

# Grace by the Numbers

by Rolaant McKenzie



September 11, 2022

From small things like how many teaspoons of salt may go into a stew to larger efforts as whether there is enough money coming into the budget to overhaul the roof, numbers play an important role in our daily lives.

Often numbers help to resolve issues that may arise. As an example, *Numbers* (stylized as *NUMB3RS*) was an American crime drama television series (January 23, 2005-March 12, 2010) that followed FBI Special Agent Don Eppes and his brother Charlie, a gifted college mathematics professor, who helped Don solve crimes for the FBI. The patterns and insights provided by Charlie's mathematical skills were always in some way crucial to solving a crime.

Other times, numbers can act as mnemonic devices that point to important concepts or events. The following are some numbers in the Bible that are significant to me.

The number **1** is a reminder that there is one God, and the one and only mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Forgiveness of sin and salvation is found only in His name (Acts 4:12).

The number **3** is a reminder of the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; the perfection of God and His redemption of humanity. The Father loved lost sinners so much that He sent His one and only Son to atone fully for their sin debt on the cross and grant them the gift of eternal life

(John 3:16). Those who trust in Jesus are born again and receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who seals them unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:3-14, 4:30).

The number **5** describes God's gracious dealings with fallen humanity in the first five books of the Old Testament, Genesis through Deuteronomy, and the first five books of the New Testament, Matthew through Acts. The culmination of His love is seen in the death of His Son Jesus on the cross, the perfect and complete atonement for sin, and His resurrection from the dead that ensures eternal life for all who believe on Him.

The number **7** points to completion, such as when God completed the creation of the heavens and the earth by the seventh day and rested from His work. This stands as a refutation of Darwinian evolution. "Know that the LORD Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3). Believers find their completeness in the Lord Jesus (Colossians 2:10).

The number **9** refers to the ninth hour (3 PM) when Jesus on the cross said, "It is finished," and died having paid in full the sin debt for sinners.

But on the first day of the week, Jesus rose again from the dead as promised, as proof of the acceptance of His sacrifice by God and the truth of His teachings. Some of the earliest Christians referred to Sunday as the **8<sup>th</sup>** day, a new beginning. In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, Barnabas in his first epistle (between 70-130 AD) wrote:

"I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead." (*The Epistle of Barnabas*, 15:8-9)

The number **153** refers to the great catch of fish in John 21

Peter and six other disciples caught in the period after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. They worked hard all night but could not catch any fish. In the morning Jesus stood on the beach, and He told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. So great was the number of fish in the net, that they could not haul it into the boat, but needed additional help dragging it to shore.

This account reminds me of the abundant grace shown in Jesus dying on the cross for sinners, providing for physical needs such as food, forgiveness, and restoration. God's love, His grace, is greater than we can imagine. Peter, who denied Jesus three times, discovered there is hope and restoration for all who repent and take refuge in Him.

By faith, Abraham considered himself a sojourner on earth who looked forward to a new country in which will be the new eternal city with foundations, built by God for all who trust in Him (Hebrews 12:8-16). This city's wall will have twelve foundation stones, on which the names of the **12** apostles of Jesus will be inscribed. It also will have twelve gates, on which will be written the names of the **12** tribes of Israel.

All believers in the Lord through the centuries trusted God's promises and looked forward to "new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). We, too, who trust in His promises, who believe the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) will receive citizenship in this new country, in this new city, that never perishes.

Flash cards are cards containing information on both sides that are intended to be used as aids in memorization. The Lord Jesus, Creator of all things, made the numbers we all use. Like flash cards, they can act as illustrations of God's grace – His love for humanity and the redemption He provides for all who trust in Him.

E-Mail Rolaant McKenzie: [rolaant@gospeloutreach.net](mailto:rolaant@gospeloutreach.net)

Website: <http://www.gospeloutreach.net/>