



Bible Numbers & Bible Gematria

Bible Numbers

About one in five Bible scriptures contains a number. For example we find 6 days of work, 8 people in the ark, 10 commandments, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 disciples, 30 pieces of silver, 40 days in the wilderness, 70 prophetic weeks in Daniel, 153 fish in the net, 144,000 on Mount Zion, and 666 - the number of the beast. Are these just random numbers or do they have some deep significance? **If the latter, they underscore the belief that the Bible is God-inspired!**

Many maintain that biblical numbers are highly symbolic and meant to convey a concept e.g. many accept that 7 denotes some form of completion and that 666 is not very pleasant! In fact, we are told to *calculate* or understand the number of the beast (Rev 13.18). It appears that our Creator God communicates to us by both language and numbers. It is maintained that when a number occurs it should underscore, clarify or enhance the meaning of the text.

Gematria

The Hebrew and Greek alphabets use letters to represent numbers e.g. the Hebrews wrote "gimel" for 3 and the Greeks wrote "kappa" for 20. Clearly, summing all the letter values in a word gives a numerical value for the word. Does this have significance? Moreover, do different words with the same numeric value have a common symbolic meaning or enhance the overall meaning when taken together?

Gematria is the technique of using the numeric values of Hebrew and Greek letters to find a hidden or symbolic meaning to the corresponding word. It has its roots in the medieval Kabbalistic system of interpreting Hebrew scriptures in order to seek out hidden meaning and has been adopted by both Christians and the occult. Some Christians maintain that gematria has real meaning in scripture whilst others warn of its mystical roots.

Interpreting Numbers in the Bible

First a word of warning. We must be careful when assigning a symbolic meaning to a number in the Bible and refrain from doing so unless there is strong scriptural backing. Having said that, the meaning of some numbers is widely accepted. Let's examine the symbolic meaning of some of these numbers by highlighting Bible verses that appear to attach symbolism to the number [see also "Biblical Mathematics: Keys to Scripture Numerics" by E. F. Vallowe, and [Bible Numbers - Ivan Panin](#)].

Number 1 - unity

"I and the Father are ONE" (Jn 10.30).

"The glory which you have given Me I have given them, that they may be ONE, just as We are ONE" (Jn 17.22).

The millennial earth will be unified in Christ; "in that day the Lord will be the only ONE" (Zech 14.9).

Number 2 - union, division

In terms of union, Jesus sent His disciples out TWO by TWO, a union of minds and purpose. In marriage, TWO become one flesh. In terms of division:

"a DOUBLE-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Ja 1.8).

"No one can serve TWO masters" (Mat 6.24).

Man has TWO natures, one in conflict with the other (Rom 7.14-25).

Number 3 - resurrection, divine completeness

"Destroy this temple and in THREE days I will raise it up" (Jn 2.19).

There are THREE cases in the OT where people were raised from the dead, and Jesus raised THREE people from the dead in His earthly ministry (the widow's son, Jairus's daughter and Lazarus). Divine completeness (the Trinity) is found in Mat 28.19: "Go ... in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit", implying THREE persons in ONE.

Number 4 - creation, world

There are FOUR points of the compass, FOUR seasons, FOUR primitive elements (earth, air, fire and water), FOUR living creatures around God's throne (Rev 4.6). The angels will gather the elect "from the FOUR winds" (Mat 24.31). There are FOUR world kingdoms in Daniel's vision of the statue (Dan 2.31-35). Since FOUR is not a prime number (it can be factorised) it also symbolises weakness. The FOUR world kingdoms are man centred and weak, to be followed by a fifth kingdom – Christ's.

Number 5 - grace, God's goodness

There were FIVE ingredients in the holy anointing oil or perfume used in the OT: myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia and olive oil (Exod 30.23,24). Grace came by Christ, who has FIVE names: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa 9.6). There are FIVE ministries whereby God's grace is given to the world: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers (Eph 4.11). Jesus, out of compassion and grace fed FIVE THOUSAND men with FIVE loaves (Jn 6.1-10).

Number 6 - man, weakness, sin, Satan

Man was created on day SIX (Gen 1.26-31):

"SIX days you (man) shall labour and do all your work" (Exod 20.9).

Nebuchadnezzar made an image to the glory of man: it was SIXTY cubits high and SIX cubits wide (Dan 3.1). Goliath (denoting man's defiance and sin) stood "SIX cubits and a span" and his spear weighed SIX hundred shekels (1 Sam 17.4,7). In contrast, David's weapon was FIVE stones, showing how grace overcomes man's sin. The flood (judgment of sin) came in the SIX hundredth year of Noah's life, in the SECOND month (representing division caused by sin) (Gen 7.11). The number of the antichrist is SIX, SIX, SIX (Rev 13.18).

Number 7 - completeness, spiritual perfection

Seven was the most sacred number to the Hebrews:

"By the SEVENTH day God completed His work" (Gen 2.2).

The OT 'Feast of Booths' was complete after SEVEN days (Lev 23.34). SEVEN pairs of each 'clean' animal were taken into the ark (Gen 7.2). In Revelation we find SEVEN churches (all forms of church). Judgment of the earth is completed via a SEVEN sealed book, SEVEN trumpets and SEVEN bowls of wrath. Counting from Adamic man, there have been approximately SIX millennia on the earth; the SEVENTH millennium will see Christ's rule on earth, and complete earth's history.

Number 8 - New beginning

The ark carried EIGHT persons to a new beginning for man on earth (Gen 7.13). A male baby (a new creation) was circumcised on the EIGHTH day (Gen 17.12) - this being the [optimum time medically](#). The conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus regarding new birth mentions 'born' EIGHT times (Jn 3.1-8). The EIGHTH day starts a new week.

Number 9 - Divine blessings, divine completeness, divine judgment

There are NINE fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5.22,23). There are NINE gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12.8-10) and NINE Beatitudes (Mat 5.3-11). Jesus completed His work on the cross "about the NINTH hour" (Mat 27.46). The sum of the numeric values of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet is 4995 = 5 × 999. This implies that the Hebrew alphabet is 'watermarked' with the divine attributes of grace and completeness!

In terms of judgment, in the Bible NINE persons are stoned to death, there are NINE widows, NINE persons are afflicted with blindness and NINE persons are afflicted with leprosy.

Number 10 - Law

The TEN commandments specify God's basic laws for His prime creation, man: TEN = FOUR (creation) + SIX (man). The OT law was to tithe ONE-TENTH. The last worldly empire will be a revived form of the ancient Roman Empire. This will crush people with man's laws and will incorporate TEN worldly governments or systems (the TEN 'toes' of Dan 2 and the TEN 'kings' of Rev 17.12). [It is interesting that the UK currency based on 12 has been replaced by a decimal system!]

Number 11 - Judgment, disorder

There were ELEVEN judgments upon Egypt; TEN plagues followed by drowning in the Red Sea (Exod 7 - 14). King Zedekiah, a wicked king, reigned ELEVEN years and brought chaos and death on the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Jer 52.1-11). There were ELEVEN disciples after one had been judged and taken away.

Number 12 - Governmental perfection

Solomon, a divinely appointed ruler, appointed TWELVE officers over Israel (1 Kings 4.7). Jesus chose TWELVE apostles to initiate His kingdom on earth, and He said to them:

" ... you also shall sit upon TWELVE thrones, judging the TWELVE tribes of Israel." (Mat 19.28).

There are TWELVE signs of the zodiac (in the AV Job 38.32 refers to 'Mazzaroth' meaning twelve signs). The stars are seasonal signs to help man govern his life (Gen 1.14). So we have TWELVE months of the year. The new Jerusalem (God's perfect kingdom) has TWELVE gates and TWELVE foundation stones (Rev 21. 12,14).

TWELVE (perfect government) = THREE (unity) + NINE (divine blessings)

TWELVE (perfect government) = FIVE (God's goodness) + SEVEN (completeness and spiritual perfection).

More on Number 7

Number SEVEN is so important it is worth another visit. It seems to place God's stamp on the living world around us, specifically in the physiology of living organisms. For example:

- According to scripture, man's years are 70 (7×10) (Ps 90.10). Today, the world average [life expectancy](#) at birth is around 67.2 years

- The human body has an approximate 7-day clock. The science of [chronobiology](#) describes circaseptan ('about 7') rhythms or [body rhythms](#) that run about seven days in length. This is a very good reason to rest every 7 days (Exod 20.10)! The [10-day week](#) of the humanistic French Revolution, and the 'continuous work week' of the Russian Revolution both failed for this very reason
- Researchers report 'a built-in (genetically determined) about-7-day (circaseptan) period' in connection with [human organ transplants](#). Swelling or rejection of an organ transplant tends to follow a circaseptan rhythm i.e. about 7 or 14 (7×2) days after surgery. [It is claimed](#) that this rhythm also applies to the immune response to infections, blood and [urine chemicals](#), blood pressure and the common cold
- Circaseptan (7-day) rhythms have been detected in simple [Plant life](#)
- A woman's [fertility cycle](#) has multiples of 7. In a short cycle of 21 days, ovulation occurs around day 7. The average fertility cycle is 28 days (7×4). In a long cycle e.g. 35 days, ovulation does not occur until around day 21 (7×3)
- The adult human body is made up of around 7,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 ([7 octillion](#)) atoms
- In obstetrics, the human [gestation period](#) (denoting completeness) is around 280 days (7×40)
- The gestation period for a dog is typically [63 days](#) (7×9)
- The gestation period for a sheep is typically [147 days](#) (7×21)
- The gestation period for a domestic duck is typically [28 days](#) (7×4)

More Numbers

There are more important numbers in scripture:

- 17 - Victory e.g. Noah's victory over the flood (Gen 7.11, 8.4)
- 24 - Priesthood e.g. the 24 elders around the throne (Rev 4.4)
- 40 - Trial and Testing e.g. Jesus in the wilderness (Lk 4.1-13)
- 42 - Oppression of Israel e.g. Israel's end-time suffering (Dan 12.7)(Rev 11.2)
- 70 - Israel's period of punishment and restoration (Dan 9.24)
- 144 - Spiritual guidance and protection e.g. the sealing of Israel (Rev 7.4)

Divine Inspiration?

An interesting example of how biblical numbers suggest divine inspiration of the Bible is described by E.F.Vallowe ["Biblical Mathematics: Keys to Scripture Numerics"]. God instructed Noah to build an ark 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 30 cubits high (Gen 6.15). These dimensions define a numeric volume of 450,000 which factors as $5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 144$. Now 5 denotes God's grace and 144 denotes spiritual guidance. Do the ark dimensions speak of God's loving preservation of the eight people in the ark?

What about 666?

When 666 appears in the Bible it relates to either gold (wealth), idolatry, or people control (today, nations have [gold reserves](#) to secure national currencies). Solomon's wealth included an annual income of 666 talents of gold (1 Kings 10.14) and he subsequently descended into idolatry (1 Kings 11). When a remnant returned from captivity to Jerusalem, they included 666 from the people of Adonikam (Ezra 2.13). Adonikam was a noble sent from Babylon to rebuild the Temple - a false priest given to idolatry. The number 666 is strongly inferred in Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold (Dan 3). Its dimensions were 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide, and when the people heard the sound of 6 instruments (Dan 3.5 KJV, NASB) they had to fall down and worship the image. Those who did not were to be killed. So in Nebuchadnezzar's image we see 666 is associated with gold, idolatry and enforced worship on pain of death.

Nebuchadnezzar's image foreshadows the [end time 666 scenario](#):

"... the number of the beast ... is the number of a man: his number is 666" (Rev 13.18)

Here we find the Antichrist (the beast) using wealth (buying or selling), idolatry (image worship) and extreme control over the nations on pain of death (Rev 13.11-18). Clearly, 666 is not a nice number!

Bible Gematria

As mentioned, gematria is a system of assigning a numerical value to a word or phrase. A study of gematria in the Bible shows some amazing numbers and text-text relationships. Whatever is revealed must not conflict with the word of God (the text), or add to it. But it can enhance the meaning of a particular scripture by linking it to other relevant texts. Also, the implied coding of texts underscores the Christian belief that the Bible is indeed the inspired word of God. The numbers look of divine origin and can be intriguing.

Number 37

Bonnie Gaunt in her book [The Sacred Design](#) has some interesting observations. It seems the prime number 37 and integer multiples (or extensions) of 37 always point to the Godhead or to God's attributes. For instance, in certain verses, 37 is the sum for 'God', 'only Son', 'only begotten', $2 \times 37 = 74$ is the sum of 'a great God', 'their Redeemer', 'everlasting', and $3 \times 37 = 111$ is the sum of 'wonderful', 'the Most High', 'Son of the Living God' and 'Lord of all'.

Consider a few more integer multiples. In the NT the Greek for Jesus sums to $888 = 24 \times 37$, and in the OT the phrase 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the

earth' (Gen 1.1) sums to $2701 = 73 \times 37$. In fact, it is claimed that 37 is central to the structure of scripture, [link](#).

The Ishtar Gate

When the Jews went into captivity in Babylon, they passed through the Ishtar Gate, the gateway to the Temple of Ishtar. This had pictures of 337 demons or dragons, the Babylonian snake-gods. Why 337? It turns out that 337 is the numerical sum of "**Hell on Earth**" in [Jewish/Hebrew gematria](#). When the Jews went through this gate they knew they were going through the gateway to hell on earth! Is it significant that this ancient gate has now been excavated and moved from Babylon to the [Pergamon Museum](#) in Berlin? (A smaller reproduction of the gate was built in Babylon, Iraq by Saddam Hussein).

Now let's look at the positive side! Consider the gematria associated with Jesus.

Jesus

The Greek word for Jesus comprises six letters:

iota = 10, eta = 8, sigma = 200, omicron = 70, upsilon = 400, sigma = 200. Arithmetic sum = 888.

This is intriguing. The number 8 in scripture denotes a new beginning and Jesus gave new birth to mankind. Also, triple 8 could imply a new beginning given by a triune God, through Jesus. There is more support for a special significance of 888. Consider the following phrases: "The Founder" and "I am the Life". Each phrase can be closely associated with Jesus and, amazingly, each sums to 888 in Greek! Also, $888 = 37 \times 24$. Now 37 denotes "Word of God" or simply "God" and 24 denotes "priesthood". So Jesus is the Word of God, Divine and our High Priest all in one!

One of the intriguing aspects of Bible gematria is the way it links both Hebrew and Greek text. Consider the phrase

"the salvation of our God" in Ps 98.3. In Hebrew this is "Yeshoth Elohenu" which sums to 888! The number points the reader of Psalms to Jesus!

Lord Jesus Christ

These three words in Greek are:

Lord: kappa,upsilon,rho,iota,omikron,sigma: arithmetic sum = 800

Jesus: iota,eta,sigma,omicron,upsilon,sigma: arithmetic sum = 888

Christ: chi,rho,iota,sigma,tau,omikron,sigma: arithmetic sum = 1480

Total sum: 3,168

Is this number significant? First note that $3 \times 1 \times 6 \times 8 = 144$ or 12×12 . Now 12 and 12 is symbolic of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21.10-14) with its 12 gates (the 12 tribes of Israel) and 12 foundation stones (the 12 apostles). Also note that the number 12 denotes governmental perfection and Jesus is coming back to rule the earth with perfect justice (Zech 14.9). Is this all coincidence?

The number 3,168 appears in other scriptures, each time underscoring the attributes of Christ. For example, the phrase "*mediator between God and men*" (1 Tim 2.5) also sums to 3,168 in Greek, pointing to Jesus as the mediator. What is even more amazing is that all the Hebrew letter values in Isa 53.11 also sum to 3,168. Thus 3,168 not only highlights the Lordship of Christ, but also His Priestly and sacrificial roles for mankind.

Then there is the curious relationship between man's measurements and gematria. First, Bethlehem, the birth place of Jesus, has latitude 31.68 degrees north. Second, the floor dimensions of Solomon's temple were specified to be 60 cubits by 20 cubits (2 Chron 3.3)(1 Kings 6.2) - a perimeter of 160 cubits. Verse 3 also defines the cubit to be used (the one *according to the old standard*), although there is some debate as to whether this is about 20.5 inches or 19.8 inches. If we take the latter (the Babylonian cubit) then $160 \times 19.8 = 3,168$ - which again seems to underscore the divine inspiration of the Bible.

Conclusions

Bible numbers, especially those from 1 to 12, have well-defined and undisputed meaning e.g. 6 denotes man and 7 completeness. Whenever a number occurs it is helpful to recall its underlying meaning since this may enhance understanding of the text. In passing we might ask "Is the fact that 12 has fallen from use in the world in favour of 10 (decimalisation) an end-time sign of man rebelling against God?"

Biblical gematria could be conjecture or coincidence or both. But many maintain that they underscore the divine inspiration of both old and new testaments and so build faith in God's word. On the surface it appears that the Hebrew and Greek text is encoded such that its numeric value enhances understanding of the text and also builds links to similar texts (unifying the Bible). Encoding requires intelligence i.e. the mind of God. It is an open question why some gematria appear to relate to man's units of measurement such as degrees and inches.

You can do your own gematria investigations at [The Bible Wheel](#) and at the [Gematria Calculator](#).