

Seven Zeroes of the New Testament

by: John R. Gibson

Most Bible students are familiar with some of its key numbers. For example, the number forty is key to the flood, the life of Moses, the Israelites in the wilderness, the fasting of Jesus, and other Bible events. Twelve was the number of sons of both Ishmael and Jacob. It was also the number of apostles, the age of Jairus' daughter, and the number of the baskets collected after the feeding of the five thousand. There are other numbers we could talk about, but have you ever thought about zeroes in the New Testament? Since the mathematical concept of zero did not develop until centuries later, the word zero is not mentioned in the New Testament, but there are some things commonly found today that are conspicuously absent from the New Testament.

Recitations of the Hail Mary

For many the term Hail Mary means no more than a long pass attempted at the end of a football half, but to mil-

lions more the Hail Mary, or Ave Maria, is an important element of their religious devotion. In conjunction with this we want to make two observations: 1) Mary truly was a special lady (Luke 1:28, 41-45, 46-48); 2) despite its casual usage by football announcers, many who recite the Hail Mary take it quite seriously. That being said, there is not a single reference to praying the Hail Mary in the New Testament. While some of the phrases that make up the Hail Mary are in the New Testament, they are never found in one collected verse as a prayer to be recited. In fact, there is not a single specific reference to Mary after Acts 1. As Acts relates the story of apostolic preaching, and then as we read the letters to the various churches and individuals, not only do we never read of the Hail Mary, we do not read of Mary at all.

References to Peter (or Anyone Else) as Pope

Though millions of people believe the papacy began with Peter, there is no evidence of this to be found in the New Testament. Peter was a married man (Matthew 8:14) who refused to allow Cornelius to worship him (Acts 10:25, 26), and described himself to some simply as a “fellow elder,” not their Holy Father (1 Peter 5:1). You may read about Peter the Pope outside the New Testament, but you will not find a single mention of such within its pages.

Preachers Called by the Title of Reverend

Reverend has become the common title placed before the name of preachers, but there is no scriptural basis for doing this. Most Bible translations do not contain the word, but it is found in Psalm 111:9 of the King James Version where it applies to the name of God. It is an honorable thing to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:15), but such does not earn one a title of exaltation. Let us all heed the warning given to the disciples in Matthew 20:26, 27—“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.”

Women Preaching to the Assembled Church

While women were involved in spreading the good news about Jesus Christ (Acts 8:4; 18:26; 21:8, 9), it is clear that when the whole church was gathered the women were to keep silent (1 Corinthians 14:23, 34, 35). In another place Paul, based upon the order of creation and the nature of the first sin, stated that women were never allowed to teach in positions of authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11-14). It may seem odd in our twenty-first century culture, but the number of women preachers in the New Testament was zero. Does the cultural shift today give us the right to change that number?

Instrumental Music in the Worship of the Church

There are many references to instrumental music in the worship of the Old Testament, both in 1 Chronicles and the Psalms, but none in the New Testament. Since we find several references to singing (e.g. 1 Cor. 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), but none to playing in the New Testament, doesn't their frequent Old Testament mention make the New Testament zero all the more conspicuous?

Infant Baptisms

While millions of people today were baptized as infants, there is not a single men-

tion of this practice in the New Testament. First century baptisms were for those old enough and mature enough to believe, repent, and commit their lives to the Lord (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:18, 19). While some households are said to have been baptized (e.g. Acts 16:33, 34), not all families then or now include infants. In fact, the only time age is indicated about the subjects of baptism is in Acts 8:12 where we read, "...both men and women were baptized." If the New Testament number of infant baptisms was zero, why should there be any today?

People Saved by the Sinner's Prayer

Countless millions have been told to pray the Sinner's Prayer, but not a single apostle of Jesus Christ ever gave similar instructions. Peter responded to the question of what should be done with an exhortation to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37, 38). After having seen the Lord in a vision Paul spent three days praying, only to be told, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Instead of reciting a prayer that is never found in the New Testament, shouldn't we do what the Savior said in Mark 16:16? "He who believes and is baptized will be saved."

Why are so many New Testament zeroes found in great numbers today? While many answers to that question could be given, we are confident no good answer will be found. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8, 9).

New Reading Schedule...

With the new year, we will be starting a new reading schedule! For 2017, we plan to read some of the epistles (Galatians through Philemon) multiple times. If you continue with the schedule, you will read these books 8 times over the next year. We hope you will join us in this endeavor!

What Does Submission Look Like?

by: Doy Moyer

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Imagine a person whose normal mode is to run red lights (maybe we don't have to imagine so much). He runs this light and the next one, but then comes upon a red light and sees a police officer sitting there at the corner. He stops because he doesn't want the ticket. Is this person a true law-abiding citizen? Is he really submitting himself to the law? Or is he just picking and choosing when to stop for the sake of his own convenience? After all, getting stopped and being issued a ticket would be highly inconvenient and costly, but if the police officer were not sitting there, he would have run the light. His goal is not to be obedient, but to act out of selfishness and personal convenience.

Peter wrote:

“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Peter 2:13-15).

Likewise, Paul wrote:

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves” (Rom. 13:1-2).

These instructions are not based on our agreement with the governing authorities, but upon God's will. When we just happen to agree with a law and therefore do it because it aligns with our own will or is simply convenient to do so, that is not real submission. When we do what the law says just because it is convenient at that moment, we are not really being law-abiding citizens. We are acting selfishly. Our intent isn't to obey the law, but to do whatever is most advantageous to us in that moment. We abide by the rules we like, but when the rules run counter to what we like, we feel free to do our own thing. Much of modern culture seems to thrive on this mentality. It is wrong.

Might we be treating God in the same way? We may do what God says when we like it, but find ways to circumvent the Lord's teachings when don't like them. Are we being true disciples if we act this way?

True submission is seen, not just when a law or expressed will aligns with our desires or when we can conveniently do it, but even when we don't agree and we find it inconvenient. This is true of a wife's submission to her husband, who is to love her as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:22-33). Even more, this is true of our service to God, who loves us in spite of ourselves. Submitting to God isn't about finding the commands that we like and agree with; it's about doing what God says because He loves us, we love Him, and we recognize His absolute authority over us. We don't need God to rationalize Himself in order to satisfy our curiosities. We just need to be doers of the word, not merely hearers filled with self-delusions (James 1:22).

Submission, though, is more than just obeying someone's will whether we agree or disagree; it can involve acting in another's best interests, especially when serving others. Jesus, in accordance with the Father's will, gave Himself over to His own creation to be put to death, not because He was under human authority, but because He loves us and wanted to save us. This was a voluntary action on His part as He emptied and humbled Himself "by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). This attitude, or mind, of Christ is well stated by Paul:

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus..." (Phil. 2:3-4).

The issue here is not so much about being forced to submit, but rather freely giving ourselves over to the service of others. Being "subject to one another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:21) is to be done voluntarily and out of love. It is to benefit others, intentionally putting the interests of others over our own. Such cannot be done out of selfish desire or convenience. The Hebrews writer made the point:

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

Christianity necessitates submission. When we choose Christ, we are choosing the Lord and others over our own desires.

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

The Power of Prayer

Ladies

Corner

by: Laura Brewer

As 2016 draws to a close and the new year is on the horizon, our thoughts naturally go to resolutions. We resolve, or determine to do things differently in the upcoming year, whether it is to eat better, exercise more, or be more organized. Quite often my top resolution is the latter, and after moving our family twice in the last two years I definitely need to spend some time in 2017 organizing the clutter in our new garage. By comparison it is really not that bad, but I seem to accumulate and hang on to things that we no longer need or use. They may not be bad things in and of themselves, but the sheer accumulation of them and my lack of determination to take action have resulted in a quite the pile of clutter. And as I'm sure you all know, clutter means work. Physical, material clutter takes time and effort to control and honestly it can be exhausting.

The accumulation of physical clutter is not the only thing that can weigh us down. Mental or spiritual clutter can occur when we hang on to or dwell on the cares of this world. Our worries, our fears, our hopes, or our daily struggles can be overwhelming at times. We trick ourselves into thinking that we can handle it all. We may at times unload our troubles on a friend or family member, which can provide temporary comfort. However, the perfect solution to this type of mental clutter is freely available to all who seek it – prayer! In speaking about worldly cares, Jesus made it clear that we are not to dwell on them –

“Therefore do not worry, saying ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:31-33)

God knows the things that we need. If we seek first to serve Him, then everything else will be taken care of. However, we are told to actively ask for our needs and seek the will of God. This requires action on our parts. We cannot simply rely on the fact that God is omniscient and He knows what we need; we are told to ask Him, and to do so in prayer –

*“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers.”
(1 Peter 3:12)*

God has gifted us a 24 hour hotline, if you will, to lift up our voices in prayer. Whenever and wherever, we can pray to God and if we are righteous, He will hear us. What a wonderful thought! When something bad happens, our first reaction should be to pray. When something good happens, our first reaction should be to pray. Have you ever had something that you just needed to talk to someone about right away, whether it was good or bad? Prayer allows us to do just that with the Lord. We don't need a phone, text, or email. We simply have to pray.

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4:6-7)*

If we make our requests known to God, then we shall have peace—a peace of mind that is beyond even our own understanding. The simple method of talking things out in prayer reminds us that the Lord is in control, and knowing that things are in His hands brings us peace. By praying, we are figuratively de-cluttering our minds and recognizing that the Lord will take care of us.

Not only are we to pray for ourselves, but we are to pray for others as well. In order to know the needs of our brethren, and what we should be praying for, we must be able to talk with them about such things. Unless we tell our brethren know what our struggles are, they will not know that we need their prayers. Sometimes we go through things in our lives that are difficult to discuss openly, but James tells us that we must do so in order to pray for each other –

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16)

Lastly, we are told to pray constantly. Prayer isn't something that we can just use whenever it suits us. It is not something to use as a last-ditch attempt at getting what we want. We are commanded to pray constantly, not just when we feel like it –

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Daily Bible Reading

January 2017

January 2	Galatians 1	January 17	Philippians 1:19-2:11
January 3	Galatians 2:1-3:9	January 18	Philippians 2:12-3:11
January 4	Galatians 3:10-4:7	January 19	Philippians 3:12-4:23
January 5	Galatians 4:8-5:6	January 20	Colossians 1
January 6	Galatians 5:7-6:18	January 23	Colossians 2
January 9	Ephesians 1	January 24	Colossians 3:1-17
January 10	Ephesians 2:1-3:7	January 25	Colossians 3:18-4:18
January 11	Ephesians 3:8-4:16	January 26	1 Thessalonians 1-2
January 12	Ephesians 4:17-5:21	January 27	1 Thessalonians 3-4
January 13	Ephesians 5:22-6:24	January 30	1 Thessalonians 5
January 16	Philippians 1:1-18	January 31	2 Thessalonians 1-2

Gallatin Valley Church of Christ
C/O Kris Brewer
PO Box 11111
Bozeman, MT 59719

Mail To:

www.gallatinvalleycoc.com