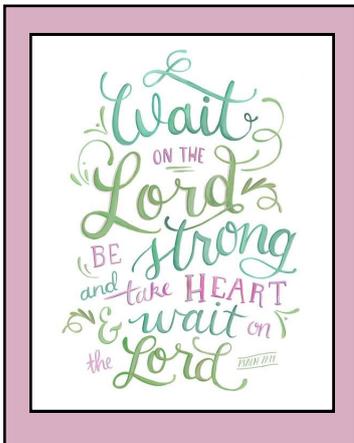
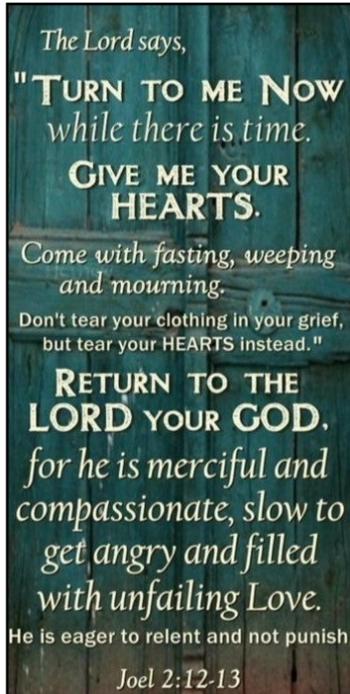


Battle Baptist Church

Being Transformed Together



28th February 2021



Biblical Sevens

Each book of the Bible is exquisitely designed but none more so than chapter 1 of Genesis when read in Biblical Hebrew. The readers of Genesis 1 in Hebrew would have been taught to study this chapter carefully in an attempt to begin understanding the literary constructs and designs used in the whole Old Testament, leading to the books in the New Testament. The number seven is everywhere. Of course there are the seven days of the creation narrative, but there is so much more to glean when looking at the Hebrew. In our culture the number seven has become a kind of lucky number, just like thirteen might be deemed unlucky. However, in the Bible, the number seven is a number that represents completeness, or even a holy completeness.

In Biblical Hebrew, the first verse of Genesis contains seven words:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ¹

One of the key things about the number seven is that like all odd numbers, it has a centre. This centre is often apparent when the writers of the books of the Bible want to create a structure that is helpful or draw attention to a central point or theme. For example, the book of Leviticus may seem like a book that is just full of obscure laws and rituals that we are tempted to skim read or even miss out. Nevertheless, the book has been carefully written in seven sections that are very helpful in positioning the text into organised passages, through which we can understand and learn:

- section 1 (ch 1-7) and section 7 (ch 23-27) contain the laws about ritual
- section 2 (ch 8-10) and section 6 (ch 21-22) contain the laws about the priesthood
- section 3 (ch 11-15) and section 5 (ch 18-

- 20) contain the laws about purity leaving the central section 4 (ch 16-17) to draw attention to the important Day of Atonement.

Seeing this structure is incredibly helpful as we grapple with some of the laws that seem obscure to us: it is created using the seven sections of completeness.

Looking again at the first verse of Genesis, the fourth word אֶת is not found in our English translations, as it is a marker of the direct object in Hebrew. In English, we indicate this by word order instead. This key central word uses the first and last letter of the Hebrew alphabet which immediately indicates a parallel with Revelation 22:13 'I am the alpha and omega', the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This attention to detail in the design of the first verse of the Bible is incredible and we have as much to learn from the Hebrew as the English translations we use.

There are many more sevens to look at even within Genesis 1 (the second verse contains fourteen (2x7) words and then verse three begins the creation narrative which consists of seven days), let alone the whole Bible. Perhaps this week, we can think about the number seven, the completeness it represents and see Genesis 1 through the eyes of the ancient readers of the Biblical Hebrew texts.

Yours in Christ,

Jenny

P.S. I am still at the very early stages of learning Biblical Hebrew, but if anyone would like to discuss the Hebrew text in more detail, I will attempt to do so!

¹ Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

² Bible Project video on Leviticus <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/torah-leviticus/>

PRAYER POINTERS

COVID-19

Pray for everyone working and studying in schools and colleges as they prepare to return to their setting and prepare to manage testing. Pray for parents whose childcare plans are complicated,

Missionary Links

Please continue to pray for the Kakishes in the Holy Land; for Claire Grimble in Nepal; the Nekounams in Kazakhstan; and for BMS, working in four continents with some of the world's most marginalised people.

Foodbank

Thank the Lord for new volunteers which means that the Foodbank is adequately staffed. Pray for clients: in their time of deep need may they encounter the love of Christ through the volunteers they meet.

NEWSLETTER

28th February 2021

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Battle Baptist Church is part of Life with Hope Trust; registered charity 1134288, Mount Street, Battle,

East Sussex TN33 0EG.

- Website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
- Telephone and answerphone (01424) 774825 • Email: office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
- Caterpillar Preschool direct telephone line:

Church maintenance issues:
zionpremisesteam@gmail.com



NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Baptist Union Presidency '22/'23: Please contact the office to say which [candidate](#) you would like to support. The vote closes on [31st March](#).

Children and Young People: Online meetings resume as usual this week. Contact Tim and Caroline via [email](#) for more information.

Catching up? Go to the BBC [YouTube channel](#) to find sermons, broadcasts, testimonies and more.

Digging deeper? Find materials for further study under the 'For Further Fought...' tab on the church [website](#).

Foodbank: Donations of tinned fish, steamed puddings, small bags of sugar, bottles of squash and shaving foam would be particularly appreciated this week. Thank you for your continuing support.

Looking ahead:

Holy Week, 29 March—2nd April: Early morning prayers will be held at 8am each day, via Zoom.

Next Church Meeting—revised date: Our next ordinary church meeting will take place on Thursday **22nd** April, from 7.30pm, via Zoom.

WORLD VIEW

Vietnam – In 2018 Y Bi was thrown out of her home by her husband after she became a Christian. Thanks to prayers and support from 'Open Doors' supporters, she has settled into a new home and a new Christian community. She says, "It's amazing to be living with other Christians. It's a wonderful thing. Even when I am doing house chores, I can study the Word of God."

'Show me the right path, O Lord;
point out the road for me to follow.
Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.'

Psalm 25:4,5

The [Baptist Union](#) has issued renewed call for us to persevere in prayer regarding the COVID-19 pandemic:

"As Covid-19 threatens to overwhelm our health service and continues to inflict pain and loss, we stand together with many others and **renew our commitment to sustained prayer**.

"You may like to join virtually with friends to pray, perhaps in small groups or as a wider congregation. You might like to spend time in solitude praying for our nation at this time of crisis.

"Here are some **pointers to help you and your friends as you pray**. These have been written by a senior A&E nurse in a large teaching hospital:

1. Pray for all the NHS staff for their own safety, energy and peace in dealing with each and every patient.

2. Pray for those in hospital leadership, for wisdom and for good decisions to give the best outcomes for patients.
3. Pray for patients; for healing, for peace and ultimately to fight this disease and get home and pray for their relatives who feel helpless.
4. Pray for the vaccine, that it will and is working against this latest strain of Covid-19.
5. Pray for a reprieve and an end to Covid-19.

"**You may know people who are currently working in the NHS or another healthcare setting** in your area, please let them know you are praying for them and ask them how you can pray specifically."

(Taken from the Baptist Union website)