

# The End

Numbers

*"This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666."*

(Revelation 13:8)

## Introduction

Last week, we explored the perfect number, 7, and noted its use throughout the book of Revelation and how it showed the completeness of what God is doing.

Today, we will look at other numbers that make appearances throughout Revelation and note their importance.

## Occurrences of Two

"In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength." (1:16)

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword." (2:12)

"And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." (11:3)

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth." (11:4)

"and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth." (11:10)

"But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time." (12:14)

"Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon." (13:11)

"And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur." (19:20)

## Gematria

Two, the letter Beht, has to do with "house, tent, to build, division". Two is often a divider, or mirror, as well as potentially an indicator of what God is trying to accomplish in the world (build His house).

## OT References

Two or three witnesses were necessary to find someone guilty of crime (Dt. 17:6, 19:15)

Two is the number of trees given to us in the garden (tree of life, and tree of knowledge of good and evil). The tree of life makes an appearance in the final chapter of Revelation.

### Summary

In Revelation, we are given two choices (beast and Lamb), as well as shown God's desire to build His home with us.

### **Occurrences of Three**

Three is an interesting number. It isn't always directly written out for us, but shows up in the text for us to find.

"Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!" (8:13; note also the "woe, woe, woe" repetition)

"By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths." (9:18)

"For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb," (11:9; again in 11:11; see time, times, and half a time on last page).

"And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs." (16:13)

"The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath." (16:19)

"on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates." (21:13)

There are also three angels in Revelation 14, and phrases like "holy, holy, holy" is a triplet as well (Revelation 4:8; a reference to Isaiah 6:3)

### Gematria

Three, the letter Gimel, represents "ripening, nourish, maturing". Used to communicate growth, rebirth/resurrection ideas.

### References

There aren't necessarily direct references to 3 outside of the noted "holy, holy, holy" above. The Jewish people would often talk about "three heavens" (sky, universe, where God is; though sometimes there are "seven heavens" as well). Consider the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit) in this discussion as well.

Jonah is in the big fish 3 days and nights, and this account is connected to the resurrection of Jesus.

Seeds are created on day three of creation.

## Summary

This number shows the finishing off of the opponents persecution/empire as well as the maturing of Christian faith through the persecution, and the call for maturity in understanding

## **Occurrences of Four**

“and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind:” (4:6)

“And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (4:8)

“And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” (5:6)

“And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” (5:8)

“And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.” (5:14)

“Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” (6:1)

“And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!” (6:6)

“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree.” (7:1)

“...four angels...” (7:2)

“And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,” (7:11)

“Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God,” (9:13)

“...release the four angels....” (9:14)

“So the four angels....” (9:15)

“and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” (14:3)

“And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever,” (15:7)

“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” (19:4)

“and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.” (20:8)

### Gematria

Four, Dalet in Hebrew, is associated with “door, draw out, path/way, dominion”. It is often associated with authority and time (fourth day of creation – sun, moon, stars for calendar)

### OT References

“For thus says the Lord GOD, “How much more when I send My four severe judgments against Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts and plague to cut off man and beast from it!” (Ezekiel 14:21; compare to Revelation 6 and the 4 horsemen)

### Summary

These references remind the reader of what God is doing in the world and the authority that He carries.

### **Occurrences of Six**

“This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.” (13:18)

### Gematria

Six has positive references, but is generally regarded as a negative number in that it is one short/less of perfection (the number 7).

### OT References

“Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold,” (1 Kings 10:14; 2 Chronicles 9:13)

Goliath was “six cubits and a span” (1 Samuel 17:4) – Individual in direct rebellion to God (see also the giant with six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot (1 Chron. 20:6-7)

Nebuchadnezzar erected a statue at 60 cubits high and 6 cubits across (Daniel 3:1).

### Summary

This number is a direct reference, to “a man” in Revelation. Sometimes this number is 616 in manuscripts. Either way, the name of Caesar Nero (Nrwn Qsr or Nrw Qsr) in the Hebrew adds up to 666 and 616 respectively.

Six references the incompleteness of man, and the enemies of God.

## Occurrences of Ten

"...for ten days you will have tribulation..." (2:10)

"The number of mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand; I heard their number." (9:16)

"And at that hour there was a great earthquake and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven." (11:13)

"And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems." (12:3)

"And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads." (13:1)

"And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns." (17:3)

"But the angel said to me, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her." (17:7)

"And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast." (17:12)

"And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire," (17:16)

## Gematria

Ten, the Hebrew *Yohd*, depicts "hand", "work", and "congregation". It typically designates a group (good or evil).

## OT References

Ten Commandments

Ten Plagues

Sodom would have been spared for ten righteous (Gen. 18)

The beast that the harlot rides has "ten horns" as does the fourth beast in Daniel's visions (Daniel 7).

## Summary

Shows the organization of evil most often (particularly the kings of Rome).

## Occurrences of Twelve

"And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." (12:1)

"It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—" (21:12)

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (21:14)

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." (21:21)

"through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (22:2)

### Gematria

Lamed is the twelfth Hebrew letter and has to do with "learning" and "being shepherded". This word is often associated with order/organization and unity.

### Summary

This number would remind the reader of the need for unity and organization in the following of God (would be contrasted with the chaos of the enemy). Similar to ten's organization, but this number is more representative of a good grouping.

### **Occurrences of Twenty-Four**

"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads." (4:4)

"the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying..." (4:10)

"And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." (5:8)

"And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God," (11:16)

"And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" (19:4)

### Summary

This phrase just continues to show the connective tissue between Revelation and the prophetic writings, particular the writing of Daniel.

### **Occurrences of 144,000**

"And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:" (7:4)

"Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." (14:1)

“and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” (14:3)

“He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.” (21:17)

### OT References

There are no known references to this particular number.

The reasoning for this particular number is 12 (tribes) x 12,000 (a great number) = 144,000. Within the text here (Revelation 7) you have a contrast between those with the mark of the beast and those with “God on their foreheads” (7:3). This sounds somewhat like the exchange with God and Elijah (1 Kings 19:18) where Elijah is told that he is not the only faithful one fighting against the god Baal and his followers.

### Summary

This number is ultimately meant to represent a great multitude of people from all over. Persecution will be difficult, but the salvation of many will occur.

### **Times, Time, and Half a Time**

While not specifically a number, this phrase represents some amount of time and is often represented in explanation by the number 3 ½ (time = 1, times = 2, half a time = 1/2).

“But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.” (12:14)

### OT References

This phrase occurs twice in Daniel:

Daniel 7:25 – this is in reference to the “fourth beast” of Daniel (Roman Empire). Specifically, this is one of the horns (kings) that rises up in power to torment the saints. This ruler is able to do this for “a time, times, and half a time” before ultimately having authority taken away.

Daniel 12:7 – this second and final occurrence in Daniel is in reference to “and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time” (12:1). Daniel sees “a man clothed in linen” who asks “how long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” (12:6). The answer? “Time, times, and half a time.” (12:7). After this, the people of God will be delivered (12:1, 7)

### Summary

This phrase just continues to show the connective tissue between Revelation and the prophetic writings, particular the writing of Daniel.

### **Conclusion**

Though hard to understand as modern readers, these numbers in addition to the familiar phrases and keywords we have and will discuss, serve to provide comfort to the ancient reader. The writing of Revelation is full of references, in both word and number, that remind them they are not the first ones to go through such a persecution, and that God will bring about deliverance, as He always has.

### **Take Home**

Where does the idea of the Rapture come from in Revelation? What is it?