

NUMBER SEVEN.

Seven is a peculiar and much-used number in the bible. It is the basis of reckoning in many prophetic arguments. It is what may be termed a complete number. It represents the whole of that to which it is applied, and the whole is often divided into seven parts. It may be to others, as well as ourselves, both interesting and profitable to consider the relation of this number to the various elements of God's revealed plan.

The thoughtful reader of the bible may have been impressed with the oft-repeated use of this number. It suggests to our minds, in harmony with many other things, the idea of order in the plan. The idea of the bible being a chance book cannot long be entertained by those who can see the systematic development in its revelations. We believe the veil will be removed from the face of the nations (Isa. 25:7), by the manifestation of long-hidden truths, whatever means God may use to bring it about, and it is doubtless the duty and privilege of all who have any degree of light, to let it shine.

The first use of the number seven in the bible is in the formation of the week. The creation week was seven days. We do not assert that they were each twenty-four hours in length. A day is any specified period of time. The twenty-four hour day, as is well known, is caused by the revolution of the earth on its axis. The evening and morning of such a day are caused by the sun's shining on each part of the earth half the time during the daily revolution. For this reason it seems clear that the creation days could not have been mere twenty-four hour days, because the record shows that the sun was not made to shine on the earth until the fourth creation day. Gen. 1:14-19. Those days were doubtless long periods, as geologists claim, and yet the principle is made the basis of our ordinary week. Why should

there be seven days in a week rather than some other number? We regard it, of course, as of Divine arrangement. Attempts have been made to change it, as when the French arranged one day in ten for rest, but it proved a failure. This cycle of seven is not caused by astronomy, as are the length of the day and the year. We believe it is caused by the Divine impression of God's plan of salvation on the history of mankind. Can any skeptical friend suggest a better reason for this otherwise arbitrary arrangement?

There are many reasons for believing that the seven days of a week are typical of the seven thousand years of the world's history. The statement that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3:8), is not proof of the position taken, but it suggests that a thousand years, rather than a million or some other number, is one of the kinds of day used in God's plan. According to the bible chronology, with which many of our readers are more or less familiar, the six thousand years from the creation of Adam ended in the year 1873, and the seventh thousand is therefore commenced. Not only is the number seven made prominent, but in many cases the seventh is made specially prominent. In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but the seventh day is the Sabbath. This prominence of the seventh day holds good in the week of creation, the ordinary week and the week of thousands. The number seven is made prominent in several ways between the creation and the coming out of Israel from Egypt, but up to that time there is no bible evidence that the Lord commanded the observance of the seventh day, or that anyone did observe it, or that anyone was punished for its non-observance. That the seventh day of the creation week is the rest-day of the Lord, and that He set it apart for some great purpose, are both true. Gen. 2:2,3. That the same principle of six days of work and the seventh day for rest (not any day of the seven, but the seventh), was afterward made the basis of the ordinary week, is also true. Ex. 20:8-11. But there are reasons for

believing that the grand object of the Lord in setting apart the seventh day, was to make it a type of the Great Sabbath, or seventh thousand years. It may be asked: "If the six thousand years are ended, and the seventh thousand is the Sabbath, why do so many of the conditions of the times past still continue? We believe even this is foreshadowed in the stated facts concerning the seventh day of the creation week. The work of the six days extended into and was ended in the seventh. "On the seventh day God ended his work, and He rested on the seventh day." Gen. 2:2. This double statement has often been overlooked, but the first is as true as the second, and there is a meaning in both.

There are many evidences, which have been given from time to time, that the Millennium is to be introduced by a time of trouble, in which existing organizations are to be removed, as rubbish, to make way for the verdure of peace and righteousness which is to follow. But there is another phase of this subject in which we are specially interested. The closing work of the old creation, before the generation of the family began, was getting a wife for Adam, and it would therefore appear that this was the work extended into the beginning of the seventh day. It is often said that man is the noblest work of God; "but the woman is the glory of the man." 1 Cor. 11:7. This progression, from the lower to the higher, in creation, illustrates the progression, in God's plan of the ages. The last work of the new creation, before the millennial work, is getting a wife – the **[R92 : page 5]** church – for the Second Adam, and, according to the evidences, this work is extended into the beginning of the seventh thousand years. With this in mind, we may see a significance in the promise of Christ to the overcomer: "I will give him the morning star." Rev. 2:28. Christ is called both the "Morning Star," and the "Sun of Righteousness," and these seem to be related to each other as the "day dawn" and the "perfect day." When Christ rose from the dead, on the first day of the week, it was "early, when it was yet

dark." Jno. 20:1. It was in the dawn of the day, (Matt. 28:1), and this, together with the many evidences, seem to show that the same is to be true of the church in the dawn of this great day. It is during this day-dawn, or transition between the Gospel Age and the Millennium, that Babylon is to go down to rise no more, as a millstone cast into the sea; and when this takes place, the holy apostles and prophets are called upon to rejoice over the destruction of that corrupt system. Rev. 18:20,21. The inference is, that the resurrection of these holy men of old takes place before Babylon falls. Then, indeed, they would have the "morning star," and it would be very early in the morning, while it is yet dark to the world at large. It seems that it will require the terrible events of the day of wrath to awaken the world from its stupor, and bring them to the consciousness of the presence of the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." There are several otherwise dark sayings [R92 : page 6] of our Lord, that seem clear with the idea that the seven thousand years are known as seven days. In answer to the statement of the Pharisees, "Get thee out, and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee," He said: "Go ye, and tell that fox: Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Luke 13:31,32. These days could not have been twenty-four-hour days in any case. The third day could not have been the day of His death (even if that could have brought perfection), for in the next verse He added: "Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." This shows that He was not to be put to death until He had reached Jerusalem, and that it was not accomplished on the third day from the time He spoke. His use of the word day in two senses in the same connection, without an explanation, is similar to His use of the word death in two senses in the statement: "Let the dead bury their dead." Even had He been put to death on the very day He used the language, He could have had no reference to His resurrection on the third literal day, for He did not

do cures and cast out devils when He was dead. There was a complete suspension of both physical and spiritual healing from the time He left their house desolate until the day of Pentecost. Take the broad view that He spoke not merely of Himself, but of the body of which He is the Head, and that instead of twenty-four-hour days He meant thousand-year-days, and all seems plain.

It was near the beginning of the fifth thousand years that He spoke. That was the "to-day" of His language; "to-morrow" was the sixth thousand, and the "third day" is the seventh thousand. We cannot doubt that the physical cures that Jesus performed while in the flesh were used, partly, to represent the higher work of the healing of spiritual maladies. On this principle, He, in and by His body – the church – has been doing His work, but in only a limited and imperfect manner. The mortal phase of the church is always called His body – even "the whole body;" Eph. 4:16 – but it is so only in a preparatory and representative sense. He is not perfected until all, both the living and the dead members, are glorified with Him. As Eve was the glory of Adam, and his complement, so of the church in relation to Christ.

While doing the work of Christ during the fifth and sixth thousand-year-days, the church has also been called upon to suffer with Christ, and to have conformity to His death. Phil. 3:10. Another dark saying of Jesus seems to represent this phase of the experience of His church. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Jno. 2:19.

We are told that He spake of the temple of His body. This had of course, its primary fulfillment in Jesus personally. He often showed that He would rise the third day. But what was true of Him personally on the third day, of twenty-four hours, is true of His body – the church – in the third day of a thousand years each. Jesus was talking of the temple and this was what confused the minds of His

hearers. But the temple was a type of the church as well as a type of each member of the same. Jesus was the temple of God, for God dwelt in him. The body of each Christian is the temple of God, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 6:19. And the whole church groweth into a holy temple for the habitation of God. Eph. 2:20-22. The words that Jesus used referred to the type, but the spirit, or meaning, of those words was the antitype. All through the period of their sufferings, the church could be comforted with the assurance that when they suffered He, the sympathizing Friend, suffered with them. "Why persecutest thou me?" Acts 22:7-8. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." Matt. 25:40.

Paul declares that Jesus "rose the third day according to the scriptures." 1 Cor. 15:4. He must have referred to the Old Testament, for the New Testament was yet unwritten. But what scriptures foretold that Christ should rise the third day? None directly, that we can find; but indirectly it is taught, like many other things.

When asked for a sign, the Saviour referred to Jonah as a sign, and the only one that wicked generation could have. The time that Jonah was in the deep, the Saviour Himself applies to the period of His own death. It was not thirty-three years and a half, but "He died, and rose again the third day." But there can be no doubt that it has a broader if not a deeper meaning as we have applied it to the church. We are satisfied that the reason that Christ rose the third day, instead of any other, was to represent the days of the great plan, each day being a type of a thousand years. What is true of the glorification of the church of Christ, as to time, has been shown to be true also of the restoration of Israel. And if anyone who believes the many scriptures which teach the idea of their restoration, will read the prayer of Jonah, while he was buried in the deep, as recorded in the second chapter of the book of Jonah, he will have but little difficulty in

seeing a type of the history of the nation of Israel since Jesus left their house desolate. Another prophecy of the same thing and in very plain words may be found in Hosea 6:1-3. "He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord &c." The third day has come since Jesus cut them off, and we can see the cursed fig tree beginning to put forth its leaves. By this we know that summer is near, and also that our redemption draweth near. Of Number Seven more anon.

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