

No.  
207.

"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.

" N I N E "

*An Address (revised) at*

38, Campbell Road, Bow, E.,

9th July, 1913.

by

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" N I N E "

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,

Bow, E., 9th July, 1913.

Deut. 3. 11. Og's bedstead NINE cubits long, and four cubits the breadth after the cubit of a man. The longest bed, nine cubits. Even if the cubit of a man was shorter than the cubit of the sanctuary, I suppose this means thirteen feet at the least estimate.

Neh. 11. 1; 2 Kings 17. 6; 25. 1; Jer. 36. 22;  
Matt. 27. 45; Luke 17. 17; Acts 3. 1; 10. 3.

And so, dear friends, we have a number of passages in which the word "nine" is used, but apart from this we have nine-fold numerations, e.g. 1 Cor. 12. 9, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom (1); to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit (2); to another faith by the same Spirit (3); to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit (4); to another the working of miracles (5); to another prophecy (6); to another discerning of spirits (7); to another divers kinds of tongues (8); to another the interpretation of tongues (9). You will notice we are told four times over these gifts are by the same Spirit, speaking of a world-wide work. Here then we have a nine-fold working of the Spirit of God. I would call attention to the fact that in verses 4 - 6 we have the allusion to our Triune God. "Now there are

diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God Which worketh all in all." The fact that we have there a reference

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit would suggest that the nine has some hint of three squared, for we have the three just before it, and then the three threes. I would point out, while in this chapter, that in verse 28 we read, "Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues; - eight. That is in connection with the word "church". You will notice that where ~~where~~ there is the mention of the body we have nine. Nine is the square of three; eight is the cube of two. The word "body" particularly brings before us the idea of a manifestation of a Triune God; the "church" brings before us fellowship and witnessing; hence the cube of two. Then in verses 29 and 30 we read, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" - here we have seven, no longer nine or eight, but seven, because here the thought is of the perfection and completeness of the plan of God; seven is the idea of completeness.

Gal. 5. 22. Another nine-fold enumeration, again linked with the manifestation of the Spirit of God. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against

such there is no law". Here we have then, dear friends, brought before us the fruit of the Spirit as ninefold. Oh that we might ask ourselves if this passage pictures us. Have we love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control (as the word "temperance" means)? Oh how we fail, nor can we get these things put straight by mere manufacture or effort. There must be the fruit of the Spirit, or there is only a miserable counterfeit. Fruit is the expression of life; fruit comes from within; fruit is refreshing. Oh that we might have the FRUIT of the Spirit.

I suppose now, dear friends, that we in some measure understand what God signifies by the number "nine", remembering that every number has its Scriptural meaning. We have seen in general that the odd numbers bring before us GOD, and the even numbers particularly some work on earth. Now the number "nine" is an odd number, and as three squared it brings before us some manifestation of God, of our Triune God; but does it only bring before us the thought of a blessing? In the passages at which we have looked, we have seen blessings from our Triune God, but I do not think we can limit the number "nine" to that ~~signification~~ <sup>signification</sup>. It comes, you will notice, in between "eight" and "ten". "Eight" is the number of resurrection, "ten" is the number of a complete assembly. In between the resurrection of the redeemed and the complete assembly being manifested ruling with the Lord upon the earth, in between those two we shall find that there are

poured out judgments as manifestations of God. The book of Revelation is clear in accord with this. In between the resurrection of the saints and the manifestation of the unity that God has caused, there will be the judgment of the last hour, and nine is, I believe, not only the number for the manifestation of God's workings among His people, whether the fruit of the Spirit, or the gifts of the Spirit, but it is the number for the manifestation of the spirit of wrath.

In accord with this fact, it is interesting to notice some of the words that have been found by some to occur nine times in the Scripture. They are words, many of them, that speak of man's sin<sup>s</sup> or God's judgment upon it. The word for the abyss (ἄβυσσος) occurs nine times; the word for ungodly (ἀσεβης) nine times; the word for lasciviousness (ἀσελγεια) nine times; the word "ἐρις" for strife, nine times; the word "στασις" for confusion, nine times; the word "ψευδος" a lie, nine times; the word "ἀστραπη" lightning, nine times; the word "ἄνω" above, nine times. The word for righteous (δικαιος) occurs nine squared times, eighty one. I looked through a goodly number of words to find out these. Just as the number "nine" is RARE in Scripture, so the words that occur nine times are RARE. I found two or three had been gathered together already, but there may be a goodly number more, and some in the Hebrew Scriptures which I did not consider; yet I think we have sufficient evidence here that God has arranged that the words for "strife", and "insurrection", and a "lie", and "ungodly", and

"lasciviousness" should all come nine times. At once we feel that nine must have a further meaning than simply the manifestation of God. It seems to remind us of the sinfulness of man which necessitates that wrath. In other words, nine is a number particularly linked with the manifestation of God in judgment against that which displeases Him. Have we any help in this connection, by the relation of NINE to TEN? Yes, nine is the falling short of fellowship; nine is one short of ten. Now, every number seems to have, not only its own primary meaning, but a relation to the number above it, and indeed, the numbers surrounding it. Nine falls short of ten, as six falls short of seven. Six, as we know, is not only a completeness, but it is MAN'S work. Nine, therefore, sometimes brings before us a falling short of that which pleases God, a falling short of a fellowship-completeness. Hence it has two distinct meanings. When used of man it is sad, when used of God's wrath and God's manifestation it is peculiarly solemn in another way, referring to the factors (3 X 3).

Shall we see where it is used of man, and in this connection has reference to his sin. The first case comes to your mind again in Deut. 3. We have read about the bedstead nine cubits long; that was man's limit, nothing beyond. You will recollect how that in connection with another type of Antichrist, another giant, we are particularly told of HIS size and his power. His height was six cubits and a span. "Six" and "nine" are numbers that, with regard to man, have a certain parallel

Six is falling short of seven. Nine is falling short of ten. Furthermore, this idea of man's falling short is linked with the idea of man's completeness in evil. You say, How can a falling short be a completeness? Easily, because nine as to ten falls short, but nine is the square of three, and all squares denote completeness. The square of two, -four, implies that which is complete. Even in our English language it is so; if we speak of anything as "fair and square", we imply that it is fixed and satisfactory. Thus the number "nine" implies a completeness of man's iniquity, and the highest height that man could reach. In accord with this, all those who lived great ages in Gen. 5, died in the nine hundreds; no one reached the thousand, no one reached the cube of ten; they all FELL SHORT of it. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and he died; another one lives nine hundred and sixty two years; yea, nine hundred and sixty nine years; but no one over the thousand. The majority lived for NINE hundred. "Nine", therefore, is man's zenith, man's completeness, and then man dies. In this connection it is interesting to notice that nine went to live in other cities, and one out of ten of the Israelites lived at Jerusalem. But to live at Jerusalem then was the unpopular thing, for they blessed the men that willingly offered themselves to live there. Hence, the nine were, apparently, the more selfish; the one out of the ten was especially God's portion. This was so with regard to the tithing also. The tithes of Israel gave one part in ten particularly to God, the nine parts remained for men. Hence

the number "nine" became indicative of what man had for himself. Further, there were ten lepers cured, a picture of an assembly. Only ONE returned to give thanks, but where were the nine? The nine did not return. They went on their own way; they were healed by grace, but we cannot say that they heard the gracious words "Thy faith hath saved thee". The nine were, in this way, a failure: the one out of the ten was specially marked as belonging to God. Jabin the king of Hazor, King round about the north of Galilee, had as his captain Sisera, - He mightily oppressed Israel with nine hundred chariots. Here was man's climax, and this one was the first of the kings specially of the land of Palestine who oppressed them. Chushanrishathaim, and Eglon, king of Moab, who had oppressed them before, were kings from outside districts, but Jabin was, as the passage clearly shows, a king of CANAAN who had an army at Harosheth which was evidently in part of Galilee. He had nine hundred chariots. In this connection, dear friends, I feel there is a wonderful force with regard to the dates of the destruction of Jerusalem, and also of Israel, the ten tribes, going into captivity. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the kingdom of Israel came to an end. In the ninth year of Zedekiah the king, Nebuchadnezzar began his victorious campaign that ended in the taking of the city. You remember the verse in 2 Kings 25. 1, reads, "In the NINTH year of Zedekiah's reign, in the TENTH month, in the TENTH day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against Jerusalem and pitched against it. Again, the taking of

Jerusalem was on the ninth day of the fourth month. To this day Israel connect the NINTH day of a month with judgment. So here we have the ninth day of the fourth month. "Nine" therefore suggests man's climax, and God's judgment being poured out.

Are you surprised, dear friends, that God has recorded our beloved Lord's hanging on the cross "till the ninth hour"? He would bear OUR judgment, bear the wrath we deserved. It was at the ninth hour He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Do not say, Oh that was the hour of prayer, and that is all. It is blessedly true, it WAS the hour of prayer, and so just as our Lord was crucified in the morning hour of prayer, and prayed a beautiful prayer then, "Father, forgive them", He associated certain other prayers with the evening hour of prayer; for we are told at the ninth hour He prayed, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" AGAIN, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit". He prayed at the hours of prayer, but that is not all the teaching. It is delightful to see Christ picking out the hour of prayer when He was crucified, and the hour of prayer when He died, to make manifest His prayers, - His prayers linked with His meritorious sacrifice; both alike were acceptable unto the Father. But it is not only that. Why did God arrange the third hour and the ninth hour to be the hour of prayer? There was a wondrous lesson wrapped up in this. Do you say, Oh, God meant six hours between, as if to show us there was to be a complete work before prayer was acceptable. That is true. The six hours pictured, moreover, Christ's hanging on the

cross and a complete work glorifying God "on the earth", for on the sixth day He died, and for six hours He was hanging on the cross. Everything was beautifully arranged with a Divine wisdom. I suppose that our beloved Lord was about six times six hours in the grave, but we would not speculate when God does not state. There was a wondrous arrangement of it all, to show the work was complete and done and finished; never to be undone, never to be altered. We can never exhaust all the hours and moments, and lessons of details from our beloved Lord's death. But there was more than that when God arranged the third hour as the hour of prayer, and when He arranged the ninth hour. He was teaching something from the very numbers. "Three" is the number that suggests a Triune God, and it is only in Christ and by the Spirit that we have access unto the Father. "Nine" is the number of judgment, and Christ dying at the ninth hour brings before us, as we have seen, the fact that He took our judgment, and that our prayers are only acceptable because judgment has fallen on Him, because He took our place;- and thus we approach our Triune God in the Name of Him Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

And so, dear friends, all the "nines" of Scripture have a suggestive lesson for us, but oh that the Lord may teach us to be more than HEAD students. This subject is a very precious one, but I cannot hide the fact that I am always afraid of our studies, - nearly as afraid of studies as of ignorance. Ignorance is Satan's opportunity, AND studies are Satan's

opportunities too. Unless you and I, by the grace of our God, are brought to realise, as a fact in our heart, in a way that affects our whole life, the inspiration of the Scriptures, all the knowledge about the beauties will be only so much addition to our mental store, and there will be no "fruit". Dear friends, I long, and I am sure you long, that God should have something from our meeting together, that God should have worship, and that GOD should be well-pleased. God does not seek for clever persons, but for obedient disciples. It is true that our brains are **PART** of the living sacrifice that we should present to Him, but our brains must not be our rulers; they are part of that body which must be led in subjection that we may please God with the whole frame, and please Him in a costly way, for a sacrifice is always feeling, and a living sacrifice involves the thought, I suppose, in its fulness, of a living strain. Not that we are to be away from that perfect peace that God gives. The Holy Spirit shows a/ wondrous blending. The world will misunderstand it, but I suppose that we are to enjoy the deepest peace and the greatest pain at the same time. Oh, how we fall short of this. May the Lord lay hold of us with His truth this evening, and when we think that we deserved judgment, and that the story of Og king of Bashan is not only put there to give us a piece of history, but to remind us how men's sins lead to wrath, and how vain is man's mighty power: - Og is now **FEELING AGONY** from which he will never have escape: - Oh, if our hearts only realize this, how solemn will the whole of the book of Scripture seem, and how we

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shall live to the praise of the glory of God's grace as those who search in order to learn, and learn in order to live, and all in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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