

MONMOUTHSHIRE 45p Wednesday, August 9, 2017 Free Press

Dear Friends,
Believe it or not, but this is my seventieth monthly thought in the Free Press. And that made me think about the significance of the numbers seven and indeed 70 in the *Bible*. Did you know, for example, that the number seven appears in the *Bible* more than 700 times? Of course, not every instance of the number seven in the *Bible* carries a deeper significance, but it is true to say that often it seems that seven communicates the meaning of divine completeness, perfection and wholeness.

In the first book of the *Bible*, *Genesis*, God spends six days working hard on creating the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rests. And in last book of the *Bible*, *Revelation*, we find reference to sevens letters to seven churches, sevens spirits before the throne of God, seven golden lamp stands, seven stars in Jesus' right hand, seven angels with seven trumpets, and I could go on. The number 70 comes in when Simon Peter asks Jesus how many times

he is expected to forgive his brother and sister, and Jesus replies, "I tell you, not seven times, but 70 times seven" (Matthew 18:22), meaning an infinitely large number, and that each and every one of us should be generous and tireless in forgiving one another.

I guess you too have your favourite number? As it 'happens', I do like seven, although my absolute favourite is three. Why? I wish I knew, and that I could give some Biblical reason for it such as the Trinity perhaps (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), but no, my heart for the number three goes back to long before I became a Christian. However, once you pick your favourite number, don't you find that they easily take on a real significance for you, and you tend to use them in passwords and such like as they are easily remembered? Next month I shall hope to touch on Jesus' very own and personal use of the holy number in his seven 'I AM' sayings as quoted in John's Gospel, and until then, God bless you.

Rev Preben Andersen

Thought for the weak



with the Rev Preben Andersen