

Numbers Don't Lie

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Back in July, our family had something happen in which we clearly saw God's intervention. I am not going to go in to the details.

But, while waiting in the Family Room at the hospital, I mentioned to the gathered family that it was the 15th birthday that day of our grandson Stephen and the number 15 in the Bible can symbolize salvation, deliverance, or grace—which we had clearly seen only moments earlier.

Of course, the rest of the grandkids wanted to know what their ages meant in the Bible. And this discussion went on at church the next Sabbath because, in the back of my oldest Bible, I have a list I have compiled over the decades of the meaning of various numbers in the Bible.

Jayme wanted to know what '11' meant; Ella '13'; Audrey '6'; the twins '9.' They all wanted to know what their ages meant.

Addison came up and said, "Grandpa, grandpa, what does twelve mean?" So I looked in the back of the Bible and I said, "Governmental foundation or organizational beginnings." She was silent. She said, "That doesn't mean anything to me!"

Numbers play a large role in our lives, such as when you turn 16 in the States and you can legally drive a car, or 21 and drink alcohol. Or the number 1,000, which is the Millennium (the years in the Millennium), or it also happens to be the number of feet in a kite (if you put four of them together!).

How about how fast the state says you can drive? How about the time you have to get up each day—what number is that? How much of your check is left each week after you pay the bills? That is a pretty important number.

The Bible is also filled with numbers and their value to our lives cannot be discounted. At the feast in 2016, Richard spoke about the number 3 and Mark Schindler touched on the number 7. And then, you may probably remember, David Maas gave a sermon on “The Patterns of Seven” at the feast in Nashville in 2015.

But, today, I would like to give just an overview of numbers in the Bible.

There is a song by Mary Chapin Carpenter called “I Feel Lucky.” A line in that song goes:

“The moral of this story, it’s simple but it’s true.

Hey, the stars might lie, but the numbers never do.”

Unfortunately, there is no other connection with my sermonette in that song because the song is about winning the lottery. But it is true that numbers do not lie. There is an old saying attributed to Mark Twain (it goes much further back actually than him, but it goes like this): “Figures don’t lie, but liars figure.” And that goes right to the heart of this matter.

God does not lie. Ever. Richard went over this opening day. But Satan always lies.

You hear a lot today about fake news, and it is out there. Numbers are manipulated to tell the story that you want to put out there.

The 19th century Prime Minister of Britain, Benjamín Disraeli, famously said “There are three types of lies: Lies, damn lies, and statistics.”

That is because we do not often stop to think about the numbers we hear.

By now I am sure you have all heard of the big straw thing. We are going to ban plastic straws in American juice, 500 million a day. At least 15 major news outlets have reported that number: 500 million plastic straws a day.

We went to breakfast yesterday at a pancake house. There was a sign on the door “We’re not going to be using straws; we’re saving the environment.” If you go in to the restaurant here and eat on the porch, you will be given a plastic cup with a paper straw. That paper straw will go through that little hole in the plastic lid and constrict, and you will not be able to get anything out. And then you will have to take the plastic lid off the plastic cup, and of course both of those will be thrown away. But we are saving the environment.

Anyway, where did that number come from—500 million? Where does it come from?

It turns out, that in 2011, a nine-year-old boy named Milo Cress in Vermont was at a restaurant and he noticed people throwing away their straws. He felt that was a waste. And it is. It is a waste. So he set out to find out how many straws were used. Nobody had the number. So he called some restaurants, he called some straw manufacturers. He put together an estimate of 500 million and put it on the Internet. And it has now gone around the world. I think it is incredible that a nine-year-old boy has that kind of influence. I think it is also incredible that supposedly reputable news organizations do not fact-check these numbers if they support the position they want you to believe in.

Numbers do not lie, but people do. They manipulate, obfuscate, fudge, leave out things, whatever you want to call it. I have heard it said that 67% of all statistics are made up on the spot (I just made that up!).

God uses numbers in a way, however, that can be trusted. For instance, in Matthew 12, Jesus gives a sign that will prove who He is.

Matthew 12:40 “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Seventy-two hours in the tomb. Not a minute more, not a minute less. So what does Satan do? He lies. He inspires men to try to make the numbers jump through hoops to fit the pagan circumstances.

Well, you know the Jews counted differently than we do (Really? Were they aliens?). How else do you get three days and three nights from Good Friday to Easter Sunday? You have to count pieces of days including Thursday night. Hold on! If He is crucified on Good Friday, why do you get to count Thursday night? Well, you see, Jews start their days at sundown. So Good Friday started Thursday night and you get to count that. Well, that is absurd. Those Jews were a funny bunch. You see how the manipulation of numbers work.

Now we know from Hebrews 13:8 that God does not change, and we can trust His use of numbers. So that must mean that if a number comes up frequently in our lives, it is our lucky number, right? Maybe we should play the lottery or go to Vegas and spin the roulette wheel. And what about numerology, horoscopes, astrology?

These things are no different than what Satan does with the three days and the three nights. He takes something true and godly and turns it into something wrong.

Now, in my case, the number 8 comes up frequently in my life so much so that I tend to look for it. But it not my lucky number. Luck has nothing to do with it. Spiritually speaking, the number 8 signifies new beginnings. And it seems every time something new happens in my life, I can find the number 8. So what does that mean?

Just that I can see God, really. If He knows the number of hairs on my head, would He also not let me know He is involved in other ways?

However, it would be extremely foolish, stupid, and wrong for me to start buying lottery tickets with the number 8 (if that is even how it is done, I am not sure, but you know what I mean).

I read that 25% of Americans, Canadians, and Brits still believe in astrology. That the position of planets and the date of your birth will affect somehow the bearing of your entire life.

Well, the date of your birth can, and does, have an effect on your life. Let us say your birthday falls just short of the cut-off for starting school, and you go through school one year older than your classmates. You graduate at 18, not 17. Well, there is a maturity level that you have there that you would not have had otherwise. But how the planets aligned that day has nothing to do with it.

Now if you lived among ancient Israel when they were wandering for those forty years, your birthday could have meant life or death. In Numbers 14:29, God says anyone over the age of 20 would die in the wilderness. Now think about that! Imagine if, the day of that pronouncement, you were 19 years old, 11 months, and three-and-a-half weeks. You lived. What if on that very day of the pronouncement you had turned 20? It was a death sentence. What if you were one of two twins born, let us say, 10 minutes apart, either side of sunset? For that 10 minutes in time, one is 19 and one is 20. Very important number.

What about numerology? Now I really run the risk of stepping in to a minefield here. I am going to give you a definition from Wikipedia.

“Any belief in the divine or mystical relationship between a number and one or more coinciding events.”

Let me stop there. What about the unvarying lunar and solar cycles? What about the number 7 and the weekly Sabbath or the year of release? Is that not definitely a divine relationship between a number and an event? Now it is not what the proponents of numerology are thinking of, but I will just put it out there as fitting. What about counting fifty? Is not Pentecost a divine relationship? Let us turn to Revelation 13.

Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

I would say that is a divine relationship between a number and an event. So call it what you will, God has established certain numbers to mean specific things.

Now let me continue with this definition of numerology.

“It is also the study of the numerical value of the letters in words, names, and ideas. It is often associated with the paranormal, alongside astrology and similar divinatory arts.”

They lose me with that part of the definition. A little later they add:

“The term ‘numerologist’ can be used for those who place faith in numerical patterns and draw pseudoscientific inferences from them, even if those people do not practice traditional numerology.”

I think that could describe us. God designed order and regularity, gave us patterns to see and follow. Man, pushed by Satan, adds things that just are not there—such as finding your future in the stars based on your birthday or the number of letters in your name. Where people run off the rails, on this and many other things, is turning something into a religion (in this case, numbers).

You have probably heard of the Pythagorean theorem $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. The originator, of course, was Pythagoras. A Greek philosopher, he died about five centuries before Christ. It is said we owe pure mathematics to him. He influenced Plato, Aristotle, and really all of Western philosophy which continues to influence us yet today. He was not so much of a mathematician, though, as he was a religious leader.

He founded a school and a movement in which the initiates were sworn into secrecy and lived an ascetic, communal lifestyle. He taught the transmigration of souls, which holds that every soul is immortal and when you die you enter a new body. He is also credited with vegetarianism, which included not eating beans. One story says he refused to not even walk through a bean field at the risk of his very life. He dressed all in white. He lived in a secret cave. I tell you all this to point out that he was a little unbalanced.

But he is absolutely revered by the scholars of this world even though we have none of his writings available to us. Just his legend. And that legend does stress his mathematical and numerological discoveries, the theory of proportions, the historicity of the earth, the division of the earth into climate zones, and (this one I like) the doctrine of musica universalis. That theory posits that the planets move according to mathematical equations and thus resonate to produce an inaudible symphony of music. I agree that the planets do move according to strict criteria God has put into place. I do not know about the inaudible symphony part. And if a symphony is not audible, is it really a symphony?

Pythagoras was a great lover of music. Much of today's music theory is actually owed to him. The point is Pythagoras developed his theories, in part or mostly, by observing God's creation. He got some things right, he got some things wrong, because God was not part of his equation.

He spent two decades in Egypt studying their religion and was even inducted into their priesthood. He then spent another 12 years in Babylon studying the mystery religion and became one of their priests as well. He was his own god. He is said to be the first man that called himself a philosopher, which simply means the lover of wisdom, but in this case it was his own wisdom. No beans, no meat, wear white, live in a cave, and so on.

Man can see great order in God's creation. But if they do not see God—if God has not called them, if God has not opened their minds—then, as I said, they run off the rails. Satan takes something pure (in this case, numbers), tweaks, twists, perverts them—sometimes a little, sometimes a lot.

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!”

John 10:30 “I and My Father are one.”

We know what these verses mean. God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son are totally in sync with one another. They are one.

Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”

What does Satan do? He takes the Holy Spirit—a truth, a reality—and he adds it to the God Family making it a trinity. He then spins it so that if you do not believe in the trinity, you are not a Christian. It is all backwards.

Here is something else about him as well. If you research into numbers, just even a little, you will find those that insist early man did not have numbers. They were so stupid. They did not have a clue. They understood the concept of one and many, but in between it was just “duh.” I will give you one example of this kind of thinking. Quoting from “A Brief History of Numbers and Counting” by Steven Law, he says this:

“The origins of numbers are cloaked in mystery. Common intuition, and recently discovered evidence, indicates that numbers and counting began with the number one (even though in the beginning, they likely didn’t have a name for it).”

Those idiots! Where is God in all this? Let us turn to Genesis 1.

Genesis 1:5 So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Verse 8: We see the second day. Verse 13: The third day. It appears God, at least, could count. What about His creation?

Genesis 2:3 God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

He expected His creation to follow His example. Now I might interject here that Satan spins this number a different way. It does not matter what day you keep as long as you set apart a part of one day.

In Genesis 2:10, we see four rivers. Go to Genesis 4, verse 24 where Lamech says to his wives:

Genesis 4:24 “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

It appears to me, not only basic math is understood here but the counting of things—multiplication. A little bit more from this article by Steven Law.

“It was the Egyptians who transformed the number one from a unit of counting things to a unit of measuring things [when they invented the cubit].”

Smart folks, those Egyptians.

Let us go to Genesis 6. God is speaking to Noah about the ark, and He says:

Genesis 6:15 “And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits”

And Noah said, “Right. . . What’s a cubit?” No, He did not say that. Noah was probably busy taking notes so he could draw up the blueprints. He knew how to count. He knew how to measure. He knew how to draw to scale. But you see how Satan perverts things. People of previous generations are presented as dumb. I bet Noah, as a shipbuilder, also knew the Pythagorean theorem but not by that name (maybe he called it Shem’s Law, I do not know). God designed and implemented these things for us to discover and use, but it is offensive—it is anti-God—to ignore the Bible and the evidence around us.

Now in the time that I have left, I would like to take a look at a few numbers. Just a brief overview of what they mean in the Bible.

The number one. Only divisible by itself. We have the Godhead. We have one church. We have unity.

John 10:30 “I and My Father are one.”

John 10:16 “and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

I Timothy 2:5 there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Numerous passages state Christ is the First and the Last. But let us turn to Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Out in the world we have many gods. I did a quick Google search and came up with not hundreds, not thousands—I found a website that floated the possibility of 320 million gods worshipped around the world. ‘One’ in the Bible means unity, but out there it means confusion.

The number two means duality. A man and a woman get married. Two in number are made one.

We have Christ and the church; the Old and New Testaments—the Old and New Covenants; the Father and the Son, but one God.

We have the first man, Adam, who sinned and brought death. We have the second Adam, Jesus Christ, who brought the hope of the resurrection and eternal life.

The Ten Commandments were on two tablets of stone.

Division or unity; peace or war; opposition or agreement.

I quoted Amos 3:3 earlier.

Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”

Titus 3:10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.

I Timothy 5:19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

(It would seem to me that Brett Kavanaugh is being railroaded by only one.)

Mark 6. Christ sent the disciples out in pairs.

All of Revelation 11 really deals with the Two Witnesses. Give Satan two, he will immediately try to divide them. Given the divorce rate that Kim talked about on Tuesday he has been very successful at this.

Number three means judgment, finality, entire, solid, complete—although to a lesser degree than the number seven. It is the first of four spiritually perfect numbers, the others being 7, 10, and 12.

There were the three righteous patriarchs before the Flood (Abel, Enoch, and Noah) and after the Flood (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

The prophet Daniel prayed three times a day, leaving us an example.

Peter denied Christ three times after His arrest.

Before His arrest, Christ prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Christ was placed on the cross at the third hour and died at the ninth hour. There were three hours of darkness while on the cross. He lay in the grave three days and three nights.

Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration.

There are the three angels that are actually mentioned by name in the Bible: Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer.

In I Corinthians 12, Paul tells of the third heaven where God's throne is.

Three annual feasts.

Three unclean spirits (Revelation 16).

Three vows (also in Revelation).

And then the Two Witnesses lay dead in the streets of Jerusalem for three days.

I had quoted Hebrews 13:8 earlier.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever [entire, solid, complete].

What does three mean to English-speaking peoples? I would say the Trinity, which I discussed earlier. Again, Satan set out to confuse, to divide. He took one God, made up of the Father and the Son, and he added a number. He took 'one,' which is 'unity,' and 'two' which is 'duality'; and instead of making 'three,' which is 'judgment,' he made it 'confusion.' The Trinity is not biblical. It came about centuries after Christ's death.

Let us go to Deuteronomy 4. Moses is speaking here.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take [anything] from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you [entire, solid, and complete].

The number four means 'God reveals Himself.' Think about Creation—the number of seasons. He rested on the Seventh day of Creation week but the Sabbath is the Fourth Commandment.

The Garden of Eden had four rivers.

The prophet Ezekiel had visions of God in the first chapter of his book, in which he saw four living creatures, each with four faces and four wings.

There are the four gospels in which Christ is revealed.

Let me go back to the fourth commandment just for a moment.

Deuteronomy 5:12 Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Deuteronomy 5:13-14 Six days you shall labor . . . but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

Now, just one chapter earlier, we were warned not to add to, or take away, from God's Word.

One billion two hundred million people in this world are professing Catholics. In their version of the Ten Commandments, the one about idols (the second commandment) gets dropped—it gets cut, it is gone. So, the fourth commandment (remember, that number reveals God) bumps up to number three. The tenth commandment (coveting) gets split into two commandments, completing the ten. Do you see what I mean about Satan making changes? That may seem small, but they are not. The fourth commandment (number four reveals God) moved up to three.

The number five can mean 'emphasis' and 'grace,' as can 15 (which is 3 times 5) or 25 (grace upon grace—5 times 5).

There are five primary types of offerings.

Psalms is divided into five sections.

Five books of the law.

Matthew 14: Jesus used five loaves of barley to feed five thousand.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness had five curtains coupled to one another, five bars made of acacia wood, five pillars, five sockets of bronze. That is all in Exodus 26.

In Exodus 27, the dimensions of the altar are given five cubits times five cubits.

In Exodus 30 (verses 23 through 25), God gives the recipe for making the holy anointing oil: 500 shekels of myrrh, 250 shekels of cinnamon, 250 shekels of cane, 500 shekels of cassia, a hin of olive oil. Five ingredients.

Emphasis and grace.

What is five in the world? Well, if you are old, like some of you I see out there, you might remember Dave Brubeck. In 1959, this pianist and composer had a massive hit. It is called 'Take Five' which means 'take it easy.' I do not know, maybe the Eagles expanded on that—take it easy. Take a breather. Stop pushing. Stop working. And then we high-five each other when we celebrate.

The Pythagoreans believe five to be about marriage, more specifically the marriage between heaven and earth.

In a deck of Tarot cards—I do not possess them, but I read this—the number five is the Pope.

But, anyway, you can see the departure here from emphasis and grace.

And I do not have time to go through lots more numbers, but I will explore a few more. I did not go through these very much. I just wanted to maybe generate your interest in this, something to think about.

The number six is man's number, one below perfection. It is a number of the world given over to judgement, as one commentator put it.

Man was created on the sixth day.

We are given six days to labor.

We have 6,000 years, we believe, after which comes the Millennium.

Hebrew slaves served six years, were released in the seventh.

And then of course, do not forget, in Revelation: 666.

I will get back to number seven in a second. I mentioned number eight signifies new beginnings.

The number nine is finality or judgment, and you see the connection with number three.

Number 10: Completeness of order; nothing lacking.

Number 11: Disorder.

Number 12 we talked about: Governmental rule, organizational beginnings.

The 144,000 of Revelation 7 and Revelation 14 are made up of 12,000 from each tribe of Israel.

Jacob had 12 sons.

There were 12 disciples.

12 gates in New Jerusalem.

Christ's bride will wear a crown with 12 stars.

Number 13: Enemies of God or rebellion.

Number 16 can mean love and loving, others say it means sacrifice. And if you think about it, those two are not really contradicting each other.

Number 17 is overcoming or victory.

We know that 19 is a time cycle. We know that that has been important to John and Evelyn [Ritenbaugh]. It can also mean divine order with judgement.

40 is testing and trials.

50 is the Jubilee year; also deliverance.

65 is apostasy.

70 is perfect spiritual order.

So many numbers, so little time.

Now number seven: Perfection, completeness, it also ties to Creation.

Fourteen is a double measure. Again, Dave Maas did a great job with his sermon “Patterns of Seven” so I am not going to belabor this.

I will just say quickly we have the seven days of creation week. We have the seventh-day Sabbath, the seventh year, and a seven-year cycle as the year of release.

The Bible is divided into seven sections.

We have seven churches, seven church eras, seven angels to the seven churches, seven seals, seven plagues, seven thunders, seven last plagues.

The first resurrection is at the seventh trumpet.

Seven holy days.

Jesus performed seven miracles on the Sabbath.

Completeness and perfection.

Versus what? What do you think of when you hear the number seven out in the world? Lucky seven! Was the creation luck? See, luck is the antithesis of God.

In seven days, God created; He did not stop by QuikTrip for a lottery ticket. That is absurd, I know, on the surface of it but still you know what I mean. God is order and perfection. He is not a God sitting back waiting for lucky seven to come up.

I heard some commentators talking a few weeks ago on news radio. One said something on the lines of “President Trump is more popular than President Obama at the same stage in the respective presidencies.” The other one

disagreed. The first one trotted out a Rasmussen Poll: Trump was at 46, Obama 45. Well, the second one trotted out another poll: Obama was at 45, Trump was at 44. And it went back and forth until I had to turn it off.

The numbers may or may not have been accurate, it is hard to say. Polls are not reliable, obviously. And if you throw enough numbers out there and do it fast enough, you can drown out the opposition.

I Corinthians 14:33. We are all very familiar with it.

I Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion [which can also be translated to ‘disorder’] but of peace.

We are deluged daily by numbers: Interest rates; the price of gas; some ballplayer signed an astronomical contract—numbers beyond what I can conceive.

What are the numbers that truly count? The Seventh Day, the Ten Commandments, your threescore and ten, that you live out. These numbers do not lie. They are forever.

Let us end with the apostle John’s vision in Revelation 7.

In Revelation 7 you see that the number of those sealed were 144,000 (which we hope to be a part of). Then in verses 9 and 10, coming out of the Great Tribulation, he says:

Revelation 7:9-10 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

It says no one can number this group. Do you doubt that God knows this number? John is asked if he knows who these people are, and he does not.

Revelation 7:14 These are the ones [he is told] who come out of the great tribulation.

Revelation 7:15-17 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

God willing, we will be there at this time to see God wipe away the tears of mankind. We will help the Shepherd in whatever job we are given. You know, you might say God has our number: The one God—the Father and the Son. These numbers do not lie.