

Bible Numbers 9 through 11

Numbers in the Bible

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Bible Text: 1 Corinthians 2:9-13

Preached on: Thursday, December 15, 2011

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We're turning tonight, if you have your Bibles, to 1 Corinthians 2. We want to begin reading at the 9th verse.

“9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

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

Our Father, we thank thee as we come to these pages tonight we can know that they are, indeed, the things which are given by the Spirit of God. We thank thee that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost as they penned these words. We pray to thee that we can study it tonight knowing that it is the solid rock foundation upon which our hope is built. We thank thee that we can know that the Lord Jesus Christ has declared these things before the foundation of the world, that this is the eternal word forever settled in heaven. We pray, Father, that by thy grace that it might be your word settled in our hearts, that we might understand something of the teaching here, that we might use it in our lives as believers and that should there be those here who are outside the Savior, that it might be a means of pointing them, indeed, to the way of salvation. We're grateful for the truth that is contained within these pages and for the Lord Jesus, the Word living, who said, "I am the truth." We pray that tonight he might be in our midst, that we might be conscious of his presence. We pray these things in his precious name. Amen.

We're continuing tonight with what is number five in a series of messages on Bible numbers. I said to you as I began this series that I hope to bringing you four messages on this subject and the four have come and gone and we still have a good bit of ground to cover so what I'll do is stop predicting and start preaching and see if we can't cover several of these numbers tonight. Up to this point, we have come through the number eight and we're going to begin tonight with the number nine. Before we do, I want to give you just a little bit of background into what we're seeking to accomplish as we study these numbers together. Now, if you don't have a copy of this Bible study sheet, you need to get one. You can get it at the back or up here at the front after the service. It'll give you a list of the primary numbers in the Bible and what I have concluded to be the significance of those numbers and what we've been preaching on here in the course of these past few weeks as we've studied the word of God together.

We're talking essentially here about some things of which we've read here in 1 Corinthians 2. We read in verse 9, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." This is something that is extremely important for us to understand: man as he's born into the world, has not seen, he's not heard, has never entered into his heart, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. I would like to think about the fact that that is somewhere off in the far distant future and someday when we get to glory, these things are going to be revealed but that's not what it says. It says in verse 10, "But God hath," right now, "revealed them unto us by his Spirit for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

If we're going to understand the deep things of God, we can find them right here in the word of God but it must be as we're taught by God the Holy Spirit. What I want you to notice in this passage is the principle that we find down there in the 13th verse, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." That's an extremely important principle of Bible study as we have it right there. This is God's method of understanding the deep things of God. It's by comparing spiritual things with spiritual. It's not by being some great theologian; it's not by being an intellectual giant; it's by taking this book and from Genesis to Revelation, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. And the more we do that, the more God is pleased with us and the more he's going to see fit by his Spirit to reveal to us the deep things of God.

When we're talking about the numbers in the Bible and as we've seen up to this point, there is only one number of which we have any indication of the meaning and that's the number six, the number of man, but God has ordered this book so that certain things can only be understood by the slow and laborious process of looking up hundreds of references and comparing spiritual things with spiritual. That's the way it is with the meaning of the numbers in the Bible. There are thousands and thousands and thousands of them here in the book. There is page after page after page of the Bible that means absolutely nothing unless you know the significance of the numbers in the Bible. There's that dull portion back there in the Old Testament that we so often speed right on by and

don't pay any attention to; there are the words here and there throughout the New Testament that refer to various numbers and numbers of things that are mentioned and we just read over those things very lightly. But 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 is important including the numbers.

And to understand the significance of these numbers, is to have open to us a whole new field of understanding here in the pages of God's word. As I've said before and I want to keep repeating it: this is not something on which to build doctrine; this is not the fundamentals of the faith that we are talking about here. But we're talking about the deep things of God given here in his word to edify his people. Of course, they teach us the way of salvation; we see mirrored in these numbers the fundamentals of the faith and yet we don't take these things any more than we do the types and shadows and the symbols of the word of God to build doctrinal truth. We simply observe these things; we use them in our study of the word of God in order to help us see this revelation in all its completeness as it is given here in the pages of this book. These are the numbers, apart from the number six, which must be discovered as we search them out one at a time and draw conclusions on how God consistently makes use of any given number.

We begin tonight with the number nine. That's the number of judgment. It's found only 81 times here in the Bible and, again, most of these times it's connected with longer number such as in the use of 969 years or maybe the 39th year of the reign of a king in the Old Testament. That's a different thing entirely that we'll be looking at in a couple of weeks. So, there are only a few in connection with this number nine that we can get right down and examine and seek to understand God's usage of them here in the book. But as we do examine them, I believe we'll find, invariably, that nine is the number of judgment.

Turn with me if you will, to Matthew 27 and we want to begin reading at verse 35,

"35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. 44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth."

Notice this 45th verse,

“45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.”

The question is: what does that verse mean? We can make up something; we can say, “Well, I think it means this and you think it means that and somebody else thinks it means something else.” But what does it mean in light of the overall revelation of the word of God? Where can we find something that’s consistently manifesting the fact that these statements here in verse 45 really mean something? Why should we care that come the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour? What difference does that make? “Well,” you say, “it makes absolutely none,” unless you understand the meaning of the numbers. But if you do, it means a very great deal.

We’re reading along here in this passage of scripture and we see it deals with the cross and let’s just suppose that you know absolutely nothing about the meaning of the cross and yet you’ve been coming here and you’ve been hearing about these Bible numbers and the meaning of them here in the past few weeks. You’ll notice what these Bible numbers teach us right here in this passage. “Now from the sixth hour,” there is the number six and we’ve seen that that’s the number of man. “There was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.” That’s the number of judgment and from the sixth hour to the ninth hour is three hours. Three hours of darkness over all the land as the Lord Jesus hung on the cross. Now, we’ve seen that the number three is the number of completion and so right here in these numbers, we have the gospel story set before us so beautifully. The complete judgment of man fell on the Lord Jesus as he hung there on Calvary’s cross. That’s what those numbers are saying to us. Six, the number of man; nine, the number of judgment; three hours of darkness over all the land.

And it’s not like that just here, it’s like that throughout the pages of the word of God. All the complete judgment that man deserved was taken by the sinless substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, in those hours of darkness as he hung between heaven and earth on Calvary’s cross. Now, it’s re-emphasized for us there in the 46th verse, “And about the ninth hour.” Why should we care what time it was? Unless we understand that that number nine always causes us to think of the number of judgment. “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” God never asks a question and tries to find out the answer because he knows the end from the beginning. God knows the answer to every question and he knows the question for every answer. He’s the one who knows everything. And when God the Son asked this question, it wasn’t because he didn’t know. It was because he was seeking a confession from you and me. In the Garden of Eden when Adam had sinned, he’d gotten away from God and God said, “Where art thou?” It wasn’t because he didn’t know where Adam was. He knew where every molecule in Adam’s body was but he was asking that question, seeking confession from Adam. He wanted Adam to recognize the fact that he was lost, that he was separated from God.

The same thing is true here. The Lord Jesus said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” not because he didn’t know but because he wanted us to know, because he wanted us to understand that he was forsaken because he was bearing our judgment as he hung there on Calvary’s cross. About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice. That’s the judgment of sin in its finality; to be forsaken of God, that’s what judgment is all about. And one day if we leave this world never having come to know the Lord Jesus and we depart from this earth never having had our sins forgiven, we’re going to come to understand that this is the meaning of judgment, to be forsaken of God. A lot of other judgment in between, but that’s the end result, to be forsaken of God forever. And this is exactly what happened to the Lord Jesus as he took the complete judgment of man when he hung there on the cross of Calvary.

Let’s turn now, if you will, to Acts 3. This is a good one because it shows that even an obscure situation, these numbers ring true if only we have the spiritual perception to see it. Let me hasten to add that there are many instances here in the word of God where I don’t have the spiritual perception to understand why a number is used in a particular fashion. There are many passages, especially in the Old Testament, where you could come to me and say, “How is it that the number five is the number of grace here in this passage?” Or, “How is the number six the number of man here?” And I’d simply have to say, “I don’t know,” but what I’m pointing out to you in these studies is that where I can discern them and throughout the pages of the word of God, these meanings are consistent and they are unfailingly true and they can give you a great deal of insight into just what’s happening in any particular passage.

Notice what we read here in Acts 3:1,

“1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.”

Okay, but what does the number nine have to do with the hour of prayer in the temple? How can it speak of judgment here? Isn’t it a good thing to pray? Not necessarily because you see two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee prayed thus for himself and he said, “I thank thee, Lord, that I’m not another man or even as this publican.” The publican would not so much as lift his eyes unto heaven but he prayed and he said, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Now, there were two instances of prayer, the number of contrast. One was a bad one and one was a good one. The good one was the man who came to God with a broken spirit, with a broken and a contrite heart that he would despise and prayed and said, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” But the other one was the one who came with a prayer from an unbroken heart, with unforgiven sin in his life, with an unwillingness to recognize that he needed salvation. We’re told very clearly in the book of Proverbs that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

You see, the prayers of unsaved people, unless it’s the prayer for salvation, are an abomination to the Lord and that’s why we see that the national Jewish hour of prayer was the ninth hour. God was not pleased with this thing. This nation was under the

judgment of God, even the very prayers that they came and prayed to heaven, were under judgment because they had rejected the Messiah. They'd just gotten through crucifying the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and here they were observing the hour of prayer. It didn't mean anything. It did mean something, it meant judgment because salvation is not in praying. Salvation is not talking to some vague god somewhere up there in the heavens. Salvation is coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal way, trusting him as our Savior from sin, knowing him personally as the one who is alive in our hearts by faith. "There is therefore now no judgment, no condemnation once you're in Christ Jesus." But there is plenty of judgment upon those who are living like these Jews where in this hour, seeking to maintain their good works, trying to do the best they could, hoping to get to heaven by keeping the law when Christ had come to pay the price for all their sins.

There is another very interesting example in Luke 17. As I say, I hate to rush along through these so quickly because the last time I preached 13 or 14 messages on the numbers a couple of years ago and could have preached a whole lot more. I'm trying to trim this down to keep from spending too long on any one of the numbers. Here in Luke 17, we see again the number nine is the number of judgment. We find it as we beginning reading at the 11th verse,

"11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: 13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. 14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

This is especially interesting because it's the only instance that I know of in the Bible which indicates that the Lord Jesus heals people who didn't get saved. Normally, they did. In some instances it doesn't say, but it's implied that they did. But here we see exemplified for us the utter worthlessness of healing without salvation. It means absolutely nothing. Here are these ten men who had leprosy which is always a type of sin in the Bible but, of course, it's a physical disease as well. And they lifted up their voices and they said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." They knew they were in bad shape; they knew that this disease was eating away at their physical body. But Jesus gave them the word, the word of the law. When he saw them, he said unto them, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed. They got rid of their leprosy.

All ten of them were healed physically but there was one, the one of singular importance and when he saw that he was healed, he turned back and with a loud voice glorified God.

And he fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks and he was a Samaritan, a half-breed, a man despised among the people. From his racial background, he was nobody but, you see, the redeeming quality was that he turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face. At his feet, at whose feet? At God's feet. The feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jesus, answering him said, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" Now, we see that number and we think of judgment. We think here are these men, they're still under judgment. They are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger and he said unto him, "Arise, go thy way. Thy faith hath made thee whole." There he's speaking spiritually; there he's talking about the fact that not only had this man been cleansed physically from leprosy like the others, but he said, "Alright now, you can go on your way cleansed spiritually. Your faith has made you whole. Your faith has saved you because you believed that I am the God of the universe. You believe that I am God and I am the rewarder of them that diligently seek me.

We see that word "nine" and it gives us a little insight into understanding what happened here in the case of the ten lepers. But there's another one right here in Luke 15:1,

"1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.
2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. 3 And he spake this parable unto them."

Now, we've been seeing in the last few weeks several of the parables of the Lord Jesus and how we have a great deal of light thrown on the situation by the numbers that are involved in the parables and this is another of the same type of instance. We find here set before us in this one parable, this parable, singular, as the Lord Jesus called it there in verse 3, we find that it's a parable about three lost things: a lost sheep, a lost coin and a lost son. A complete picture of how God seeks lost sinners. The lost son, the prodigal son as they commonly call him, pictures the love of God the Father. The lost coin pictures for us the searching work of the Holy Spirit of God as the woman swept the house looking for the coin. The lost sheep, as we're going to notice in a moment, pictures the Son of God coming into the wilderness of this world and he's the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep. There is a complete picture of what all this involves in the salvation of the sinner. The love of God the Father, the searching work of the Holy Spirit, the death of the Good Shepherd, given for the life of the sheep.

Notice again what we read here in verse 4,

"4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

We saw a couple of weeks ago in the parable of the ten virgins how we get a good understanding of those five wives and five foolish virgins by the use of that number five. Ten of them, not speaking of losing one's salvation, but speaking of grace accepted by the five wives and grace rejected by the five foolish. Here again in this parable, this part of the parable of the three lost things, the same thing is true. We're talking here about 99 sheep and we saw in the case of the antichrist, that his number was the number of man: 666. And we saw that it was three sixes because this is the complete manifestation of the best that man can do here in this world. The antichrist will be man empowered by the devil himself to be the best of man, as far as his thoughts and his words and his deeds are concerned here in the world.

Alright but when we come here to these 99 and when we remember that nine is the number of judgment, we get a little understanding about this parable also. There was a popular song in some circles talking about the 90 and 9 which safely lay in a shelter, but I don't see a word here about the 90 and 9 being saved or about them being in the fold. It says here in my Bible that the 90 and 9 were in the wilderness. Now, if nine is the number of judgment and these 99 were in the wilderness and not in the fold, we're beginning to get a little picture of the condition that he's representing in this parable. The Good Shepherd left these 90 and 9 and he went after the one, the one of singular importance, the sheep that knew that it was lost. This is holy sarcasm. Notice what we read there in the 7th verse, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

I wonder if you could tell me where we could find one of those just persons that need no repentance? The Bible says "there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not." The Bible says man at his best state is altogether vanity. There is not a just man that doeth good and sinneth not but there are an awful lot of people who think they are just persons that need no repentance. They're just like this great herd of sheep wandering around in the wilderness of this world. The Good Shepherd can't do a thing for those people but he can do something for that one who is out there wandering, realizing that he's lost, realizing that what he needs is the help of the Shepherd. That's when a man gets saved, when he understands his lost condition. When he sees that he's not a just person, that he does need repentance and that's what we see pictured here in this portion of the parable. The 90 and 9 were under the judgment of God but the one, the one of singular importance, was found of the Good Shepherd. And do you know what he did when he found him? Verse 5, "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends." He didn't take him back into the wilderness to be with the other sheep, he took him home and that's exactly what the Lord Jesus does when he saves.

Right now we're, in the sight of God, seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Our citizenship is in heaven and once we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, this world is not our home. We're strangers and pilgrims in this world; we're looking for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God and it's because we're no longer

a part of the 90 and 9 under judgment. That is, if we've seen ourselves like this lost sheep in the wilderness and if we've been found of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alright, I've spent too much time already on number nine. So, just briefly: there are nine words in the Bible that come from the root word "judgment." It was in the ninth year of Nebuchadnezzar that the house of God was burnt. It was on the ninth day of the fourth month that famine prevailed as the judgment of God was poured out in that day also. It was in the ninth year of Hosea that Israel was carried away captive by the king of Syria. There are nine people in the Old Testament who are afflicted with leprosy. There are nine persons stoned in the Bible. There are nine cases of people struck blind and we could go on with many others. So there is no question in my mind, at least, that any time that we come upon this number nine in the Bible, we can begin to look around for something that has to do with judgment.

Let's move on to number ten. The number ten is the number of service or maybe the number of works, it might help you to understand it a little better. I like to call it service because it fits better in my mind. Whenever we find the number ten, there is something there that has to do with service or works in one sense or another. There are three thoughts that you need to keep in mind here: sometimes we see that it's service in the good sense, in the sense of serving God; sometimes it's service in the neutral sense of just doing service for your fellow man or something like that; sometimes it's service in the evil sense because you see, actually, the number ten is two times five, the number of contrast multiplying the number of grace. We see works in contrast to grace in the evil sense; we see what man is seeking to do in contrast to what God has already done in the evil sense when we come to this number ten.

For example, we have the ten commandments. There you have the number ten speaking of works or service in the good sense because the ten commandments are the essence of keeping the law of God. The tithe, 10% mentioned so many times there in the Old Testament. This was the whole of God's claim on man's service under the law. He was to come offering the firstfruits of all his increase.

But then sometimes we find it used in the neutral sense. We find that Jacob's wages were changed ten times because here was man dealing with man. It's again neutral when we see that Joseph's ten brethren went down to Egypt with ten asses laden with good things. Here they were coming and the situation was not necessarily good or evil; this was just their service to try to appease the ruler of Egypt. They didn't really know who it was or what the circumstances were. Of course, in the typology there, it speaks of evil. There is nothing neutral in the typology. Joseph is a type of the Lord Jesus and men are just like his ten brethren. They are trying to come to the Lord with their works, with their service, trying to get in favor with the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, it doesn't work. You can't deserve the bread the life. You get it as a free gift just as they ended up getting it from the hand of Joseph. There is no way that salvation can be purchased by our service to God or to man, either one for that matter.

Another example of the evil use of this number ten where service or works is indicated, would be as we saw last week, the devil in Revelation 12 having ten horns and in Revelation 13, the antichrist, the beast, represented as having ten horns because horns in the Bible speak to us of authority and most especially political authority. This is a representation to us of the fact that when the revived Roman Empire comes on the scene during the tribulation period, that these political heads, these horns of governmental authority are going to be under the control of Satan and of the antichrist. Now, the point behind this thing is the fact that by wicked works, by seeking to serve the lusts of mankind, the devil and the antichrist are going to attempt to rule the world in a coming day. This is what they've got in mind: to cater to man's desires; to offer to man that which is pleasing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, in order to dominate the world as we know it today.

Turn for a moment, if you will, to Luke 19. Notice the 11th verse,

“11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants,” there is that number, “and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? 24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. 27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.”

How many informed of this passage say, “There it is, you can lose your salvation.” I say unto you that every one which hath shall be given and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But when we see this number ten written all over this passage, we know that the whole thing is talking about service. Ten servants, ten pounds, ten pounds taken away, ten pounds given. It’s talking about the works in the life of a man. It’s talking about serving the Lord as he’s placed us here in this world with the gifts that he’s given to us. It’s so obviously centered in service from beginning to end.

Let’s move quickly to Daniel 1. I want you to see another one here in the Old Testament. Daniel 1:8,

“8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

I’m sure you know the story: Daniel and his brethren have been taken away captive into the land of Babylon and as they’ve come to Babylon they have this desire before the Lord to remain true to the Jewish law. So he purposed in his heart, as we see it there, not to defile himself with these heathen foods that are available at the king’s table. And so he requested of this prince of the eunuchs, this man that was in charge of him, that he might not have to eat this food that had been provided for him by the king.

“9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.”

So this guy was in charge of Daniel and he’s very much concerned about his head, naturally, since it was common practice to cut them off in that day, and he said, “Why should I get myself into trouble letting you starve yourself to death here when the king has said you were supposed to eat this and that and the other? Why should I let you go around here looking worse than the rest of the captives because you don’t want to eat the king’s meat?” Alright, now, Daniel said these words in verse 12,

“12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee,

In other words, put him to the test, demonstrate their service, manifest their works. That’s what we’re talking about here.

“12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. 14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.”

There is that number ten over and over because Daniel says, “You let me try this thing. You let me show you by my works. Let me show you by my service here in the next ten days what’s going to happen.” And what did happen there is in verse 15,

“15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.”

So, we see that this was the circumstance here in the first chapter of Daniel where the number ten, again, speaks to us of the number of service. We’ve got to move on but just remember to look for something about man’s works or his service whenever you see the number ten. There are too many of those to bother to look at tonight.

The number 11 is one that’s found only 43 times in the word of God and we can do this one quickly. You’ll find that the number 11 speaks of disorder for one simple reason: because it comes short of number 12 and that’s the number of perfect government as we’ll be seeing next week. For the first mention of number 11, turn with me, if you will, to Genesis 32. We’ve seen often that the first time anything or anybody is mentioned here in the word of God, it’s usually the key to the understanding of that thing throughout the rest of the pages of the Bible.

We’re looking here at Genesis 32:22 at the first mention of the number 11. Again, I’ll explain the situation to you here: Jacob has heard that his brother Esau, whom he has deceived, is coming out to meet him and he’s very much concerned about this fact and he’s trying to figure out a way to appease Esau so that he won’t come and kill him or whip up on him with the 400 soldiers that he’s got with him. As we see it here in the 22nd verse, speaking of Jacob,

“22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.”

Here we see the number 11, the eleven sons of Jacob and that’s an imperfect number there you see, because God’s perfect government involved the 12 sons of Jacob. Over and over and over and over again throughout the pages of the Old and New Testament you find mention of the 12 sons of Jacob, the 12 children of Israel, the 12 tribes of Israel but here we see the 11 sons and they passed over the ford Jabbok. One of them was missing and, you see, it was the one of singular importance, it was the one that was to be his well-beloved son and a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Genesis 35:16 and we’ll see who it was,

“16 And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel,” that’s Jacob’s wife, “travailed, and she had hard labour. 17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.” This is Jacob’s 12th son. “18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing,

(for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.”

There we have a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Benoni means “the son of my sorrow” and Benjamin means “the son of my right hand.” And in these two names we find characterized that son of singular importance, God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Son of Sorrow, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. The one who of necessity had to go to Calvary’s cross to shed his blood there for you and me. But God the Father, calls him the Son of my right hand because he was not only to die, he was not only to be buried but he was to rise again the third day to ascend into heaven to sit at the right hand of the throne of God. We see him pictured here in the person of this 12th son, Benjamin. It takes all 12 of them, you see, to make the perfect government there for Israel and here we see disorder. We see imperfection because of the 11 sons being mentioned here in the first mention.

Most of the New Testament references involve mention of the 11 apostles and, of course, the point is obvious: the Lord chose 12, the number of perfect government again, but rebellion and sin in the heart of Judas brought about that disorder to the company of the apostles. Over and over and over again, seven or eight times I believe it is, we read of the 11, the 11, the 11 because Judas was not in the number. As I say, this is the most frequent use of the number 11 in the New Testament. In fact, there are only two other situations presented: one involves the gemstones in Revelation 21 and I don’t have the slightest idea what that means but the other is very obvious and I’ll read it to you to save time. It’s Matthew 20:6 and it’s the well-known parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The verse is this,

“6 And about the eleventh hour he went out,” that is, the Lord of the vineyard, “and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?”

That’s the point of that parable, that disorder existed there because when he went out at the eleventh hour, he found the idleness that was there among the workers in the vineyard. It’s like that in the Lord’s work today. It brings disorder. Why stand we here all the day idle when there are so many who are in need of a Savior?

Look at Deuteronomy 1. This is a very striking fact, indeed, in light of what happened. Deuteronomy 1:1,

“1 These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 (There are eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.)”

When Israel came out of Egypt, it was an 11 days journey from Horeb to Kadeshbarnea, to the Promised Land and you know how long it took them. It took them 40 years. That’s

disorder if there ever was any. God intended that it be an 11 day journey but because of their unbelief, because of their failure to believe the promises of God, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

There's one more and then I'll quit. Exodus 26. I like to talk about these numbers because they bring to light a lot of things that I didn't understand before I knew the meaning of these things. Exodus 26. We'll see here an example of how even the technicalities fit when it comes to these numbers in the Bible. Notice what we read in Exodus 26:7,

“7 And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. 8 The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure.”

Twice there in two verses, God tells us that there were 11 curtains involved in the tabernacle. Now, what possible different could that make? None at all unless you understand the meaning of the numbers of the Bible. You see, the curtains surrounding the tabernacle were that which kept men from the presence of God. God dwelt in that tabernacle; that was the place of the manifest presence of God among his people and it was those 11 curtains that kept man from coming into the very presence of God. That's imperfection. That's disorder because God never intended for man to be kept from his presence. It's sin that has done that. The sin that has brought the great disorder to the world as we find it today all around us on every hand. It's that very thing that keeps man right now from the presence of God. Because of sin.

You and I tonight need not have that difficulty. We can enter into the holiest, into the very presence of God himself by a new and living way because the Lord Jesus has come to this world and this Old Testament picture here of New Testament truth represented the Lord Jesus. He is the tabernacle of God with men and he's opened the way for us in the very presence of God, by the rending of the veil, by the tearing of that great curtain that separated man from the presence of God. The veil, according to the book of Hebrews, is a picture of his flesh. His body was broken; his blood was shed that sin might not longer keep you and I from the manifest presence of God. We can come into his presence, into the holiest, by this new and living way of the blood of the Lord Jesus shed for our sins on Calvary's cross.

I hope you know the reality of that tonight. I hope that this is something as real and precious in your life because if it's not, your life is full of disorder. Your life is full of confusion because it's only when God lays hold upon you, it's only when he gives you this gift of eternal life, that you can know what it is to rejoice in the kinds of things that we've been studying here tonight. These are the things that confound the natural man. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God.” He knows nothing and cares nothing about the numbers of the Bible but these are things that are precious to the heart of a child of God when we can see that here these curtains, the curtains that kept people from the presence of God, they are in the tabernacle in the days in the wilderness are no longer necessary. We have the Lord Jesus; we have the price that he paid for our

sin and we can come to God on that basis, upon the authority of this one Mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus.

I hope tonight that you've trusted him. I hope that you know him as your Savior or if not that before you leave this place that you'll let me speak to you about your soul and show you from the word of God how you can know that you've received God's gift of eternal life.

Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Our Father, we do come rejoicing tonight in the blessed of thy word of truth. We realize that here within its pages we find woven into the fabric of revelation, the blessed embroidery of this inspiration that surrounds us on every hand. We can see it here from cover to cover and yet how we do pray for any who might be here tonight with their eyes blinded to spiritual truth. How we do pray for the many around us here in this community and throughout this area who need their eyes opened to understand the blessed revelation as you have it here in these pages.

We ask, Father, that by thy grace that in studying these things together that there might be that which would strengthen us and encourage our hearts and teach us and help us to search the deep things of God by the power of thy Spirit. We pray for the wisdom to see the eternal value of comparing spiritual things with spiritual and studying to show ourselves approved unto thee, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. We pray that you'll help us tonight as we seek not only to understand these things but to go from this place to be witnesses to others, to tell them the glorious story of Jesus and his love, to present to a lost and dying world our Savior who loved us and gave himself for us. We pray these things in his precious name. Amen.