

No.
205.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

SCRIPTURE NUMERATION.

"SEVEN"

An Address (revised) at

Campbell Rd., Bow,

11th June, 1913.

by

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Scriptural literature for Believers

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" S E V E N "

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,

Bow, E., 11th June, 1913.

The first point of our subject is a collection of occurrences of the word "Seven". Shall we, therefore, instead of taking one chapter, read a large number of verses?

Passages read:- Gen. 4. 15, 24; 41. 1 - 7; Lev. 4. 16,17; 16. 14; 23. 1-8, 18, 24, 27, 34; 26. 23,28,33; Deut. 7. 1; 1 Kings 18. 43; 2 Kings 5. 10; Psa. 119. 164; Prov. 6. 16; 9. 1; 24. 15; 26. 16; Dan. 3. 19; 4. 14; Matt. 18. 21; Acts 20. 6; 21. 4; 28. 14.

I cannot read passages from the book of Revelation, - we should need to read so much of it. (Before we come to the interpretation, will a brother lead in prayer?)

It is now our responsibility, dear friends, to consider God's general teaching wrapped up in the figure "Seven". It is, as you notice, an odd number, and, therefore, we notice it is peculiarly linked with God. "If "one" and "three" be Divine numbers to describe a Divine Person, "five" and "seven" seem to describe Divine operations. "Five" suggests law, "seven" completeness. An absolute perfectness is marked out by this number seven, - not only perfectness in onSelf, which is God's wonderful, unalterable position, but also perfectness in action, i.e. perfectness and completeness in working out the various things that are Divinely appointed. This seems the general teaching of the number seven. It is a number that speaks of

completeness. It is stamped on the very arrangement of our time. There are seven days in the week. It is, moreover, a number which, as we have seen, is frequently associated in Scripture with the word "times", or with the word "days". Because of this we are not surprised that the number "seven" brings before us a complete **WORKING OUT** of a Divine plan. It need hardly be said, and yet must be sorrowfully said, that Satan has his counterfeit, his imitation, - that if the Lord's people have God's completeness, Satan will aim at HIS completeness, HIS perfectness of evil; and there shall be many "sevens" when transgressors are come to the full. That such teaching is wrapped up in the passages at which we have looked seems clear. May I mention a few?

In Gen. 4 God declares that if Cain is slain he will be avenged sevenfold, i.e. completely, perfectly. Lamech strives to outdo God. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Lamech will avenge himself seventy and sevenfold. Again, where we read of going seven times to see, we are not to think only of the servant's continuance, but of a complete looking until the Lord completely stepped in. In like manner, not only were there seven literal nations in the land of Canaan, but there was a completeness of opposition to Israel, and only a completeness of Divine power could have driven them out.

God not only marked the week for Israel, but the **SEVENTH MONTH** was particularly emphasized, and there were seven days in the Passover feast, and sevens are brought

before us in the feast of tabernacles. Moreover, the sprinkling of the blood was seven times; the washing in Jordan was seven times; the praising is seven times; the fire is heated seven times; Nebuchadnezzar is brought low till seven times pass over him. Now I have not the slightest doubt that in all these passages we have brought before us not only a general thought of salvation or judgment, but completeness and perfectness, an absoluteness. That is the idea hidden in the word "Seven".

Now having this acquaintance with the facts, we can consider the seventh day as it is brought before us in the Scriptures. In Gen. 2 God hallowed the seventh day because that in it He had rested; so that the division of time into weeks does NOT depend upon human arrangement; it does not depend on nature. Months are associated with the moon; years with the sun, but weeks with neither. God has stamped upon the first mark of time in Genesis the number "seven", and has thereby shown that He has a perfect right to make His arrangements, and that He can make those arrangements even apart from the various rulings of the sun and moon which He has appointed to rule the day and the night, and to be for signs and for seasons and days and years.

Then, again, we have in connection with the flood a stress upon seven days. In Gen. 7 not only does God arrange for the seven clean animals to go in, "seven" being the number of completeness here; but God marks out that there will be

seven days, and He will cause the rain to come upon the earth. In other words, there was a completeness of final waiting first. I need hardly remind some who are present that in connection with the removal of the water after the flood, we are told again more than once of a period of seven days. Noah sends forth a raven and a dove, and the latter finds no rest. He stays seven days, he sends out the dove a second time, and the dove returns with an olive leaf plucked off. He stays seven days. God has marked seven, and no French Revolution, or any other revolution, shall change what God has brought before us. Men will ever try to change times and seasons, but God is Omnipotent, and altogether glorious.

Then again, in Exodus 20 we have the seventh day, as well as in the repetition of the ten commandments in Deut. 5. The seventh day is the climax day. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work". The seventh is the sabbath unto the Lord, - no work in that. You will notice that there is no day in Israel's week beyond the sabbath. As soon as the seventh is reached, there is the coming back again to the first. Completeness! Climax! and particularly a climax with regard to rest. Again, in connection with the taking of Jericho, there is the walking round the city six days, and then on the seventh day they go round seven times, and the walls fall down flat, and everything comes into the hands of Israel, except those things which God demands shall be destroyed, and not taken for a prey to themselves. You will recollect, moreover,

that the mourning in connection with David was seven days. I have already hinted that the two special feasts of Israel's year were seven days, and therefore the last day was a climax, a seventh day. Moreover, in the investigation for leprosy we find in Lev. 13. 4, that the testing takes seven days. The one who has the plague is shut out of the camp seven days, and the seventh day is brought before us in Lev. 14. 9 with regard to the cleansing. Again, in Num. 19 we find that if a man has touched a dead body he must be sprinkled with the water from the sacrifice of the red heifer on the third day, and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even. You will recollect how, in 1 Sam. 10. 8 Samuel instructed Saul to wait seven days until he should come down, and how Saul waited nearly the whole of the seven days, and then forced himself and offered a burnt offering instead of leaving everything unto the Lord. The time of fasting at the death of Saul by the men of Jabesh-gilead, was seven days. So the seventh day was **THE CLIMAX**. Again and again, and again, this is brought before us. The seventh day, a day of completeness, and oftentimes of rest and peace and rejoicing. You will notice that as "seven" is an odd number, it has a peculiar reference to God. Hence, the Sabbath is first called, not man's Sabbath, but the Sabbath **OF THE LORD**.

We pass next to consider Revelation, and the many sevens there. It will be a healthy exercise to sit down and

write how many "sevens" one could RECOLLECT from such a book, in which there are so many. We find the seven churches likened to seven lampstands, the seven angels likened to seven stars, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven thunders, the seven vials; nor must we forget the seven Spirits of God. We have the seven, moreover, in Antichrist's travesty, and in Satan's parody of the things of God, for we read of Satan, the dragon, as having seven heads, and the beast Antichrist has seven heads, - seven heads representing seven mountains AND seven kings. In every case we get the thought of man's PEACE, but there is no peace (1 Thess. 5). So Antichrist makes a covenant for SEVEN years with Israel, but we know the broken middle and solemn end of his covenant is the Lord's arising to judgment. Ah, the Lord stops him short, for from the Lord's standpoint it is not a half and three years, but three years and a half. God cuts man short in the midst (Hab. 3.1,2). God undoes man's peace. God steps in and alters man's millennium that there may be the glorious peace of the seventh thousand years, when the Lord shall reign gloriously upon Mount Zion, even before His ancients. How bright and blessed and happy is the prospect that is brought before us. All the sevens of Revelation seem to bring before us that that book is the climax, the heading up. It is what we anticipate that Revelation is the fullest book of "seven" proportionately, throughout the Scriptures, unless we also take Leviticus and the sacrificial arrangements.

We now come to consider "seven" in connection with

chronology. Not only have we the seven days in the week, not only the seventh month of Israel's year as a deeply important one, but, furthermore, every seven years there was a sabbatical year by God's appointment. And then, just as there were seven sevens of days to lead up to Pentecost (which Israel are now professing to keep while we are gathered here, - ah, we should pray for them), - just as there were seven sevens of days, there were seven sevens of years to lead up to the Jubilee, and seventy sevens to lead up to the fuller Jubilee; for God forgives until seventy times seven, and then will choose Israel again. So we have brought before us the chronology of Scripture as nothing haphazard, but as bringing before us God's plan, God's order of all God's appointment of everything. And we have yet one more multiple of seven, not indicated in so many words, but implied. A day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and so we have the week, not of years, but of thousands of years, leading up, as we have seen, to the millennium when our beloved Lord shall come and reign gloriously, and His people shall reign with Him.

So, dear friends, we face, in every connection, seven as suggestive of perfection, completeness whether of good or bad, or that which is in itself neutral. The perfection of good, where we read, for example, of the sevenfold sprinkling; the completeness of evil, where Balak has his seven altars, or where we read that not only are six things an abomination, but that seven things are those hated by our glorious God; and a

NEUTRAL seven, used by Satan, but overruled by God, where we are told of the seven times, for example, the fire made seven times hotter. I need hardly say that the object was wicked, but the mention of the word seven there rather suggests completeness in a neutral sense.

But, oh, dear friends, it is not enough for us to learn history, not enough for us to search into the Scriptures and see their arrangement. We want a spiritual blessing. Ah, we want in connection with this spiritual blessing to go further than merely the mentions of seven; we want to gather yet other passages together, and then to ponder them all before the Lord. We are not always told where the number "seven" is used. For example, we read of the sevenfold Spirit of God in Isaiah 11. Surely Revelation looks back to this, and we see the completeness of the operations of the Spirit of God. Now all these things are brought before us to remind us, that God is not the Author of confusion, but the Author of peace, that His Words are wondrously arranged, that He Who has stamped His Word with "Sevens" and stamped nature with "seven" is the God of perfection, the Author of both nature and Scripture, which harmonize so wonderfully.

I have only fringed the subject. I have not even mentioned in explanation the very first passages to any great extent, (for example, Cain avenged sevenfold,) but almost all the passages will illustrate the great point just now before us, and oh that our hearts may be kindled with love to the Lord for all He is, and all He has done for us. Oftentimes the utterances of the Lord Jesus upon the cross of Calvary have been divided

in seven. It is possible that we should divide them into eight, but if we take the number "seven" or "eight" we have ~~contained~~ ^{combined} spiritual lessons, as elsewhere. Certain it is that He wrought a complete work which led up to resurrection, for eight is a resurrection number. He accomplished a complete work when He died for our sins; - delivered because of our offences, that we the guilty and worthless might be saved by His life and blood, and drawn into fellowship with Himself to live with Him because we are in Him for ever. Seeing that we look for God's sevens of warning and of judgment to come upon this earth, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Oh how low oftentimes is our spiritual experience, how low is our standpoint of life. Let us be aroused from our stupor. Let us wait on our God for strengthening, that we may enter more into the fulness of His will for us, that we may, now that the week has been changed in its order though not in its number of days, enter into the spiritual lesson which is now suggested - one day of rest to lead to six **WORKING** days. Completeness once more, completeness first because of the work of Christ, and then pressing forward to completeness with our obedience on that basis. Beloved friends, we need to have more of this obedience in the Spirit on the basis of the finished death and resurrection of our beloved Lord, **7** six working days; obedience because saved; more of a completeness of obedience, a completeness of love, until that day dawn when we **SHALL** enjoy a complete

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obedience and shall have a complete love by the gracious power
that is even now able to subdue all things unto our Lord Himself.
Oh that we might live victorious lives.

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