

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#05-1150

The Number 70

December 31, 2011

Restoration of All Things

I am closing out the year with this topic because it has to do with the word that I believe the Lord has put on my heart for 2012.

There are two main views of the meaning of the number 70.

First, 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."

Second, the number 70 is considered the number of universality or the restoration of all things.

Of course, these two views are mutually inclusive. In fact, they go hand-in-hand since the restoration of all things signifies perfect spiritual order and is brought about by all spiritual power. Another way of stating this is that 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).

Before explaining this thought, let us consider some places in scripture where the number 70 appears.

The first mention is discovered with the descendants of Shem, Japheth, and Ham that repopulated the earth after the flood. Adding up the descendants of Noah as recorded in Genesis 10 reveals that there were 70 of them.

The house of Jacob that entered Egypt numbered 70, and from this group eventually came the nation of Israel.

(26) All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all, (27) and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were **seventy**. (Genesis 46:26-27 NASB)

When the Lord delivered the sons of Israel from Egypt and led them into the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, God gave Moses the command to choose 70 elders to help him judge the people.

The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me **seventy** men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. (Numbers 11:16 NASB)

Later and 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).

The Lord told Daniel that 70 weeks were set for his people to finish the transgression.

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. (Daniel 9:24 NASB)

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.

Finally, Jesus sent 70 disciples out into the field for a harvest.

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)

These are just a few examples of the appearance of the number 70 in scripture.

Now, the number 70 signifies the restoration of all things in that it refers to all the nations. As we have already seen, there were 70 descendants of Noah following the flood, and these 70 were essentially the beginning of the nations on earth that was restored after the flood. Thus, the number 70 represents all the nations and their restoration.

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).

This thought was conveyed 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, these 70 bulls corresponded to the number of the nations, 70 in the world. Thus, 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. 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)

One further proof of this was when Jesus, who came in fulfillment of all the prophets, 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. God plans to harvest (i.e., restore) all the nations to Himself through His Son who has the power to subject all things to Himself (1 Corinthians 15:25-28; Philippians 3:21).