinking about the fact that this world is very much like a large estate, a great plantation, a farm with all the beautiful things provided by the owner of that farm. And we’ve come here and we’re living off the goods of God’s land. We’re trespassers on this property because we don’t recognize him as the owner when we’re born into the world. Here’s a world full of heathens out there. We like to think of them as being out there; we like to think of them as being out of the jungle but, you see, they’re out in the streets; they’re just down the block; they’re over in the church on the corner; they’re all around. And these heathen, like ourselves before we come to know the Lord Jesus, we’re living here in this world, we’re living off the good things that the husbandman has placed here and the wonderful blessings that he has.

Sometimes we think about the fact that we ought to look into this matter, we ought to find out just who this great one is that owns this great world in which we’re living. And about how we ought to realize that we’re responsible to him. We’re living here on his land, we’re taking advantage of the good things that he’s provided and we ought to do something about it. But we were thinking about how there’s no real need for these heathen to ever hear about the Lord Jesus Christ, about the Son of the great husbandman who died to pay for their sins, until they get right with him, until they get right with God, until they understand that he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a

rewarder of them that diligently seek him. When we're ready to recognize the great Creator, the Sovereign ruler of the universe, the Father in heaven, then we're ready to be introduced to his Son who loved us, who paid the price of our reconciliation as he laid down his life there on Calvary's cross. So, you see, this is the statement of primary importance in the Word of God, the one of singular importance, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." If you can't believe that word of Moses, how can you believe the Lord Jesus?

Alright, that we might talk, while we're here, about the first day of creation. Notice what we read in the first verse,

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

Now, this is the day of singular importance because, you see, without light life is impossible. There is no need to talk about dividing the words if you don't have light because you have a frozen waste. There is no need to talk about grass and seed and trees because they can't live without light. There is no point in speaking of animals and human beings because except there be that day of singular importance when God said, "Let there be light and there was light," there could be no life here in the world.

Even when the number one is not used specifically, we can learn a great deal where it's implied. For example, in Genesis 6, we read a story there about one ark. There weren't many of them, there was only one because, you see, there's one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And that one ark, the singularly important way of escape from the flood of judgment, was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was only one ark because there's only one way of salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ is that way.

In Genesis 22, we read an amazing statement: God said, "Take now thy son," speaking to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." But Isaac wasn't his only son. He had another son named Ishmael. What was it that God was talking about? He was talking about the fact that there was only one son of singular importance. God had said to Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And so he said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, take him up there on the mountain, put him to death as a picture of my only begotten Son who loved men and gave himself for them."

Talk about Genesis 25. The number one is it not there in connection with story of Esau? But when we come to the New Testament, it's there. When we come to the Book of Hebrews we read about Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. Now, it

wasn't that there was one particular meat out of all the pieces that he had, out of all the animals that he'd ever eaten that was the problem. It was the fact that there was a singularly important time in the life of that man, Esau, when he turned his back on the blessing of God for the last time. He turned his back on his birthright, on God's offer of salvation and from that day forward, he couldn't find the way of repentance.

He couldn't find the place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears. This is because God is trying to impress upon us, that now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. There is one singularly important place in our lives to which we come when we meet the Lord Jesus or when we reject him and we don't know when that is in any man's life. We don't know when it is but God will turn away from that individual forever but it can happen. "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." There is a time that is without remedy.

Turn for a moment, if you will, to Exodus 12. Now, I've pointed out to you in past studies as we've studied the Passover lamb here in Exodus 12, a very striking thing. Here, again, we're not talking about the number one specifically as it's written out but the thing that makes it interesting is the fact that we're talking about only one lamb in all of chapter 12. You'll notice in the first verse,

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it"

And we could go right down the line because here, in the whole of this 12th chapter, presenting to us the great Passover, dealing with two million people in bondage there in the land of Egypt, the plural is never used in connection with that word "lamb." And the Hebrew language is always singular, it's always one. The one of singular importance, you see, because God was looking down the centuries of time, he was looking to the time when John the Baptist would be standing there on the banks of the Jordan and see the Lord Jesus coming and he would say, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. That's the only lamb God knows anything about. That's the lamb that's uppermost in the mind of God, the one of singular importance. The lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, before I close, I want to give you a complicated example. I hope you don't go to sleep on this one but I want to show you not only how the number one is the number of singular importance, but how critical numbers are in the Word of God altogether. Now, there's a book here in this Bible called the Book of Numbers. Let's turn there for a moment. Numbers 7. Notice what we read in the first verse,

“And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered.”

This is the setting: the tabernacle has been fully set up in the wilderness. The tabernacle is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was the Tabernacle of God among men. And we see that they've set up the altar and the vessels of the altar, they'd anointed them, they'd set them apart, they got it all ready for the worship of the children of Israel there in the tabernacle. Now, the altar also is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Hebrews, again, tells us that “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” Our altar is the Lord Jesus himself. So, here in God's picture book, here in these Old Testament Scriptures, we're talking about the fact that the tabernacle of God had come among men. The altar had been set up and sanctified and set apart as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Look at verse 11, “And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.” This is what they're going to do: the children of Israel are going to dedicate the altar now that they've got it set up.

“And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah: And his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.”

We're talking here about one silver charger, one silver bowl, one spoon of gold, one bullock, one ram, one lamb, one kid and peace offerings. Now, if we really want to get impressed with how monotonous all this gets, we could start here at the beginning of chapter 7 and we could read the 89 verses that are here in this chapter. And for 89 verses there is a repetition of what we just got through reading because 12 times this happened. Twelve times this is repeated, 84 times in this chapter the number one is used. Seven times in each case of each tribe, the number one is mentioned. Brother, the point I'm

making is this: what could these 89 verses of the Word of God possibly mean to you? Or to anybody else if you don't understand the meaning of the numbers in the Bible? This is the kind of chapter you don't even bother to read because it's just monotonous numbers that mean very little or nothing.

I mean to maintain to you that this chapter is important. It's important or it wouldn't be in the Word of God and it's not something to be skipped over. It's not something at all to be dull and boring. There ought to be something here that speaks to our hearts and tells us something about the truth of God. Eighty-nine verses and how it goes on, over and over and over again, to tell us about the fact that we're talking about one silver charger, one silver bowl, one spoon of gold, one bullock, one ram, one lamb, one kid, two oxen, five rams, five goats, five lambs. This is repeated 12 times in the language that we just got through reading it right here.

If we can understand one section, we ought to be able to understand it all. So, look again, at verse 11, "And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar. And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah." The setting here is that we've got the tabernacle set up, we've got the altar built and anointed and sanctified. We're talking about a picture of Christ who is our tabernacle, about Christ who is our altar. We're talking about dedication to him, that's what it's all about. We, like these men, come to dedicate him in our life in a personal way. That's what it's about. And how we do it is pictured here in these strange numbers and symbols that we have 12 times over in these 89 verses.

Now, seven times we'll find the number one. The number seven in the Bible is the number of perfection and the number one is the number of singular importance. So, we're talking here about seven aspects of the singular importance of our dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ. We're talking here about three instruments: we're talking about a charger or a platter and a bowl and a spoon. The number three in the Bible is the number of completion. We're talking about 21 animals: 3×7 , the number three in the Bible is the number of completion, the number seven is the number of perfection. So, we're talking about a dedication to Christ that has completeness and perfection and singular importance written all over it.

Follow this carefully because it gets a little sticky. Look at verse 13, "And his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense." Alright now, here we get the picture: we've got a tray made out of silver and we've got a silver bowl sitting on it and we've got a golden spoon there in the bowl and fine flour mingled with oil are here in this bowl that's on the tray and there's some incense there in that golden spoon that's sitting down there in the bowl. Silver in the Bible speaks of redemption. Gold speaks to us of deity. Flour speaks of broken wheat, finely ground wheat. Oil speaks of the Holy Spirit. And incense speaks of prayer. And true dedication to Christ involves these five things, each one of them singularly

important, each one of them a picture of a portion of our dedication to the Lord Jesus because, you see, we're redeemed vessels just like these. Silver speaking of redemption. We're redeemed vessels, vessels unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use. And inside of us there should be brokenness pictured by the meal offering here. And it should be mingled with the oil of the Holy Spirit. And there should be an instrument inside these vessels to stir us up, that golden spoon, a picture of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ himself for it is God that worketh in you the will to do his good pleasure. He is the one inside our vessel that stirs us up. And we have the incense of prayer mixed in. We need that for our complete dedication to him.

Then when we come to verses 15 and 16, notice what we read, "One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering." Exodus 29 explains these things to us. When the priest offered the bullock, his blood was poured on the ground. The ram's blood was poured on the altar. The lamb was offered completely as a whole burnt offering. The goat has his hands laid upon his head and he was sent off into the wilderness bearing the sins of the people, the scapegoat.

All these things picture to us the singularly important aspects of complete and perfect dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ in our life. The priest, you see, pictures us. We are priests unto God and our Father. And we see ourselves here standing on the blood of Christ. That's our standing before God. We see ourselves presenting the blood to God on the altar as an atonement. We see ourselves presenting our bodies as living sacrifice, the whole burnt offering. We see ourselves confessing our sins, laying our hands on the head of the scapegoat and sending him off into the wilderness bearing our sins. And all these things are singularly important aspects of our dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 17, "And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab." Now, we're talking about two oxen which here speaks to us of the number of witness. And then three times 5, 5, 5 the number of completion and the number of grace.

Now, brother, that's a sweet picture out of a bunch of confusing numbers and symbols. We're witnessing to the grace of God. We're witnessing to a finished work of grace in our life as priests of God and of Christ as we're going about in our work here in this world. Remember, we have here a picture of what perfect and complete dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ really means. It means that we're redeemed vessels, inside of us is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart mingled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, stirred up by the Lord Jesus and laced with prayer. We're priests of God standing on the blood, pleading the blood, presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, confessing our sins and giving witness to a lost and dying world of a complete work of grace.

This is some of the hidden manna that's promised to the overcomers and I submit to you that you cannot understand that passage of Scripture right there unless you understand the numbers in the Bible. It means nothing, it means absolutely nothing without this symbolism that unlocks the truth that's here. But when it does, it's blessed truth indeed. It's a wonderful thing to see what our dedication is, what it can be, if we'll come to the

Lord Jesus in the manner that these men came. They came ceremonially, they came not understanding these things but we can come as priests of God and of Christ with our redeemed vessels, offering ourselves as a whole burnt offering, a living sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we can go forth standing on the blood, pleading the blood, confessing our sins and giving witness to those around us who are lost on every hand, a testimony to the fact that we're witnessing tonight for a completed work of grace. That one sacrifice for sins forever. That one offering. That one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. He's all we need. He's paid the debt. He's borne our sins in his own body.

Tonight, the only question that arises for us is this: Have we dedicated ourselves to him? Have we come to him? Have we offered our life to him? Have we come trusting in that precious blood? In that singularly important sacrifice for sins forever?

Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Our Father, as we've come to these pages tonight, we thank thee that we can indeed see thy hand here writing the truth that's before us. We know, Lord, that within the things that confound the natural man, as we go deeper and deeper we dig out thy infallible blessings set down here for thy people. We thank thee that we can read these Scriptures, we can study them, we can see the perfect revelation of thyself and thy truth and we can know that beyond our limited intelligence, beyond the stars in the third heaven, is the one who loved us and gave himself for us. And yet, at the same time, by the person of the Holy Spirit, he's alive in our hearts by faith. Father, we pray that by thy grace tonight we might understand something of the things that we've seen. That there might become a vital reality in the matter of salvation and that the study of thy Word might become precious to our hearts that we might earnestly and diligently seek to study to show ourselves approved unto thee, workman who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. We pray these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.