

Chapter 22

The Number 70 – Restoration of the Nations

In Scripture, the number 70 is considered the number of universality or the restoration of all things, especially in relation to the nations.

In his book *Number in Scripture*, E.W. Bullinger states that "7 x 10 signifies perfect spiritual order and carried out with all spiritual power and significance. Both spirit and power are greatly emphasized." This signification and restoration go hand-in-hand since the restoration of all things signifies perfect spiritual order and is brought about by all spiritual power. When God's perfect spiritual order comes, all things will be restored back to God. **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things** (Romans 11:36).

The number 70 appears in several critical historical accounts in Scripture.

The first mention of 70 is in Genesis 10 where it is recorded that 70 descendants of Noah repopulated the earth after the flood. These 70 were essentially the beginning of the nations on earth as mankind was rebooted, so to speak. Thus, the number 70 represents all the nations and their restoration after God's judgment.

In Genesis 46:26-27, there were 70 persons belonging to Jacob that went into Egypt. The nation of Israel eventually came forth from this group, so the number signifies the beginning of a new nation.

In Numbers 11:16, while in the wilderness, God gave Moses the command to choose 70 elders to help him judge the nation of Israelites. Thus, the number signifies judgment of the nations.

Later, after Solomon's United Kingdom of Israel was split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, Judah was given the **iron yoke** of judgment (Jeremiah 28:13-14) and sent into Babylonian captivity for 70 years, which was also the length of years for the Babylonian monarchy. With the end of the 70 years, Judah was allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and its temple (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 7:5); a nation was regathered.

In Daniel 9:24, the Lord told Daniel that 70 weeks were set for his people to finish the transgression. These 70 weeks were actually 490 years that ended with the crucifixion of Jesus in 33 AD. The last week or 7 years of Daniel's 70 weeks occurred from 26-33 AD. Jesus began His ministry in the midst of the week in 29 AD when He went to John for baptism on the Day of Atonement. This is when He presented Himself for ministry and made an end to sin, which was fully consummated at the Cross. This opened the way for a new nation (Matthew 21:43).

These few examples reveal that the number 70 is associated with the nations. However, there are two other significant references.

The primary one is discovered in the 7-day **Feast of Tabernacles** that the sons of Israel celebrated each year, starting on the 15th day of the 7th month.

(12) 'Then on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall observe a feast to the LORD for seven days. (13) 'You shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire as a soothing aroma to the LORD: thirteen bulls.... (17) 'Then on the second day: twelve bulls.... (20) 'Then on the third day: eleven bulls.... (32) 'Then on the seventh day: seven bulls.... (Numbers 29:12-32 NASB)

Notice that on the first day they sacrificed 13 bulls and on the second day they sacrificed 12 bulls. Each day they reduced the number of bulls to be sacrificed by one until on the 7th day they sacrificed 7 bulls. There were a total of 70 bulls sacrificed over this 7-day period.

According to the **Jewish Talmud**, based on Genesis 10 and Noah's descendants, these 70 bulls corresponded to the number of the nations in the world.

As the teaching goes, the purpose of these sacrifices during the Feast of Tabernacles was to appeal to God for the restoration of all the nations of the world, to restore them back to God. They were doing this with full knowledge of God's heart as revealed through His prophets.

In like fashion, when Jesus came in fulfillment of all the prophets, He sent out 70 of His disciples into the harvest of the world as a sign that it is God's plan to restore all the nations.

Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. (Luke 10:1 NASB)

Later, Peter reminded the men of Israel of this fact.

(19) "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; (20) and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, (21) whom heaven must receive until *the period of restoration of all things* about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. (Acts 3:19-21 NASB)

In other words, God plans to harvest (i.e., restore) all things to Himself through His Son who has the power to subject all things to Himself (1 Corinthians 15:25-28; Philippians 3:21). Some might reply that this refers to all things and not nations or individuals. Are not nations included in all things, and do not people make up nations or *ethnos*, that is, ethnics, tribes, or races? Besides, the first mention in Scripture of the number 70 clearly signifies nations.

Carrying this thought to its fullest extent means the restoration of all things. After all, according to Paul, who used a similar word, God in Christ has **reconciled all things** to Himself on earth and in heaven (Colossians 1:20), and God is not counting the world's trespasses against them (2 Corinthians 5:19). Is this not the greatest perfect spiritual order imaginable?