

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Seven

The Completed Church

Nearly everything that is found in the scriptures concerning the number seven and the subject of completions can be related to the completed church and the work of Jesus Christ. There are some things that are directly related to the visible manifest local bodies of Christ that we refer to as the church. We will now look at some of these things.

2 Tim. 3:16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." From this passage we gather that everything that is needed concerning good works is provided for us in the scriptures. Among the things that have been provided for us is the gospel ministry. The Lord interpreted a sign for us in Rev. chapter 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." The use of the number seven indicates that we have a completed church and a complete gospel ministry. The seven stars represent the ministry and the seven candlesticks represent the churches. In the next two chapters, the Lord gave instructions to the seven stars and ultimately to the seven candlesticks. That is, the Lord gave instructions to the churches through the gospel ministry. These instructions are in the scriptures, which are a thorough furnisher.

When the Lord had the apostles to establish the office of deacon in the church at Jerusalem, he had them choose out seven men of honest report and full of the Holy Ghost to be appointed over the work that God made them responsible for. There are obviously more than seven preachers and seven deacons in the local churches today. However, when the Lord illustrated the work he used the number seven to make it known that the offices of deacon and bishop were of his origin and that he gave us complete instructions that these men might be set aside to the work that God had given them.

To illustrate the priority and importance of the preaching of the gospel to give spiritual food to the children of God, God fed a multitude with seven loaves of bread: Matt. 15:36 "And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake

them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full." Bread was a staple food in the diet of the Jews. Bread symbolically represents the word of God. The preaching of the word feeds us spiritually. The word of God is a complete and wonderfully nutritious diet for the children of God. After the Lord had fed the multitude they were to gather the fragments and they filled seven baskets.

Throughout the scriptures, baskets were carriers in which to carry bread. Therefore, the seven baskets represent God's people in the church who feast on the word, carry it in their hearts throughout the week, and continue to feast on its teachings.