

The Genius of God in our World

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The picture of the twelve disciples on the cover of this booklet is one from antiquity — the four most prominent disciples of Jesus (Peter, Andrew, James & John) are all on the front row; Peter and John are the two middle figures (cf. Mk 13:3; Jn 1:40-44; 6:8; 12:22; Lk 6:14; 9:28; Acts 1:13). Once you read this study you will understand the significance of the picture I chose to place on the cover. The purpose of this study is to give understanding to the “*working of God in our world*,” that we as believers might live life with greater appreciation and surety and confidence as to what God is doing in our lives and in our world. It is this “*personal application*” for the believer that is foremost in my thinking. As a launching pad into this subject, I thought it fitting to first look at the created order from the world of science, and then focus on the practical outworking of God’s plan in our world. The *premise* of science is that we live in an “*intelligible universe*” (not a chaotic one)... that we live in a cause and effect universe (every action has a cause)... that the universe operates according to fixed laws... and that all processes operate within the framework of the first and second laws of thermodynamics. The principles and the laws of thermodynamics embrace all scientific processes in all scientific disciplines, and are recognized by the scientific world as being universal in scope and applicability. That these two laws are called “*laws*,” is to understand that everything in the physical universe always operates in accord with these laws... of all the seemingly endless number of actions in the universe, *never once* has anyone observed an aberration or reversal of either of these two laws at any level). According to *the first law*, nothing in the physical realm is now being created or destroyed; even though things may change forms, *ultimately nothing ever ceases to exist*. The operation of this principle apparently dates from the very end of the period of creation (cf. Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:11; Is 40:26; Heb 4:3, 10; et. al.). According to *the second law*, all things tend to decay and die; i.e., *everything is in a state of decline* (this is also known as the law of entropy). This law evidently dates from the imposition of God’s Curse upon the created order immediately after the Fall (cf. Gen 3:17; Ps 102:25-27; Is 40:6-8; Rom 8:20-22; et. al.).

It was at the Fall of Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden that *death and decay* entered into God’s perfect universe — this condition will continue as it presently exists until the physical universe is ultimately destroyed (cf. 2 Pet 3:7). The apostle Peter says, “*the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up*” (2 Pet 3:10)... “*we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells*” (2 Pet 3:13). Scripture teaches that “*God will create all things new at the end of the age; for the first heaven and the first earth will pass away*” (Rev 21:1). Behold, declares the Lord God of heaven, “*I am making all things new!*” (Rev 21:5); the word “*new*” there is *emphatic!* Incidentally, the entire created order eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God and looks forward to that day when it will be *delivered from its slavery to futility and corruption* (cf. Rom 8:19-22); *likewise we as believers groan within ourselves and eagerly wait for the redemption of our physical bodies* (Rom 8:23). Though the world of science doesn’t know “*the reason why everything is in a state of degeneration*,” it is in total agreement that the entire physical universe is in a state of degeneration (because that has been substantiated by the scientific method)... and as such has *rightly concluded that the material universe is not something that has always existed* (as many renowned scientists claimed just a few short years ago; including the late Carl Sagan), because if the material universe was indeed eternal, it would have already entered into a stag-

nant, energyless, dead state in eternity past (which obviously it has not)... therefore the world of science has concluded that the universe must have had a beginning not more than 15 billion years ago — this conviction has ultimately resulted in the “*big bang theory*.”

To expand briefly on these two laws of nature, let me quote the most prolific science writer in America during the 20th century, humanistic chemist *Isaac Asimov* — he defines the *first law* as follows: “Energy can be *transferred* from one place to another, or *transformed* from one form to another, but it can be neither created or destroyed; [thus] the total quantity of energy in the universe is *constant*. This law is considered the most powerful and most fundamental generalization about the universe that scientists have ever been able to make. [With that in mind,] the world of science operates under the premise that we live in a universe in which existing entities are always conserved, never created or annihilated.” Regarding the *second law*, Asimov says: “No device can deliver work unless there is a difference in energy concentration within the system, no matter how much total energy is used.... [so] another way of stating the second law is this: The universe is constantly getting more disorderly... [ultimately] everything deteriorates, collapses, breaks down, wears out, all by itself” (the foregoing quotes are from the “*Smithsonian*,” June, 1970, p. 6). Though no one can explain “*why*” these two laws are universally true, these two principles are accepted by the scientific community as foundational to the operation of the universe.

The world’s most prominent scientist in the 20th century, *Albert Einstein*, said, “The most incomprehensible fact of nature is the fact that *nature is comprehensible*” (*American Scientist* 65; July-August, 1977, p. 405). Einstein believed the most incredible thing about the universe was that it is *intelligible* (reflect upon the ramifications of that statement). Another renowned physicist and mathematician, *P. A. M. Dirac*, said: “One of the fundamental features of nature [is that] physical laws are described in terms of a mathematical theory of great beauty and power, needing quite a high standard of mathematics for one to understand it. [Though one may wonder why that indeed is the case], one can only answer that that is simply the way nature is constructed.... One could perhaps describe the situation by saying that God is a mathematician of a very high order, and He used very advanced mathematics in constructing the universe. Our feeble attempts at mathematics enable us to understand a bit of the universe, and as we proceed to develop higher and higher mathematics we can hope to understand the universe better” (*Scientific American* 208, May, 1963, p. 53). When one equates the created order with mathematical genius, in actuality he is describing its foundations as being *incredibly brilliant, coherent, exacting and perfect*. Albert Einstein said, “The scientist is possessed by the sense of *universal causation* [incidentally, that is the essence of science]... His religious feeling takes the form of a *rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law*, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is *an utterly insignificant reflection*” (cf. *The World Treasury of Religious Quotations*; New York: Garland Books, 1966, p. 839). The purpose in quoting the respected thinking of mere men is to illicit a sense of “*awe*” at the majestic, magnificent genius of God displayed throughout the created order of the cosmos. Though we can only scratch the surface of God’s brilliance regarding the ways in which He runs the universe, it is our continued amazement at *the absolute perfection of things* that is so astonishing to human thought. The man who closes his mind to the ways of God, according to Scripture, is an empty-headed fool, whose thoughts are meaningless nonsense (cf. Ps 10:3-4; 14:1). When dealing with the genius of God it is always important to remember that “*God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways; as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts higher than our*

thoughts” (Is 55:8-9). When you respect the transcendent greatest of God’s ways, you will find your soul high and lifted up (cf. Ps 138:6; Prov 3:34; Mt 23:12; Rom 1:18-22; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5-6).

Let me comment briefly on *this incredible planet* upon which God placed us on the sixth day of creation. Much of the material in the next four paragraphs was taken from studies done by *The Institute for Creation Research* in southern California, a very respected group of Christian scholars and scientists. Remember, as Christians we are not simply trying to muddy the water for evolutionary science... no, *our goal is to see things as they really are, without letting our innate bias control the discourse.* That should be the goal of every person on earth, regardless of what side they may profess to be on – even those scientists in our world who are not Christians, if they have any integrity (which all scientists who are worth their salt have), they should be into seeing things as they really are, and if it conflicts with what they may have previously believed, be willing to altar their thinking on the matter. I quote a number of the world’s great scientists on this matter in a study I did titled “*Ultimate Reality*” – you can check it out on my website at: www.TheTransformedSoul.com. If for some reason we could *disprove the integrity of Scripture* (which we can’t if indeed it is true), then we could turn our attention to other issues that we truly believe are true. Without an open, honest, transparent look at reality, *our faith* would not nearly be as credible as it is... we don’t study things fearing that we are going to discover some “*new truth*” that will make everything we have believed untrue. By definition, truth is unchangeable, so as God’s people we should rejoice in the truth and seek to discover the wonder and fullness of it. With that in mind, let’s take a look at some of the operational dynamics of this wonderful planet God designed for us to inhabit – remember, we are not loading the deck with a bunch of trivia... we are simply taking a look at unadulterated truth. Regarding this incredible planet on which we live, the vast majority of scientists tell us that there is no other known planet that is covered with green vegetation, enormous blue-green oceans containing over a million islands, hundred of thousands of streams and rivers, huge land masses called continents, mountains, ice caps, and deserts. Keeping that in mind, some form of life is found in virtually every ecological niche on the earth’s surface – from the apex of the atmosphere to the bottom of the oceans, from the coldest part of the poles to the warmest part of the equator, *life thrives on our planet*, and there is no evidence whatsoever that life exists on any other planet. On average the earth is 93 million miles from the sun – *if the earth traveled a little faster* in its 584,000,000 mile journey around the sun, it would distance itself from the sun, and all life on this beautiful planet would be destroyed... *if the earth traveled slightly slower* in its orbit, then the earth would move closer to the sun, and all life would also perish. The reality is this: the earth orbits around the sun just under 67,000 miles per hour; so essentially it travels 1,600,000 miles a day. How fast is that? It would be like traveling from Los Angeles to New York City in three minutes. If the *average temperature* on earth’s surface throughout the course of a year changed by only a few degrees, much of the life that exists on it would eventually roast or freeze. If the earth *rotated slower on its axis*, all life would die in time, either by freezing at night or burning up during the day.

Of all *the energy the sun gives off*, less than one-half of one percent of its daily output strikes our planet. Every day the sun provides the earth with energy estimated at over 239 trillion horsepower – that’s 1,000 times 239,000,000,000 horsepower). Furthermore, even though there are *over one billion galaxies in the universe*, each containing 100 billion stars, there is only “*one atom*” for every 88 gallons of space, which means the vast majority of the universe (which is unbelievably large) is basically empty. If the *moon* was much larger or closer to the earth, huge tides would result and overflow onto the lowlands and erode the mountains. Likewise, *if the*

earth was not tilted 23 degrees on its axis, we would no longer have four seasons, and without seasons life would soon die off. The reality is this: “*just a little change*” in the perspective of the universe would render the earth unsuitable to support life.

The earth is the only known planet with *huge bodies of water*... seventy percent of its surface area consists of oceans, lakes, and seas surrounding huge bodies of land. Scientists believe the few other planets that may have water contain *only moisture floating as vapor* on their surface. *Water is unique* in that it can absorb enormous amounts of heat without a large alteration in its temperature. Its heat absorption level is about ten times as great as steel. During the day, the earth's bodies of water rapidly *absorb* enormous amounts of heat – thus the earth stays relatively cool... at night, they *release* the vast amounts of heat that they absorbed during the day, which combined with atmospheric effects, keeps most of the surface from freezing solid at night. If it were not for the incredible amount of water on earth, far greater day and night temperature variations would exist – hot enough to *boil water* during the day, and cold enough to completely *freeze water* at night. Because water is an excellent temperature stabilizer, the large oceans on earth are vital for life to exist on our planet. Because of the way water responds to atmospheric conditions, it ensures that the vast majority of the ocean stays in a liquid form, thus allowing the thousand upon thousands of different water creatures to live.

The *atmospheric air* close to the earth's surface is heated by light energy from the sun, and after the air is warmed it becomes less dense and rises upward. The result is that the air near the earth's surface maintains a temperature in which life can exist – because air on the earth's surface rises when heated, life is not destroyed. The movement of warm air from the surface rising upward creates “*air currents*” (winds), which are a critical part of the earth's ecological system. They carry away carbon dioxide from areas that overproduce it (cities), and move oxygen to areas in need of it (large population areas). The exact mixture of gases found in the atmosphere (not contaminated by human pollution) is perfect for life. If the levels of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and other gases were much different life would cease to exist on our planet. The foregoing is just a miniscule amount of data that reflects the genius of God in constructing our planet and making it inhabitable. Should you care to study these issues in more detail, volumes have been written on this subject by scientists all over the world.

A few years ago I was watching a show on PBS television about the *effects of lightning* on our planet. I found it absolutely fascinating, especially because of my belief that *GOD* is the one who is at the controls in our world. Let me share a few facts with you – every day there are some *2000 storms* active on our planet at any given instant. Scientists tell us that there are some *8,000,000 lightning flashes* that strike the earth every day (apparently about half of them are invisible according to Popular Science magazine); the approximate diameter of a lightning-bolt channel is about *one-half an inch*, and the temperature inside the lightning-bolt is about *50,000 degrees Fahrenheit* (roughly five times hotter than the sun). A typical lightning bolt carries *100,000,000 volts of electricity*. Essentially, lightning is an atmospheric electrical discharge that is created in clouds that contain lighter positively-charged ice crystals in their upper portion, and heavier negatively-charged water droplets in their base. One of the significant things accomplished in our world by lightning is that of *fertilizing our planet*. Our atmosphere consists of approximately 70% nitrogen, but this nitrogen exists in a form that plant life cannot use, and there is where lightning comes in to play. Let me explain – our bodies need protein, and proteins contain nitrogen. The air we breathe has plenty of nitrogen to satisfy our needs, but

it is not available to us in the form in which we need it. The only way we can get nitrogen is from the plants we eat, or from the animals we eat that eat the plants. A nitrogen molecule in the air consists of two atoms which are held very tightly together... in order for us to absorb nitrogen, the two atoms must be separated, which again is where lightning comes in. In a thunderstorm, there is enough electrical energy in lightning to separate the nitrogen atoms in the air... and once they are separated they can fall to earth with rain water, and combine with minerals in the soil to form "*nitrates*" (a type of fertilizer) — remember some 8,000,000 lightning flashes strike the earth every day. The nitrogen-containing nitrates in the soil are absorbed by the plants, and when we eat the plants or animals which eat the plants, we get the nitrogen in a form that our bodies can use; incidentally, without nitrogen, all life on our planet would die. One further note: lightning also produces "*ozone*," a vital gas in our atmosphere that helps shield the planet from rays of harmful ultraviolet sunlight.

Again, this world (universe) in which we live is "*an intelligible one at the highest level*" ... nothing within it is chaotic and without understanding. That should not be surprising to the believer, because foundational to his faith is believing that the eternal all-knowing God is the author of all that exists, and to think that He would somehow just throw things together in a haphazard manner is to completely throw one's brain out the window. **James A. Moncrieff** states the following axiom in his book, "*The Scientific Structure of the Universe*" — "As God is perfect, the universe which He has formed must be perfect, and consequently must be constructed of *perfect geometric figures*, arranged in *perfect geometric order*; an arrangement which cannot be altered or improved." Similarly, the *psalmist David* said, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims His handiwork" (Ps 19:1). The first thought God communicated to the human family in His Word is this: "In the beginning *GOD* (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth." And as the apostle John writes, "All things came into being through Him; apart from Him *nothing* (emphatic!) came into being" (Jn 1:3). "By Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible... all things have been created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and *in Him all things consist*" (Col 1:16-17; Rom 11:36). Just as *GOD* brought all things into existence in the created realm (i.e., all matter, space, time, creatures and life), so *GOD* is actively involved in the world in which we live. Contrary to some, *GOD* did not lay down His tools after the six days of creation and wander off into interstellar space... though He is no longer making changes to the created order, *He is actively involved in the lives of those creatures He made in His image, and is superintending the circumstances and events that are taking place in our world*. The question is, how "*active*" is God in our world? Was He simply active in the lives of men up until the formation of the first century Church... and will resume being active again at the end of the age in the Millennium? or is He also active during the present age in which we live? In the following sections I hope to answer that question for you.

The Calendar of God

God is a stickler when it comes to time, events, and their meaning. His calendar is marked in the stars, kept by the moon, observed by the sun, and ordered in the rotation of the earth (for our benefit). All of His important dates are written in advance, His feasts, celebrations, Sabbaths, and epoch changing events. The *prophet Daniel* said: "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is

in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him” (Dan 2:21-22). The *magi from the east* in the days of King Herod said, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him” (Mt 2:2) — obviously God placed a “*supernatural sign*” in the heavens that a great and unprecedented world leader was about to arise, so the magi went to seek Him out; Scripture does not explain exactly what that sign was. Likewise the *apostle Paul* said in his address to the Athenians, “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth, and does not live in temples made by human hands; neither is He served by human beings as though He needed anything, for this God is the One who gives life and breath and everything else to people. He began by making one person, and from him came every nation of people that dwells on the face of the earth. God is the One who determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, and that they should seek Him that they might find Him, for He is not far from any of us [this incredible God is actively involved in the lives of every member of the human family... His eyes are upon everyone of them... none of us dwells outside the care of our maker... and He is always attentive to our needs and is ready to open our heart to the truth when we ourselves before Him]. *In Him we live and move and exist*, just as even some of your own poets have said, ‘*For we are His children*’” (Acts 17:24-28). One of the amazing things about human beings is their reluctance to reverently stand in awe of their Creator, believe everything He has said, and place their trust in Him; sadly, even believers are prone to disregarding some of His declarations and explain them away because they appear to be too far fetched and too ethereal. Keep reading and you’ll begin to see the genius of our Creator in and through His creation.

God calls us to remember His past appointments. He knew the Hebrews would be in bondage for 400 years in Egypt, and the precise day His deliver *Moses* would stand before Pharaoh, demanding that he let God’s people go. He let *Daniel* peek at His appointment book to see the great world empires that would arrive, each in its own season, to rule the earth and govern its people (Dan 2). He appointed 70 weeks of years (i.e., 490 years) for the Jewish nation, divided into precise sequences, that foretold the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the death of Messiah, and the coming of antichrist (read Dan 9:24-27). He planned for the “*fullness of times*” (Gal 4:4) when He would make manifest His Son to the world — at a time when the Jewish religious leaders were ripe with hardness of heart... when His people were like sheep without a shepherd... when the Roman Empire was at its height with its technology, justice, roadways, culture and language. I am always amazed when I reflect upon the “*language*” God chose to use to communicate divine truth to the world in the first century — *koine Greek* (i.e., the language of the common people) was spoken throughout the entire Roman Empire back then... it is the most exacting language ever devised and spoken in our world. The grammatical verb structure and the ability to place extra emphasis upon particular thoughts & words, and give greater clarity and deeper insight into concepts and principles, makes ancient koine Greek the most definitive language ever spoken... and due to the fact that this language from antiquity did not continue to evolve (i.e., change) over the centuries, means the teachings of the New Testament are etched in stone (unchanging); thus making it the perfect language to communicate divine truth and Christian doctrine. Let me illustrate one aspect of it by quoting John 3:16 — “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” Most of you have probably heard that verse a thousand times. Before reading on, I would like you to underscore the most significant words in that verse; words that you believe should receive the greatest emphasis. Don’t continue to read on until you have done so. Ready? There are three words in that verse that are emphatic in the original language, i.e., *three words*

that are very strongly emphasized: those three words are “loved”... “only begotten Son”... and “eternal.” Underline those words in that verse now and then read the verse over a few times giving “*extra emphasis*” to the three emphatic words. You will discover that the full meaning of the verse will carry a little different weight in your mind. The reality is this, when it comes to New Testament Greek (and Old Testament Hebrew on a lesser scale), the depth of understanding is somewhere in the neighborhood of 10-15% more when considering the difference that exists from an English translation and that of the original language (koine Greek). That does not mean that one is misunderstanding the essence of what Scripture says, or is being mised in what it says (that is absolutely not the case!)... it simply means that *the fullness* of what it says is lacking just a little bit; any time one goes from one language to another, there is “*a slight gap*” in the fullness of what is being communicated. That’s the reason why people who go into ministry study the languages in which Scripture was written. Incidentally, numerous studies have been written on the significance of the original languages in which Scripture was written. It is also interesting to note, the language of Hebrew is a “*picture language*” (i.e., many of the words are pictures of something that is being communicated), so it was great for telling stories and recounting historical events... on the other hand, the language of Greek was a more “*scientific language*” (very exacting, if you will); that’s why God invented the language — to communicate the preciseness of divine truth to the world. With that in mind, you may want to read studies that contrast the two languages.

The conditions that existed in the world when Christ entered it *were arranged in eternity past*. The reality is, *the cross of Christ was God’s plan from all eternity* (Acts 2:23; also cf. Is 14:27; 25:1; 37:26; 46:11; Mt 13:35; 25:34; Lk 11:50; 22:22; Acts 3:18; Eph 1:4). So God has a calendar, not just for Israel and the nations, but for each of us as His children. As David wrote, “He knows our comings and goings, our rising up and sitting down” (Ps 139:1). God has surprises planned for us... even after disappointments, devastations, and life changing seasons (Jer 29:11). Though we may fail Him, He will not fail us (2 Tim 2:13). Have you been immersed in unbearable anguish? your God grieves with you. Perhaps you’ve been hardened in your faith, burned out and empty, and have even despaired of life itself... God has a new beginning on His calendar for you. God knew there would be a *woman at the well* at midday in Samaria, who needed relief from the shame that she felt for so many years (Jn 4:7-42). He knew there would be a tax collector named *Zaccheus* who would respond to the offer of fellowship and grace from the Son of Man (Lk 19:1-10). He knew a man named *Simon* would deny Him three times in His greatest hour of need (Mt 26:69-75), but called Him anyway, because His loving grace would transform him into *Peter the rock*. He came to seek and save that which was “*lost*” — people like you and me (Jn 9:41). God has a calendar for the Jewish year, the nation, and for all of us as believers — our days are carefully watched over (cf. Ps 32:8; 33:18; 34:15; Job 36:7; 1 Pet 3:12); we are never far from His thoughts; we are never removed from His plans — “*the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable*” (Rom 11:29; Heb 13:5). Pursue Him with renewed vigor and watch His will for your life come alive, full of grace and good news, for you and all those He has called you to touch.

The Biblical Calendar

The calendar most of the world uses today is the “*Gregorian calendar*,” a calendar named after *Pope Gregory XIII*, who updated the earlier Julian version in 1582 to align it more closely with the spring season. Gregory added rules for leap years, which insert an extra day in February

every four years – his rules have kept this calendar synchronized with the “solar year” to within one day every 3,300 years; so in 4882 we will need to add one more day to that year’s calendar. The Biblical Calendar differs from the Gregorian Calendar in that it specifies exactly which days of the year the feasts are to be observed. Without a biblical focus it is impossible to observe the feast days on the correct days of the year. If the Bible was somewhat indifferent as to exactly “when” the feasts were to be observed, that would be one thing... but Scripture stresses the importance of “the days” themselves. The Biblical Calendar is a “luna-solar calendar,” which means that both the moon and the sun play an important part in its construction... and the rules for its construction come entirely from the Bible, and are not at all difficult to understand. The lunar cycle played a significant role in the cultural and religious life in ancient Israel, so “time” was counted by the cycles of the moon (cf. Ex 19:1). God’s calendar is mentioned “very early” in Scripture, thus suggesting that it was probably established during the time of Adam; remember, Adam lived for 930 years (cf. Gen 5:5). In Genesis 7:11, we are told that “the fountains of the deep burst open (i.e., the worldwide flood began) on the seventeenth day of the second month, in the six-hundredth year of Noah’s life” (a casual calculation of the age of Adam and others at that point suggests that Noah was probably born about three hundred years after Adam died). Whatever the case may be, God’s calendar was entrenched in human activity more than 4,500 years ago (2500 BC). So very early in God’s biblical revelation to man, He employs His calendar when describing significant events (cf. Gen 7:11; 8:4, 5, 13, 14; Ex 12:2-6, 18; 13:4-5; 16:1; 19:1).

The Lord (Yahweh) told His people through Moses nearly 3,500 years ago (which is about one thousand years after the flood) that they were to assemble at certain times of the year to observe His Feast days – He used words like “the tenth day of the first month” and “the first day of the seventh month” to pin down exact Feast Day observances. He goes on to say that “the man who neglects to observe the Passover shall be cut off from his people, because he failed to present the offering of the Lord at its appointed time; such a man shall bear his sin” (cf. Num 9:13). Yahweh instructed His people to observe all of His feast days at precise times (cf. Lev 23:2), not at times of their own making. According to Scripture, we sin if we don’t observe them at the commanded day and time. In the first five books of the Bible (the Torah), all written by Moses, the rules for the original Biblical calendar were given by Yahweh to the people of Israel by oral and (later) by written instructions. If True Worship meant keeping Yahweh’s commands exactly as stated, how then did God’s people determine when the fifteenth day of the seventh month was – that is, when the Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated (Lev 23:34-44; Num 29:12-40)? Yahweh told His people, “These are the appointed times of the Lord which you shall proclaim as holy convocations;” each of the days involved in the Feast of Tabernacles required “specific actions” (notice the “exactness” mentioned in each of the passages listed above). By the way, it is one thing to be ignorant of divine truth and live outside of it, it is quite another to know it and then disregard it; there are numerous passages on this in Scripture (study them if you’re interested).

Regarding the specificity of days, Yahweh tells us plainly how to deduce the “correct days” from a calendar in the sky. Note Genesis 1:14 – And Elohim said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.” At creation God called the light Day, the darkness Night... and the evening and the morning were the first day” (cf. Gen 1:1-5). It is also interesting to note that Yahweh started His day at the “end of it,” rather than at midnight like we do. Think about the wisdom of starting a day at “sunset” – it wouldn’t be easy to tell exactly when noon was... midnight would be even worse... and sunrise is when most people are still asleep, and exactly

when the sun peeks over the horizon would be much more difficult to determine, because one can't see the process of its rising... conversely, the process of a sunset is far easier to observe, because you can watch it go down. Incidentally, this was a common method of identifying the start of a day throughout the civilized world; remember, everyone in the human family is of the offspring of Noah and his family... so we can all trace our heritage back to about 2500 BC, and the common beliefs that governed society at that time. With that said, it is only reasonable that "the story of the flood" is found in nearly every culture and geographical area in the world, including the ancient civilizations of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians. Researchers have gathered hundreds of such stories from tribal groups all over the globe, and the story told is basically the same. It is also interesting to note that "no city, town, village or people group" has been found by geologists to have existed earlier than 4500 years ago (the time of the flood); though scientists have discovered the "bones of a few individuals," and have assigned them far earlier dates, it is here where the radioactive dating methods come in to question, because all dating methods operate under the assumption that the conditions that exist at the present time are the same as those that existed in the distant past; that is, that they are constant. Why have inhabited areas that predate 2500 BC not been found? because those that existed prior to the flood were washed away and destroyed by the flood. I address this and other issues in a textbook I wrote titled, "Christian: The Pursuit of Divine Truth."

Regarding the duration of weeks, Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because in it He had rested from all His work. The word "rested" is the Hebrew word Shabbat (translated "Sabbath" in English) – other than Shabbat, the Jewish calendar doesn't have names for the days of the week: they are simply known as first day, second day, third day, etc. (the first day of the week is the day we refer to as Sunday, and the seventh day of the week (Shabbat) we refer to as Saturday. That Yahweh uses a seven-day week is clear throughout the Bible (cf. Lev 23:15). Though the sun rises and sets every day, the moon does something a little different; though it rises and sets, its visibility varies significantly... but it does follow a cycle. When you count the number of days from one point to the next identical point, you notice there are about **29½** days for the moon's cycle to complete itself. Since the first crescent sighting is the best place to begin, you decide to use this "moon cycle" for your calendar, because just marking off one solar day at a time wouldn't be of much practical use. You will also notice from the time you can just barely see the new crescent until the moon is at its brightest (full moon) takes 14 days – with that in mind, one can easily divide the 14 days into two seven-day periods (weeks).

Regarding the matter of months, Moses writes, "Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night" (Deut 16:1). In Hebrew the word translated "month" is chodesh, which literally means "the new moon" (by implication a month). So God not only includes months in His calendar, but the new moon is an integral part of each month. This verse literally says, "Look for the new moon of Abib, and keep the Passover;" Passover is to be observed on the fourteenth day of Abib (cf. Ex 12:6). Keeping the month of Abib made it necessary for the Hebrew people to become very acquainted with the position of the sun and the moon. Thus the psalmist writes, "He made the moon for the seasons" (Ps 104:19). Furthermore, Asaph writes, "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day" (Ps 81:3). There are over 200 verses in the Bible with the word "chodesh" in them (all meaning "new moon"). The reality is, as you observe about a dozen moon cycles, you notice that the sun moves along the horizon at its setting time, going from south, to north and back to south, and you notice that the world

around you is getting warmer, then cooler, then warmer again. You place a “marker object” on the ground and notice how many days it takes for the shadow of the sun to return to that same position, and your count is 365 days. This had obviously taken place in all of the prominent cultures of the ancient world (Chaldean, Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Assyrian); simple math told them that a “solar year” was not the exact equivalent of 12 lunar months; the 12 lunar months equaled 354 days (eleven days short of a 365 day solar year). The question one naturally asks is this: Why didn’t God create the world in such a way that the 12 lunar months were a direct equivalent of a solar year? Good question. I have no idea. But knowing God as I do, one day He will no doubt divulge the genius of His wisdom in doing things the way He did them, and it will blow our minds. Perhaps one element of His doing things the way He did them was to keep His people transfixed on the heavens, whereby they would continually be mindful of His creation – to God, every day and every week and every month and every year had significance. Due to the fact a lunar month equaled 29½ days, the various cultures of the world simply alternated the number of days assigned to each month; 29 days one month, and 30 days the next month. Since the month of Abib in Hebrew means “green ears” (referring to the green ears of barley grain), the Israelites (like other cultures) simply added an “extra month” every few years to coordinate the calendar with the various festivals and their God-assigned dates (this month was added at the end of the year – a year with 13 months is referred to in Hebrew as *Shanah Me’uberet*; in English we call it a “leap year”). The various seasons were extremely important to all agrarian cultures, because knowing proper planting times were crucial to their survival; thus establishing fixed times for the start of each season was essential.

An interesting find in Israel called the “Gezer Calendar” confirms the fact that the Israelites were an agrarian society that based its months from agriculture – because the vast majority of people were farmers, the people naturally regulated their daily lives according to the exactness of the seasons. The yearly calendar they used was defined by “seasonal activities” related to farming and herding. This Gezer Calendar dates from the 10th century BC (the time of the construction of Solomon’s Temple), and associates the months of the year with activities like sowing, pruning and harvesting, and gives us a glimpse into a way of life very different from our own – a life strongly tied to the earth and its natural rhythms. The Gezer Calendar defined the twelve calendar Jewish months as follows:

- Two months of harvest
- Two months of planting
- Two months for late planting
- One month of pulling flax
- One month of barley harvest
- One month of harvest and feasting
- Two months of pruning vines
- One month of summer fruit

The Gezer Calendar clearly laid out the fundamental importance of the agricultural cycle during the days of King Solomon, and can be seen in the various temple festivals that were celebrated – The Feast of Weeks, The Feast of Ingathering, and The Feast of Tabernacles. The mention of “feasting” strongly related to the importance of crop harvesting and all the work that involved.

Yahweh decreed that the year was to begin in the month when barley would be ready for harvest; hence, *Abib* (approximately March-April on our calendar) became the first month of the Biblical

Jewish Calendar לוח עברי

Following is a contemporary Jewish Calendar that is used in the world today. You'll notice there are "two names" for four of the months – because the Jews were in captivity for seventy years in Babylon, several Babylonian words crept into Jewish culture, including the months of Nissan, Iyar, Tishri, and Heshvan.

Hebrew	English	Number	Length	Equivalent
ניסן	Nissan / Abib	1	30 days	March-April
אייר	Iyar / Ziv	2	29 days	April-May
סיון	Sivan	3	30 days	May-June
תמוז	Tammuz	4	29 days	June-July
אב	Av	5	30 days	July-Aug
אלול	Elul	6	29 days	Aug-Sept
תשרי	Tishri / Ethanim	7	30 days	Sept-Oct
חשוון	Heshvan / Bui	8	29 or 30 days	Oct-Nov
כסלו	Kislev	9	30 or 29 days	Nov-Dec
טבת	Tevet	10	29 days	Dec-Jan
שבט	Shevat	11	30 days	Jan-Feb
אדר א'	Adar I (leap years only)	12	30 days	Feb-March
אדר ב' אדר א'	Adar (called Adar Beit in leap years)	12 (13 in leap yrs)	29 days	Feb-March

Calendar; so the Jewish calendar year began in the spring. Originally, the Hebrews employed "*numerals*" to distinguish one month from another; the month by which the spring season (Abib) commenced was the first month (cf. Ex 12:2; Deut 16:1)... the other months were referred to as the

second month, third month, etc. (cf. Lev 16:29; 23:34; Deut 1:3; 1 Kg 12:33; 2 Kg 25:1, 3, 8) — the Hebrew people eventually adopted some monthly names from some of the pagan societies with which they were affiliated down through the ages (the Canaanites & Babylonians in particular). Incidentally, the “first day” of each month was considered to be a holy day, and the “new moon” (the middle of the month) a festival day (observed by burnt offering, sacrifices and banquets — cf. Num 29:6; 1 Sam 20:5; 1 Chron 23:31). Two of Israel’s most important festivals fell in mid-month (Passover & Tabernacles — cf. Ps 81:3). Since several Old Testament festivals figure prominently in the New Testament, the times they are observed were also adapted into Christian tradition; that explains why “Easter” (related to Old Testament Passover) and “Pentecost” (figured from the date of Passover) are movable feasts in the traditional Christian calendar as well; i.e., they are calculated by the moon and not by the solar calendar (thus they fall on different dates as in Hebrew tradition). Ultimately, “the year number” used on present day Jewish calendars represents the number of years since the creation of Adam; this was calculated by simply adding up the ages of people in the Bible back to the time Adam (3760 years before the Christian era)... this system of identifying “years” was not adopted until after the Christian era had begun. Up until then, people simply differentiated time by referring to various historical events that took place years earlier in their country’s history. Hence, with the foregoing in mind, the Jewish calendar identifies the present year as 5776 on its calendars rather than 2016 (2016 + 3760 = 5776).

The Significance of Biblical Numbers

An essential key to understanding many of the events of Scripture, is knowing the significance of Biblical numbers, because they reveal various aspects of the handiwork and control of God over His creation. The patterns found in Scripture do not exist by random chance, but by the intentional design of our Creator — such numbers often shed light on the plan of God and His purpose for man. Both in the Old and New Testaments, numbers often reveal deeper concepts and meanings that commonly escape the casual reader. It should be noted, the symbolic meanings of numbers in the Bible are not the same as the biblical science known as “numerology,” which involves looking for an occult meaning in numbers, the combination of those numbers, and their numerical totals. For example, Jewish Cabalists have analyzed the Hebrew Scriptures using a technique called “gematria,” which looks for hidden codes in the numerical equivalents of letters. Such numerology is a form of divination that God condemns (cf. Deut 18:10-12). Following are “a few numbers” that God employed in the revelation of His Word that give us greater understanding of His work in our lives and the economic structure of His universe. Let’s begin by looking at the number “seven.”

The Number Seven — The first natural division of time we find in the Bible is “a day.” When God ordained periods of rest and worship for Israel He marked them with the number “seven,” the seventh day is a weekly holy day... the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar has special feast days within it... the seventh year was deemed a year of rest for the land... and every seven times seven years (49 years) is followed by a very special period known as “the year of Jubilee” (cf. Lev 25:1-22). With the foregoing in mind, let’s first identify the primary significance of the number seven in Scripture — it is frequently used to represent the idea of “completeness / perfection.” In the creation narrative God rested from His work on the seventh day, and sanctified it (Gen 2:2-3). Everything God did in creating the universe was complete and absolutely perfect (Gen 1:31) — and He rested on the seventh day and made it a holy day; a day set aside unto the Lord; henceforth it

was to be a day of consecration for the purpose of religious meditation and divine worship (as God ultimately commanded His people); people need to be ever mindful that God is the Creator of all things, “that *from* Him and *through* Him and *to* Him are all things; to Him be *the glory* [and *dominion*] forever” (Rom 11:36; 1 Pet 5:11). This action gave a pattern to the *Jewish Sabbath* on which man was to refrain from work (Ex 20:10), as well as to the *sabbatic year* (Lev 25:6), and to the *year of Jubilee*, which followed seven times seven years (Lev 25:8). The *Feast of Unleavened Bread* and *Feast of Tabernacles* lasted seven days (Ex 12:15, 19; Num 29:12). The *Day of Atonement* was in the seventh month (Lev 16:29), and seven occurs frequently in connection with Old Testament ritual, such as the sprinkling of bullock’s blood *seven times* (Lev 4:6), and the burnt offering of *seven lambs* (Num 28:11). Conversely, the cleansed leper was sprinkled *seven times* (Lev 14:7), and Naaman had to dip *seven times* in the Jordan (2 Kg 5:10). When reflecting upon each of the foregoing, think in terms of the completeness and perfection of what is accomplished through the repeated action. How else would one see the *emphasis* on the wholeness and fullness and completeness of an action?

In the Tabernacle *the candlestick had seven branches* (Ex 25:32) — not one, not two, not three, but seven; again the focus is emphatically on the complete perfection of its purpose (not partial). Other references to be noted are: the mother of *seven sons* (Jer 15:9); *seven women* for one man (Is 4:1); a loving daughter-in-law preferable to *seven sons* (Ruth 4:15). The Sadducees proposed a case of levirate marriage with *seven brothers* (Mt 22:25). The Israelites were commanded by God to march around Jericho on *seven successive days carrying seven trumpets of rams’ horns*, and then march around the city *seven times on the seventh day* (Josh 6:4). Elijah’s servant looked for rain *seven times a day* (1 Kg 18:43). The psalmist praised God *seven times a day* (Ps 119:164). The complete possession of Mary Magdalene is effected by *seven demons* (Lk 8:2). The early church had *seven deacons* (Acts 6:3), and John addresses *seven churches* in the book of Revelation, where there is mention of *seven golden candlesticks* (Rev 1:12) and *seven stars* (Rev 1:16). In the book of Revelation the number “*seven*” appears 55 times: they include *seven Spirits* (Rev 1:4), *seven lamps of fire* (Rev 4:5), *seven seals* (Rev 5:1), *seven horns & seven eyes* (Rev 5:6), *seven angels* (Rev 8:2), *seven trumpets* (Rev 8:6), *seven peals of thunder* (Rev 10:3-4), *seven thousand people* were killed (Rev 11:13), *seven heads & seven horns* (Rev 12:3)... the dragon (Rev 12:3) and the beast (Rev 13:1; 17:7) have *seven heads*... then there are the *seven plagues* (Rev 15:1, 6), the *seven bowls of the wrath of God* (Rev 16:1), the *seven mountains* (Rev 17:9), the *seven kings* (Rev 17:10), and the *seven last plagues* (Rev 21:9).

Related to the number seven is that of “*seventy*.” Seventy is often connected with God’s administration of the world. After the Flood the world was repopulated through *seventy descendants of Noah* (Gen 10)... *seventy persons* went down to Egypt (Gen 46:27)... *seventy elders* were appointed to help Moses administer Israel in the wilderness (Num 11:16)... the people of Judah spent *seventy years in exile in Babylon* (Jer 5:11; 29:10)... *seventy weeks* (i.e., seventy sevens — 70 x 7 = 490 years) were decreed by God as the period in which Messianic redemption was to be accomplished (Dan 9:24)... Jesus sent forth *seventy* to prepare the way for His ministry in all the cities and towns where He would be going (Lk 10:1). When Jesus told Peter that he should forgive his brother not just seven times, but “*seventy times seven*,” He was conveying the thought that “*forgiveness has no limits*” (Mt 18:21-22).

The Number Twelve — The number twelve seems to represent one of the administrative principles by which God rules and governs. As mentioned earlier, God’s calendar was divided into “*twelve months*” — not three, or four, or six, but twelve (cf. Gen 7:11; 8:4, 5, 13, 14; Ex 12:2, 3, 6, 18; 13:4, 5);

though the genius of it is more than we can comprehend, of this we can be sure, it is “genius,” so rejoice in that fact. Not only was a year twelve months long, but every day was assigned “twelve hours of day” and “twelve hours of night” (cf. Jn 11:9; Mt 20:3, 5; 27:46; Jn 1:39; Rev 9:15; Acts 23:23). Remember, these are the parameters God designed to administrate the created order. Let’s continue: He decreed that Abraham would become the Father of twelve princes (Gen 17:20), and that these princes would be the twelve sons of Jacob (Gen 35:22-26), who would ultimately become the forefathers of the twelve tribes of Israel/Jacob (Gen 49:1-28; Gen 32:28; 35:10; Ps 22:23; 46:7; 59:13; Is 46:3; 48:12; 49:6). The descendents of Jacob (after dwelling in the land of Egypt for four hundred years) merged into a “nation” (Israel) around 1400 BC when they exited Egypt (this is commonly referred to as the Exodus) under the leadership of Moses, and entered the Promised Land forty years later under the leadership of Joshua, at which time the cities and the precise boundaries of each tribe’s territory was identified according to God’s decree (Josh 13-22). Again, God is a “very exacting God,” He doesn’t do anything without perfect reason – what is strange is for a believer not to believe that, and to simply think that our God is a God of arbitrariness and inexactness. To continue – with the advent of Jesus into the world, He chose twelve disciples to be His followers (Mt 10:1; 11:1; Mk 3:14-16; Lk 6:13)... when He ascended into heaven the twelve disciples then became “the twelve apostles” (Acts 1:2; 2:43; 4:33; Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14) – the word *apostolos* means “sent ones.”

The book of revelation tells us that the walls of the New Jerusalem will have twelve foundation stones (Rev 21:14), and twelve gates (Rev 21:12), and that at the gates will be twelve angels (Rev 21:12). The city of the New Jerusalem will be 12,000 furlongs long, wide and high (using contemporary numbers, that means the city will be a cube 1500 miles long, wide and high – cf. Rev 21:16). The thickness of the wall will be 144 cubits (12 x 12), or 72 yards using modern measurements (cf. Rev 21:17)... and the walls will be comprised of twelve precious stones (including jasper, sapphire, emeralds and pure gold; cf. Rev 21:18-20), and the twelve gates will be made with pearls (Rev 21:21). During the Great Tribulation that shall fall upon the earth after the rapture of the church, 12,000 from each tribe (for a total of 144,000) will turn to Christ and be saved during the early part of the Tribulation and become His servants – they shall faithfully resist the seductions of the anti-christ, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the entire world – thus Israel’s spiritual resurrection shall be as “life from the dead” (Rom 11:15), and inspire countless millions of people from every tribe and country to surrender their lives to Christ (cf. Rev 7:4-17). The number of 144,000 is a powerful aggregate of twelve (a multiple of twelve that has the same foundational meaning) – it is 12 x 12 times 1000!!! We saw the incredible work the twelve apostles did... imagine the Spirit-empowered work of one-hundred and forty-four thousand!!! (cf. Rev 14:1-5). Did you actually think God was just going to quietly exit the scene at the end of time? He is going to make a splash unlike anything man could even dream of... and when it all comes to a close “every tongue will confess, and every knee will bow!” (Phil 2:11). There are some pretty ugly people in our world – every one of them will ultimate confess Christ and bend the knee!

Another aggregate of twelve is the number “twenty-four.” The book of revelation tells us that around the eternal throne of God in heaven there will be “twenty-four thrones,” and seated on those thrones will be “twenty-four elders” clothed in white garments and have golden crowns on their heads (cf. Rev 4:4)... and the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him... and will cast their crowns before the throne saying, “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (Rev 4:10-11). In the following chapter when the book of seven seals appears before the four living creatures who surround the

throne... one of them will proclaim with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and break its seal?” At this point the “*twenty-four elders will fall down before the Lamb and sing a new song*,” saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth” (Rev 5:8-10). When the seventh angel sounds the seventh trumpet (the final one) indicating that the Great Tribulation is over, the time will come for Christ to inaugurate His eternal reign, and the “*twenty-four elders*” will fall on their faces and worship God saying, “We give Thee thanks, Lord God Almighty... because Thou has taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign — the time has come to *judge* the unbelieving dead, and to *reward* Your own, great and small” (Rev 11:15-18). Though the unbelieving nations will be angry and full of rage (Rev 11:18), how *impotent* their wrath will be when brought into the presence of the *Omnipotent One!* Therefore the seventh trumpet will take place at the end of all things, when the judgment on Christ’s foes and the rewarding of His servants takes place... the glorified Christ will then begin His eternal reign (Rev 11:19)... in the midst of it all will be that *governing body* that shall rule with Him on His throne forever (cf. 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 22:5). The last enemy to be abolished will be death (1 Cor 15:26), and then the eternal state shall begin. Since the call of Abraham unto the world scene, and His becoming the father of the “*twelve princes*,” God faithfully continued to operate in our world through the “*twelve apostles*” and His chosen saints, and He will not cease to operate in such fashion with the “*twenty-four elders*” unto all eternity! That is simply the operational structure that God established in eternity past, and by which He will rule forever in His eternal kingdom. Everything God does is “*very exacting & perfect*,” the pillars of time and the structures of things are *very precise* in God’s economy. Why would our perfect God choose to operate in any other way? To somehow think that His actions are simply arbitrary, is really foolish, especially from someone who claims to be “*committed believer*.” Beloved, if you approach the greatest works of men with a sense of awe, yet struggle to express “awe” at the incredible works of God, you might examine yourself to make sure you are truly one of God’s children. When reading Scripture, read it with absolute awe at the brilliance, majesty and glorious nature of everything that God does; whether you fully understand His ways or not, our God is a God of absolute perfection. Why twelve? Why twenty-four? Why not eleven, or thirteen or nineteen or thirty-one or fifty-four? Why did God choose the numbers that He chose? There is no way to know at this point... but in eternity future we will marvel at the genius of them... with that in mind, think of everything that God has done as being absolutely perfect (read Job 38-42; Is 55:8-9; Ps 19:7; 145:3; Rom 11:33), and in no way simply arbitrary.

The Number Forty — The number “*forty*” not only represents a generation in Scripture, it also represents *trying & challenging times, judgments & punishment periods*; it is used 146 times throughout both the Old and New Testaments. It is the traditional Hebrew number for the duration of a trial of any kind, when times are hard, and when a person’s faith is being tested. As a result of God’s judgment on mankind during the days of Noah, God caused it to rain on the earth for *forty days* and *forty nights*, and burst open all the fountains of the deed (Gen 7:11), thus causing a worldwide flood that killed every living thing that He had made (Gen 7:4). When Moses led the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt, they spent “*forty years*” in the wilderness because of their unfaithfulness (Ex 16:35; Josh 5:12; Num 14:33-34; 32:13; Deut 2:7; 29:5; Heb 3:17). This was preceded by “*spending 400 years as aliens in a foreign land, and ultimately be enslaved in bondage in Egypt*” (cf. Gen 15:13; Acts 7:6); again, 400 is a powerful aggregate of 40 — obviously the time period was an extremely difficult one for the children of Israel; it was during this time that the

Lord grew His people into a nation, and prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah into the world. Moses was forty days on Mount Sinai when he received God's Law... he spent another forty days on the mountain after the golden calf sin. Three hundred years later Elijah spent forty days on the same mountain worshipping God... eight hundred years later, the nation of Egypt suffered judgment at the hand of God for "forty years" because of Pharaoh's pride (Ezek 29:9-12) – God gave Egypt into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon during the days of Ezekiel the prophet (Ezek 29:13-21); incidentally, never again would Egypt be a great nation. In the Book of the Law (the Law of God) we are told that when the court decides that a man is guilty of some wicked offense and deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes appropriate to his guilt – he may be beaten up to "forty times," but no more, lest he be thought of as less than human (cf. Deut 25:3), and reflect a level of barbarian cruelty that was common in much of the ancient world. To keep that from happening in Israel, the judge himself was to oversee all such beatings. It is interesting to note that in later times when the Jews were exceedingly scrupulous in adhering to the letter of the law, and for fear of miscalculation, were desirous of keeping the law within the prescribed limit, they limited the number of lashes to "thirty-nine" (2 Cor 11:24); incidentally, such a level of punishment was commonly administered for religious offenses. Regarding the most significant "forty day event" mentioned in the New Testament is the occasion when the Holy Spirit led the Lord Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for "forty days" (Mt 4:2ff; Mk 1:13; Lk 4:1ff); here again we see the matter being executed in its fullness.

Other Numbers – Aside from the three foregoing numbers which I found to be quite significant, there are several other numbers in Scripture that have profound symbolic or theological significance as well. I have chosen to briefly expand on four more of them. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* and numerous other sources help shed light on their significance. Following are those four numbers:

- A. **One** is used to convey the concept of the unity and uniqueness of God – “The Lord our God is one” (Deut 6:4)... “He made from one every nation of mankind” (Acts 17:26). The entry of sin into the world is through one man (Rom 5:12), and the gift of grace is by one man (Rom 5:15). Scripture emphatically declares that “Christ and the Father are one” (Jn 10:30), that there is union between believers and the Godhead, and union among Christians (Jn 17:21-22; Gal 3:28). Likewise, God’s Word says “in marriage the two shall become one” (Mt 19:6). The apostle Paul exhorts believers to diligently preserve the unity of the Spirit; in so doing he goes on to say, “there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and to each one grace is given according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (Eph 4:3-6).
- B. **Three** is naturally associated with the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead (cf. Mt 28:19; Jn 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pet 1:2); thus indicating a wholeness. The number three is also associated with a number of God’s mighty acts in Scripture – at Mt. Sinai the Lord came down to give His Law on “the third day” (Ex 19:11). In Hosea’s prophecy the Lord would raise up His people on “the third day” (Hos 6:2). Jonah was delivered on the third day (Jon 1:17; Mt 12:40), and Christ was raised from the dead on the third day (1 Cor 15:4; Lk 13:32). When the prophet Isaiah beheld God’s throne in a vision, one of the seraphim called out to another, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts” (Is 6:3); three times the angel exclaimed the holiness of God – the grammatical construction of that verse makes the “holiness of God” the most emphatic statement in the entire Bible (cf. Rev 4:8); so above everything you know about God, the most significant thing

one can know is that God is “HOLY!” (and knowing that alone answers a lot of questions that any of us as believers may have). Samuel is called by the Lord three times before he realizes it and answers (1 Sam 3). Satan tempts Jesus three times before giving up (Mt 4:1-11). Furthermore, just as three witnesses would firmly prove a matter to be true, a threefold repetition seems to establish it firmly or emphasize it (cf. Ezek 21:27; Acts 10:9-16; Rev 4:8; 8:13).

- C. Four is often used as a symbol of completion in the Bible. There were four rivers flowing out of the garden of Eden (Gen 2:10), and there are four corners of the earth (Rev 7:1; 20:8), from whence blow the four winds (Jer 49:36; Ezk 37:9; Dan 7:2; Mt 24:31). The New Jerusalem will also be laid out in a square with four sides; a perfect cube 1500 miles long, wide, and high (Rev 21:16). There are four directions on the earth (north, south, east and west). In his vision of the glory of God, Ezekiel saw four living creatures (Ezek 1), and with these we may compare the four living creatures to those in the book of Revelation (Rev 4:6; 5:6; 6:1; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4). According to Isaiah the prophet, the Spirit of the Lord that rested on the Messiah manifested Himself in four ways — as the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and strength (Is 11:2). There are the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (Rev 6:1-8), and four angels standing ready at the four corners of the earth (Rev 7:1). There are also four living beasts in Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation. The history of the world from the time of the Babylonian empire is spanned by four kingdoms (Dan 2:7). Four is a prominent number in prophetic symbolism and apocalyptic literature — Scripture tells us there are four hours and four craftsmen (Zech 1:18-21)... four chariots (Zech 6:1-8)... four horns on the altar (Rev 9:13)... four angels of destruction (Rev 9:14).
- D. Six represents the worship of man, and is the number of man, signifying his rebellion, imperfection, works, and disobedience. Sometimes the number six is associated with the enemies of God (1 Chr 20:6; Dan 3:1; Rev 13:18). It is used 273 times in the Bible, including its derivatives (e.g. sixth) and another 91 times as “threescore or sixty.” Man was created on the sixth day (Gen 1:26, 31). The Lord said to Moses, “For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest — holy to the Lord — whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death” (Ex 31:15; 20:9; 23:12; cf. Lk 13:14); the reason that seems so unreasonable to fallen man, is that God is not a “significant reality” in his mind — for him life is about “the creature,” not the Creator; thus revealing the diabolical nature of the core of his being. A Hebrew servant had to serve for six years before he was freed. When Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold for the people to worship, he made it six cubits high and six cubits wide; the people were commanded to “fall down and worship the golden image, or be cast into the furnace” (Dan 3:1-7). The most compelling number in the Bible in the minds of many believers is “666” (again, it is a powerful aggregate of six); it symbolizes the Unholy Trinity — Satan is the antithesis of the Holy Spirit; it is Satan’s spirit that controls the two beasts of Revelation: one is the Antichrist, who is the antithesis of God... and the other is the False Prophet, the antithesis of Jesus. Scripture says, “Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man (not God!); and his number is six hundred and sixty-six” (Rev 13:18).

I want to stress again that these symbolic meanings of numbers in the Bible are very different from numerology, which involves looking for an occult meaning in numbers, in the combination of numbers, and in the numerical totals themselves. In recent years Ivan Panin attempted to find numerical significance in every word and letter in the Bible, but his system was far too complicated to commend itself to any careful student of Scripture. The Bible does not have an

intricate numerical pattern that only a mathematical expert can discover. The mystery to find symbolic and significant meanings in numbers can be traced back to ancient times, notably to the Pythagoreans. Renewed interest in numerology was aroused by *Michael Drosnin's Bible Code* (1997) – it was based upon some highly abstruse mathematical calculations developed by Doron Witztum, Yoav Rosenberg, and Eliyahan Rips. The *Bible Code* theory asserts that encoded in the Massoretic Text of the Hebrew Old Testament, are all the future events of the world. Nearly all respected Bible scholars all decidedly against their theory. It is also odd that Drosnin, who is an atheist, should take the seemingly astounding message from *beyond our world* so seriously, since he has denied that a transcendent dimension exists. His best speculation as to the source of this information is that of *benign extra-terrestrials*, who are trying to warn us of impending disaster if we do not mend our ways.