

No.  
208.

"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.

" T E N . "

*An Address (revised) at*

38, Campbell Road, Bow, E.,

23rd July, 1913.

by

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" T E N "

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward,

Bow, 23rd July, 1913.

Daniel 1 read.

I did not read this passage, dear friends, to bring before us primarily the trials of God's people, nor to emphasize the value of a purposeful heart, nor indeed to show that if we trust God with our life, He will graciously control far more than we may expect; but I rather read because it contained several "tens", and will help us in our study of this deeply important number. Will you turn to the following passages also, 1 Sam. 25. 5 "And David sent out TEN young men, and David said unto the young man, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name". 2 Sam. 18. 15, "And TEN young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about, and smote Absalom and slew him". Ten seems the "smallest" number in the following passages, - I mean the smallest complete number in connection with the subject under consideration. Gen. 18. 32, "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure TEN shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for TEN'S sake". Exod. 18. 21-25, "Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands and rulers of hundreds, rulers of

fifties, and rulers of TENS".

I need not mention that TEN TIMES sometimes denotes a completeness. "Thou hast changed my wages ten times". "They have tempted Me" says the Lord concerning Israel in the wilderness "these ten times" - a completeness of Israel's testing of One Who bore so graciously with them, and suffered their manners in the wilderness. In Neh. 4. 12 we read, "They said unto us TEN TIMES", and in Job 19. 3 "These TEN TIMES have ye reproached me; ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me". Several times an instrument of TEN strings is mentioned in the Psalms. Ps. 33.2 92.3; 144.9.

The "tens" of the tabernacle might next be noticed, the ten commandments on the two tables of stone. The ten curtains of the tabernacle itself; the ten cubits each way, of the holiest of all, including the fact that the boards were ten cubits high. Necessarily, therefore, the veils in the tabernacle were "ten by ten" in cubits. TEN in prophecy is interesting. We read in Zechariah 8. 23 of TEN men out of all nations of the earth taking hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew. In Dan. 2 we have the TEN toes. In Daniel 7 we have brought before us ten horns, and in Rev. 12 we have the great red dragon with ten horns, and in 13.1 the beast has ten horns. "Ten" in the life of Christ is deeply interesting ~~important~~, having three parabolic occurrences. Matt. 25 brings before us the TEN virgins, Luke 15 the TEN pieces of silver, Luke 19 the TEN servants of whom the most diligent earned ten pounds, or changed his one pound into ten. Luke 17 is another

occurrence, where we have ten lepers cleansed.

Now, beloved friends, we have had brought before us a few passages. Have we not enough, by the grace of God, to serve as a basis for drawing certain inferences? I think we have. First of all, ten as an EVEN number is often connected with God's arrangement of the things of earth. I do not mean that it is earthly in a bad sense, but the odd numbers seem rather to bring before us God, and the even numbers suggest the earth. There may be the thought of a perfect work on earth, which is sometimes wrapped up in the number six, though it also shows the sad contrast elsewhere. A resurrection out from earth is included in the number eight. But even numbers often have something to do with earth. My own belief is that if we take the numbers in order we get wondrous teaching. First the even numbers, and then it may be the odd numbers. Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve, - I will not go further. As you know twelve is a climax number. Ten in one sense is a climax, for it begins the TWO figures ( 10 ). We cannot get away from the arrangement of everything in tens. At ten we begin two figures, and we know very well that not only in our own writing, but in others, ten is thus the beginning of a new series. We count afterwards by tens. The Hebrews did the same. This seems marked by God. I would not say that all the decimal arrangements are appointed by God. Certainly there was a grievous error when, at the French revolution, men tried to alter the week to ten days instead of God's appointment of seven.

but God has stamped ten very largely on arrangements of arithmetic.

Now shall we take the even numbers? Two - witness; four - a world-wide plan, both earthly. Six - finished work; eight - resurrection; ten - fellowship of an assembly; twelve - governmental perfection. Let us humbly seek the Divine teaching. God has sent forth (a) a witness (b) to all the world concerning (c) a finished work followed by (d) a glorious resurrection which binds together (e) the people of God in a unity that they may also share afterwards in (f) the coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus. There you have the Gospel set forth in the very ORDER of the numbers. You see if you turn the order of the six, eight, ten, twelve, you lose it all. Righteousness of life, Christ's finished work, resurrection, then the fellowship of saints in one glorious company, AND twelve - the governmental perfection.

Take, too, the odd numbers. God Who is One and yet Triune (one and three), has in wondrous grace (five) provided peace (seven) by the blood of the cross of the Lord Jesus, but APART from that there is judgment (nine) which, when it has been revealed, will be followed by blessing for Israel and worship in His gracious arrangement (eleven). After that the eternal wrath of God (thirteen). I am anticipating as to eleven and thirteen. Here we have then brought before us that God has wondrous teaching wrapped up in all the numbers.

Shall we take all the numbers, without taking them in their two parts? God Who is One has graciously given a witness <sup>(2)</sup> by which we know that He is Triune. <sup>(3)</sup> He has sent forth into the

earth<sup>(4)</sup> the testimony of His grace dealing with law<sup>(5)</sup> that has shown us there is a finished work<sup>(6)</sup> by which there is peace<sup>(7)</sup>, peace through the blood, and union with the Lord Jesus in resurrection<sup>(8)</sup>. To despise this is to seek judgment<sup>(9)</sup>, but those who are brought to believe in it will be in a wondrous unity of all the redeemed<sup>(10)</sup> in the marriage supper of the Lamb when Israel will be blessed also<sup>(11)</sup>, and there will be the setting up of God's kingdom with heavenly perfection upon this earth.<sup>(12)</sup>

It is no accident, beloved friends, that God has stamped His Gospel on the numbers, and the very order of the numbers. Everything is full of instruction to those who are believers. You will say, But how do we know that ten is the number of an assembly, the number of a gathering? You may ask, Is not that ~~a~~ only a Jewish idea? Nay, the Jewish idea is partly deduced from the very Scripture. They will not have certain meetings without a minimum number of ten. Ten is the <sup>typical</sup> number<sup>incomplete</sup> of a gathering, the number of a fellowship of the Lord's people. But, one may ask, How does that account for some of the tens of the earlier Scriptures? How does that account for the wages changed ten times? and so forth. I am not sure it does account for it. When we say there is a general aspect of a number, there is no reason that that should be the ONLY aspect of that number. We know but parts of God's ways. Rather, I am inclined to think, the Holy Spirit has recorded this expression "TEN TIMES", - the Holy Spirit has recorded it somewhat in the same way as we use the expression "ten times", indicating a completeness. It is beyond

the nine, it reaches the double numbers, and perhaps on this account God has made ten the number of the fellowship of His people, because it is manifestly a complete number. There are VARIOUS completenesses. Six is the number of a complete work. Seven is the number of a completeness of rest and peace. Ten, the number of a completeness as to fellowship, and twelve the number of a completeness of government. There are different completenesses, different aspects of completeness. So that "ten times" involves the thought of a LARGE number, in certain cases. Ten women would bake their bread in one oven, says Lev. 26. In such a context ten is a large number. It means that there will be a bringing together unto ONE oven of those who would normally have separate homes of their own. But, for the very same reason, ten may be a small number in other contexts. If you have a ruler, you expect to have more than ten under him. If he has only ten, it is the smallest number. We can understand how this fits in again. The gathering of the redeemed is a large number that no man can number, but the words sound forth "Fear not, little flock". The Lord is a Ruler of ten, but there is also brought before us the idea of a completeness.

The tens of the tabernacle I need not pause long to consider. They bring before us the Lord's dear people. All tabernacles numbers are suggestive of Christ, and His own. The ten nations give us Satan's gynagogue, Satan's gathering, and emphasize the thought that ten is the fellowship number, even in evil. I do not mean in the same way as two. Two is the

smallest number of fellowship and friendship, and it brings before us either two individual believers, or Jews and Gentiles or, perhaps it may, in some places, bring before us the thought of two assemblies, and two witnesses; but ten is a number far larger, it indicates a fellowship, not merely of two individuals, not merely viewed as subsisting between Jew and Gentile, one in Christ, but made of more units, denoting they are a complete company, gathered out from various parts. It is that complete company, that complete temple of God, of which the topstone is brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace, unto it; and five plus five makes ten, - grace, grace, unto it, for the complete work has the FOUNDATION of grace. This aspect of ten is very clear in the parables. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins. The ten pieces of silver which the woman possesses, picture the church. The ten servants of Luke 19 are equally suggestive of the professing people of God. So whether we think of this number ten with regard to the tabernacle types, or a contrast with Antichrist's army, or in connection with the instrument of ten strings in the Psalms, it brings before us the harmony of a goodly number. Harmony in evil, alas, we find in Antichrist's army, as Rev. 17 emphasizes. Harmony in truth, we find among the redeemed. Oh if only the church had remained an instrument of ten strings, how blessedly would it have continued, but discord came in; yet there shall be the instrument of ten strings. We look forward to the time when our Lord will yet present to Himself the church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,

and then there will be glory unto Him in the church. The instrument will have no broken strings. It will have no discord. The tuning will be perfect, and the harmony will be unforced, and it is blessed to realise that this is going to be produced on earth. I do not mean that WE have an earthly calling, but that the Lord's people are sharing His glory to be in a heavenly position IN SIGHT OF the earth (of. the Heavenly Jerusalem). It is beautiful to realise, furthermore, that He is about to show in the earth the rewards of His faithful people; in this earth where they, like unto Himself, were rejected, will He make manifest that they are glorified together with Himself. Oh how blessed to realise ourselves by grace in that vast company for which He sovereignly and perfectly died, to realise that we are made one with Him, and are united one to another.

There are various views of the Lord's dear people. You recollect how in connection with the types of the Lord and His people we have some types in which they are seen as one. For example, the laver brings before us a oneness of object. The cherubim, still more closely, are of one piece with the mercy seat. Believers are also seen as two, - the two cherubim. We remember the two rows of shewbread, (God's provision), and the two sides of the lampstand (fellowship in united worship). When you see saints in their oneness, the thought is a oneness in and with Christ. Two-ness brings before us fellowship and witness. When the Lord's people are viewed in six-ness as with regard to the three branches on each side of the centre shaft of

the lampstand, they are viewed as accepted through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus unto death, and joined with Him in resurrection. When we have the number ten, the thought is not only fellowship, but an executive fellowship. Ten was the number of a gathering able to act. It was, if I may so put it, the quorum. It was the smallest possible number that could act in certain circumstances and arrangements. I do not mean that God has decreed that no assembly of His should have less than ten people, - although I do think Scripture suggests in Matt.18 that it is <sup>normally</sup> almost impossible to carry through the <sup>displeasur</sup> arrangements of an assembly with a <sup>small</sup> less number, - but what I would bring before you is that this is, at least, the typical teaching. We have ten men in fellowship to ACT, as Ruth 4. 2 shows. Boaz calls aside ten men of the elders of the city that they may act in fellowship. Two is the number of fellowship, but rather viewed simply as bare fellowship or witness. It is NOT an executive number, it is not a church viewed as a house or city, but ten is. Ten implies an executive completeness, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

We pass on further to receive fuller emphasis from other related numbers. What is twelve? It is ten and two added. Now two, as we have seen, is oftentimes the number of WITNESS. When the Lord shall give a complete gathering together of His own, and they will be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the next thing will be the manifestation of their witness. They shall be seen with Him in governmental arrangement,  $10 + 2 = 12$ .  $10 \times 4$  gives us the number 40. The forties of Scripture I will

seek to deal with another time. They involve a completeness of earthly testing.  $10 \times 7$  is interesting. Israel said there were seventy nations. There were about seventy in the sanhedrim, and Christ with reference to the seventy nations chose seventy others, as well as the twelve apostles, to go forth before His face. I believe there was the link of the lessons of <sup>ten and</sup> seven multiplied together in that wondrous work. 120 is remarkable in Acts 1.  $10 \times 10 \times 10$  gives us the climax of fellowship, - the size of the holiest of all, that part of the tabernacle which had length, breadth and height equal, and therefore suggested Eph. 3, where we read of a coming to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, - with ABL saints, for there the fullest unity is brought before us. The new Jerusalem has length, breadth and height, and they are all equal.  $10 \times 10 \times 10$  gives us in its result the number one thousand. It is a number as to which every MAN fell short, if only by thirty one years. It is a number that brings before us the millennial kingdom of our beloved Lord when His people's fellowship, His people's unity, will be so wondrously manifest.

It is rather interesting to notice a few more tens on closing. Adam to Noah - ten persons, Noah being the tenth. This is not a matter of slight interest, for Noah typifies, I suppose, the church, and God informs us of Enoch that Enoch was the SEVENTH from Adam, therefore it is important to notice what position EACH man has with regard to Adam. Abraham leads us on another ten, and thus we find another type of the redeemed, for

we are blessed WITH believing Abraham. The redemption money which speaks of fellowship was TEN gerahs, being the HALF shekel. Of necessity the tithe which denoted fellowship was the tenth. It has been pointed out that the word "laver" (and the laver suggests the assembly of the redeemed) occurs ten times in the books of Moses, and ten times in the books of Kings and Chronicles with regard to the temple.

These things all indicate that God's book is no human plan, no human contrivance; but perfect, without error, without incompleteness. It is not for us to come to teach the Bible what it ought to say, but to learn what God has said; but O dear friends, how we need that quieting of the Spirit of God that we may indeed HEAR the voice of God through the Scriptures. It is easy, comparatively easy, to be clever. It is easy, comparatively easy, to be active; but it is not natural to be spiritual. O that God may apply the truth to our hearts, that we may not only go away saying, I have learned some fresh facts, but rather, I have learned something more of MY LORD - in order to walk with Him. It is for us to realise how dear to God's heart unity is. How sad disunity must be! There is a pleasure when we meet together to talk of the things of God, but what are we? A few handfuls in a vast city, and there are myriads who bear the name of the Lord, and they will not come together to consider His truth; they will not come to ponder why believers are disunited. Surely our hearts must feel grieved over this, that we, saved by grace, may seek after the unity which God causes, and be of one mind that we may be in our

measure among ourselves, an instrument of ten strings unto our God, that HE may play any tune He pleases, and that all our lives, incomplete without one another, but blessedly united, - that all our lives may become harmonious worship and delightful praise, in the Holy Spirit, while we look for our Coming Lord.

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