

## #'S IN THE BIBLE



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#### *Scriptures Cited:*

*Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 18:15-35, Luke 15:1-23, Psalm 90:12, James 4:8*

## NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

This is the second lesson dealing with the theme of 'Numbers in the Bible'. In our previous lesson, "[What are the Odds?](#)" we reviewed a couple of examples that illustrated how numbers frame teachings in the Bible. And we concluded in Matthew 7:13-14, which is the scripture about the broad way and the strait way, or the broad gate and narrow gate. And as that scripture says, there will be many that go the broad way and few that go the strait way into life. And looking at it by the numbers, we saw that the numbers are stacked against us... until we came to the conclusion of that lesson, which is that there is only one way for us to beat those numbers. There is just one way for us to beat those odds. And that is **in Christ Jesus**.

By ending that lesson on that **One Way**, it begins to hint towards what the most important number is. Originally this second lesson was going to focus on that most important number, but we are not quite there yet. So we will continue on with the theme of "Numbers in the Bible", specifically in the words of Jesus. Take your time when reading the scriptures in this lesson, noting the different instances where numbers are used. And as you do this, let the Word of God speak to you in order to receive the fullness of what Jesus is actually teaching.

So we're going to go into the book of Matthew, in the 18th chapter. Beginning in verse 15, we will read this "block" of teaching and then go back and dig into what Jesus is saying.

## Matthew 18:15-35

<sup>15</sup> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

<sup>17</sup> And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. <sup>18</sup> Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

<sup>21</sup> Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times.

<sup>22</sup> Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup> Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. <sup>24</sup> And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup> The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

<sup>27</sup> Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. <sup>29</sup> And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. <sup>30</sup> And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

<sup>31</sup> So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. <sup>32</sup> Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: <sup>33</sup> Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? <sup>34</sup> And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

<sup>35</sup> So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

So there is a lot of information in that one set of teachings, and we see Jesus using all these different numbers to make His point. For example: two or three witnesses, one or two brothers, how many times to forgive? Seventy times seven... we see a lot of numbers being used here to illustrate the truth of what Jesus is teaching. So now let's look deeper and see what He's actually saying here, noting some interesting points that we can pull out from these scriptures.

Going back once again and starting in verse 15, Jesus says if your brother trespasses against you, go to your brother and basically just let them know. Tell them "you offended me" or "you did me wrong in some kind of way". And what is interesting is that next it says "if he shall hear thee, **thou hast gained thy brother**". This lets us know that in His condition of **not** admitting to his guilt, he was in a sense, 'lost'. But when he admits what he has done or comes into agreement and says "yes, I was wrong" - you have now gained your brother back. It is interesting that Jesus points out the condition of relationships when we wrong one another. It is not only that the wrongdoing causes separation, but also by not admitting our faults it causes the loss of a brother.

Jesus then goes on to say 'but if he will not hear thee, take one or two brothers with you'. And the point He is making here is that there should be witnesses, so that every word will be established. This is a principle that we can trace all the way back to the Old Testament. Under the law of Moses, an accusation was not valid if made by a single person. There had to be at least two or three others to "back up" the claim.

This same principle should also be used when studying the scriptures. There should be at least two or three other scriptures that all "bear witness" to the point being made from any particular passage. This is an important principle, not only when there's a fault between brothers, but also when we come to establish the meaning of scripture. There should be more than just one place where we can find it. It should be backed up, normally in multiple places.

We can keep going here in verse 17, where it says 'if he neglects to hear them, bring the whole church'. Bring everybody, so that everybody is aware that this brother who is wrong is not willing to admit his fault and make his wrongs right. And what's interesting here is it says if he doesn't hear when the congregation is present, then basically that man is like a heathen and a publican. He is almost to be treated as an unbeliever, or an outsider. And if we keep reading, Jesus makes the statement in verse 18: 'whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven.' So He lets us know that the consequences of not admitting when we're wrong, not only has earthly consequences but it has Heavenly consequences as well.

When things get to the point where the church has to say 'this person is shunned and an outsider', you could almost say that it is recorded in Heaven. It is established in Heaven that yes, this is where the situation stands. So, this teaching is letting you know that by not admitting to our faults, and refusing to listen to others when they're bringing your fault to you, it actually has Heavenly consequences.

Continuing to verse 19, Jesus brings in another principle: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven." Then in verse 20 Jesus says "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We can highlight a few important things from Jesus' teaching here. One is the power of simply coming together in the name of Jesus. He says when we come together **in His name**, He is in the midst. And if we pray in one accord, He is going to take it to the Father that it be done. So, we should always remember that there is a lot of power when we come together and pray together in the name of Jesus.

So then we get to verse 21... and here comes Peter with something to say (of course, lol). Basically he says 'Ok Lord, I get what you're saying about forgiving others - but *how many times* do I have to go through this? If I bring my brother's fault to him and he says ok, but then he does the same thing again... seven times, is that good?' And now once again we're back at the numbers. Jesus lets him know, 'not seven times, Peter, but seventy times seven.' And I guess if we're doing the math, that would be 490 times, but I think this is to show the absurdity of keeping track to that extent. What Jesus is *really* saying here is 'don't keep track'. We should always have a forgiving heart, especially towards our brothers and sisters in Christ when they've done wrong. Our heart position towards them should still be a heart of forgiveness, even if they are not going to hear us. This is just the starting point from where we should approach these types of situations.

From here, Jesus goes into another teaching where He talks about this certain king who has a servant. And it says that the one servant owed him ten thousand talents - so there's another number; in fact, a huge amount. And he should have been thrown in jail until he paid it all, even if that meant his family would be sold to pay the price. But he went to the King and begged for forgiveness. He admitted that he owed the money, and he said 'just be patient with me, I'll get it to you'. And because this was a good king, he forgave his servant of the entire debt, which is wonderful.

But then it says the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants that only owed him a hundred pence. It is as if the servant owes ten thousand dollars, but he has a brother who owes him a hundred pennies. So imagine that he goes to his brother who owes a hundred pennies... and grabs him by the neck, saying 'you're going to pay me back and I'm not going to forgive you until you do'. In the teaching, when the king finds out about this, he is amazed and says 'you should have done to your fellow servant what I did to you - I forgave *you* of this huge amount, and you wouldn't forgive him this small amount. Therefore, you are going to suffer the punishment.'

If you look at what Jesus is teaching about forgiveness here, the overall principle is that we really need to forgive each other. No matter how big it seems, or no matter how your brother may have offended you - **it is nothing in comparison to how we have offended God**. We have all these sins that we want God to forgive us of - all of these sins. And in reality, it's not just that we want God to forgive our sins, but we *need* Him to forgive us. We need it. And in that need, we also have to be willing to forgive those who have offended us. So that sums up the teaching in Matthew chapter 18, where we see Jesus using many different numbers to teach His disciples.

As we continue on, we will look at one more teaching from Jesus that will begin to point us once again, towards the most important number. This teaching is actually in the same chapter of Matthew, starting in verse 11. But rather than read it in Matthew, we are going to read it from Luke, because Luke gives us more details. So let's read from the beginning of Luke chapter 15.

### **Luke 15:1-23**

*<sup>1</sup> Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

*<sup>3</sup> And he spake this parable unto them, saying, <sup>4</sup> What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*

**Note: keep in mind how He uses numbers here to make His point in this teaching.**

*<sup>5</sup> And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.*

*<sup>7</sup> I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. <sup>8</sup> Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? <sup>9</sup> And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.*

*<sup>10</sup> Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. <sup>11</sup> And he said, A certain man had two sons: <sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. <sup>13</sup> And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.*

*<sup>15</sup> And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. <sup>17</sup> And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. <sup>19</sup> And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

*<sup>20</sup> And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:*

*<sup>23</sup> And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: <sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

So once again we see a lot of numbers in this passage of scriptures. But it brings us back to the most important number, which is actually in the title of this section, "Are You the One?"

## ARE YOU THE ONE?

Are you the one son who thought: 'Maybe things would be better if I go outside of my Father's house. If I go outside of the will of God, maybe there is something out there in the world for me'. But when you find yourself outside of His will, you realize 'you know what? There is nothing out here at all'. There comes a time when we really need to calculate and seriously consider our relationship with God. And like the prodigal son, you come to yourself; as he said, 'how many of my Father's servants are taken care of?' He is counting, he is calculating, similarly to what we talked about in the [previous lesson](#) - we read Psalm 90:12 where it says 'Lord teach us to number our days'. And after considering his condition, the prodigal son realizes 'I can go back to my father's house. Though I'm not worthy to be a son anymore, I'll be one of His servants.'

We read here that when he *did* turn, it says 'and the Father saw him afar off - the Father came and ran to him and put His arms around him and kissed him.' And I can bear witness that this is what happens when you truly turn your heart to the Lord, coming home, and into the Father's will... You realize that it is not just you coming to Him, but He also comes to you. As it is written, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). And this is true.

So the question is, **are you the one son?** Or are you the one in the example of the woman who had ten pieces of silver? Are you the one who was lost? In that example, even though we don't deal with pieces of silver anymore, we can put it in modern terms. Let's say you had 10 thousand dollar bills, so in total you had ten thousand dollars - not too bad. But if you lost one of those bills would you just say "Oh well, I've still got nine thousand dollars here"? No, that one bill that you lost is very valuable to you. And that's how God sees us. Each one of us is very valuable in God's eyes, and if you are one that is lost, it is important to realize how much you are worth to Him. Just as we see the woman who swept the house, God will flip any house upside down and clean it in order to make sure He finds the one that is lost to Him... because every one of His has value in His sight.

Lastly, **are you the one out of the hundred?** The one sheep that has gone astray, or maybe that has always been astray and outside of the will of the Father? And what we see here, which is so beautiful is that God will leave the ninety nine *in the wilderness* to get that one, knowing that He won't lose any. Looking at this parable of the sheep that has gone astray, we might ask: How is it that God goes and seeks that one out of the hundred? Well, the way that He does this is through His Word. He sends His Word into the world to seek the lost. And for those who will accept His Word, He will bring them into the sheepfold.

And the way we come into the *fold* is through Faith, Obedience, Love, and Devotion. That's the fold. This means that when you hear God's message, you respond to it in *faith and obedience*, and then you continue with the Lord in *love and devotion*. In this, He has all hundred of His sheep together; you are brought into the fold with Him.

So with that, if you feel that you are the one who has never come into the fold according to the gospel - or if you are the one who has gone astray and are outside of the Father's will... whatever your spiritual condition and need is, contact us at [www.hisway.life/contact](http://www.hisway.life/contact) and we will help you in any way possible to take the necessary steps to correct your relationship with God, who is the most important One. Understand, yesterday is gone, tomorrow is in the future and is not promised to any of us. So we truly only have today to turn to the Lord and walk with Him, in His Way.