



A Study of Revelation

Important Symbolical Numbers In Revelation

One suggested “unity” or that which is unique and alone. This number is not actually used in Revelation, but it stands behind several others.

Two is twice one, and therefore came to symbolize “strength,” redoubled courage and energy. Two witnesses confirm the truth of God (11:3-12).

Three became the symbol of the “divine” as it represented the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Four represented the “world in which men lived, worked, and died.” Reference is often made to the four corners of the earth: north, south, east, and west.

Seven is the “perfect divine number” indicating that which is whole. By combining numbers, other symbols resulted. When the number four (“world”) is added to the number three (“divine”), the result is seven which came to be the most sacred number among the Hebrews.

Six is the number representing “failure.” As seven was the sacred perfect number, six fell short and came to mean doom. Man may have apparent wisdom and strength, but if he sets himself in opposition to God, he will always meet defeat just when success may seem to be in his grasp.

Three And One-Half is seven cut in half and symbolized “broken or incomplete.” Three different terms are employed which are equal: “time, times, and half a time” ($1 + 2 + 1/2$) or “forty-two months” or “1260 days.” Each of these represents an indefinite period of time, certainly less than the perfect or full period signified by other numbers.

Ten came to mean “completeness.” A person with ten fingers and ten toes has the full or complete number of fingers and toes.

One Thousand signified “a complete or full period of time.” This number is the result of multiplying ten ($10 \times 10 \times 10$), which is another way of confirming the certainty of fulfillment (completeness \times completeness \times completeness). Nothing will interfere or break this period of time until God wills it.

Twelve was significant in Hebrew religious thought because this number represented “God’s people.” In the Old Testament there were twelve patriarchs, and thus the twelve tribes of Israel constituted God’s nation, and in the New Testament the twelve apostles were the ambassadors of Christ to the citizens of his kingdom.

One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand is a multiple of the number representing fullness ($10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1000$) and the number representing God’s people ($12 \times 12 = 144$). Multiply these together and one hundred forty-four thousand is reached ($1000 \times 144 = 144,000$), signifying the full number of God’s people on earth at any given time.

Whatever interpretation one gives this grand book, he must recognize its unique style in contrast to the other books of the New Testament. The careful student will not interpret numbers, sometimes literally and sometimes figuratively, in order to satisfy a particular theory. A proper interpretation will follow a consistent pattern while analyzing the meaning of both the pictures and the numbers revealed in the Apocalypse.

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Truth Commentary - Revelation