

**HEBREW
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LISTS**

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The understanding of the poetry in Hebrew writing continues to grow. Much of this knowledge has developed since the publishing of the Book of Mormon. It has been the position of critiques of the Book of Mormon that it is not an ancient text, but rather one authored by Joseph Smith. As more of these poetic styles are discovered in the Bible and then if they are also evident in the Book of Mormon, it is testimony that in fact the Book of Mormon is an ancient text authored by individuals with the same understanding in writing styles as those that authored the books of the Bible.

A recent finding in the Bible is that of "numerical lists". It has been known for quite some time that the Hebrew culture uses certain numbers to symbolize other ideas, i.e. 3 - godhead, 4 - creation, 7 - completion and 12 - perfection. This is quite evident in the Book of Revelation with the importance of the number 7. The number 7 which symbolizes completion is throughout the Book of Revelation which looks through history to the end and hence the "completion" of all things. Not only is the number 7 mentioned numerous times, but in many lists in the Book of Revelation there are 7 items or events in the lists.

It is from this concept that comes the basis for the theory of "numerical lists" that is presented in the book *In Search of the Biblical Order* by J. M. Cascione published in 1987. In his book Cascione contends that although the Book of Revelation was written in Greek, it is Hebrew in its style and poetry. He also asserts that the Book of Revelation is full of these poetic "numerical lists" and that they are found in every book of the Bible. Interestingly, when you know what to look for it is also present in the Book of Mormon. Simply put, when the writer speaks of a topic he will present a list of the elements of the topic which equal the number that represents the topic. It is very evident in the Book of Revelation, because the number 7 is mentioned often. In other books it is more difficult to find because the symbolic number is not mentioned.

I) The number 2 symbolizes the word of God:

If thy children will keep my **covenant** and my **testimony** that I shall teach them...
(Psalms 132:12)

...they preached the **word**, and the **truth**, according to the spirit of **prophecy** and **revelation**... (Alma 20:2) **Note: in this verse from the Book of Mormon, there are two lists of two concerning the word of God in one verse.

II) The number 3 symbolizes the Godhead:

That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside **me**. I am the **LORD**, and there is **none else**. (Isaiah 45:6)

Being filled with great joy, because of the resurrection of the dead, according to the **will**, and **power**, and **deliverance** of Jesus Christ from the bands of death. (Alma 2:21)

III) The number 4 symbolizes creation:

...and worship him that made **heaven**, and **earth**, and the **sea**, and the **fountains of waters**. (Revelation 14:7)

Every **nation**, **kindred**, **tongue** and **people**, shall be blessed. (1 Nephi 5:257)

IV) The number 5 symbolizes human emotion and experience:

Wherefore laying aside all **malice**, and all **guile**, and **hypocrisies**, and **envies**, and all **evil speakings**, 1 Peter 2:1

...is most abominable above all other churches, which **slayeth** the saints of God, yea, and **tortureth** them and **bindeth** them down, and **yoketh** them with a yoke of iron, and **bringeth them down into captivity**. (1 Nephi 3:140)

V) The number 6 symbolizes the nature or quality of creation. Hence the negative side of 6 is destruction. It is from this that Satan's identifier is 666, the nature of creation to elevate itself to the level of God (6 in a set of 3 which is the Godhead):

And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in **fine linen**, and **purple**, and **scarlet**, and **decked with gold**, and **precious stones**, and **pearls**! (Revelation 18:16)

...if all these deaths and destructions by **fire**, and by **smoke**, and by **tempests**, and by **whirlwinds**, and by the **opening of the earth** to receive them, and **all these things**... (3 Nephi 4:69) **Note: this particular verse makes a strong argument for the case of these numerical lists being intentional. It sounds as if the author ran out of things to complete his list of six and therefore concluded with "and all these things".

VI) Cascione attributes the symbolism of the number 7 to judgment while most other sources associate it with completion. He is not necessarily incorrect as judgment is the final act that completes all things, however in many scriptural examples such as in the Book of Revelation the authors use it more liberally for examples of completion than just judgment:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of **all nations**, and **kindreds**, and **people**, and **tongues**, **stood** before the throne, and before the Lamb, **clothed** with white robes, and palms in their hands; And **cried with a loud voice**, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9-10)

...that he manifesteth himself unto all they that believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; Yea, unto every **nation**, **kindred**, **tongue**, and **people**, working mighty **miracles**, **signs** and **wonders**, among the children of men, according to their faith. (2 Nephi 11:78-79) **Note: here a list of 4 (creation) is combined with a list of 3 (Godhead) to compose a list of 7 (complete plan).

Yea, he that **repenteth** and **exerciseth faith**, and **bringeth forth good works**, and **prayeth continually** without ceasing: unto such it is given **to know the mysteries of God**; yea, unto such it shall be given **to reveal things** which never have been revealed; Yea, and it shall be given unto such, **to bring thousands of**

souls to repentance... (Alma 14:103-104) **Note: as above we have a list of 4 requirements (creation) that if followed will get 3 results (Godhead) and comprises a complete plan with 7 elements.

VII) Cascione attributes the number 10 with symbolizing completion, while most other sources believe 10 symbolizes our relationship/responsibilities with God:

I know **thy works**, and **thy labour**, and **thy patience**, and how **thou canst not bear** them which are evil: and **thou hast tried** them which say they are apostles, and are not, and **hast found them liars**: And **hast borne**, and **hast patience**, and for my name's sake **hast laboured**, and **hast not fainted**. (Revelation 2:2-3)

For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may **teach the word of wisdom**; and to another, that he may **teach the word of knowledge** by the same Spirit; and to another exceeding **great faith**; and to another, the **gifts of healing** by the same Spirit. And again, to another, that he may **work mighty miracles**; and again, to another, that he may **prophecy** concerning all things; and again, to another, the **beholding of angels and ministering spirits**; and again, to another, all kinds of **tongues**; and again, to another, the **interpretation** of languages and of divers kinds of tongues. And **all these gifts** come by the Spirit of Christ ... (Moroni 10:10-12)

VIII) Cascione believes that the number 12 represents the church, while many others think that 12 symbolizes perfection:

Charity 1[suffereth long, and is kind]; 2[charity envieth not]; 3[charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up], 4[Doth not behave itself unseemly], 5 [seeketh not her own], 6[is not easily provoked], 7[thinketh no evil]; 8[Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth]; 9[Beareth all things], 10[believeth all things], 11 [hopeth all things], 12[endureth all things]. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) **Note: "suffereth long and is kind" is one thought in the original text, similarly "vaunteht not itself, is not puffed up" presents one thought and "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoice in the truth" are opposites of the same thought. That leaves us with 12 elements of what Moroni describes as the "pure" or perfect love of Christ (Moroni 7:52)

And charity 1[suffereth long], and 2[is kind], and 3[envieth not], and 4[is not puffed up], 5[seeketh not her own], 6[is not easily easily provoked], 7[thinketh no evil], and 8[rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth], 9[bearth all things], 10[believeth all things], 11[hopeth all things], 12[endureth all things]... (Moroni 7:51)

Now those priests which did go forth among the people, did preach against all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and malice, and revilings, and stealing, robbing, plundering, murdering, committing adultery, and all manner of lasciviousness... (Alma 11:29) **Note: this a negative list of those things to not do. The goal is perfection and the list includes 12 things that they preached against.