

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Thousand – Israel Multiplied

Deu. 1:10 "The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)" Moses told the children of Israel a short time before they were to go possess the land of Canaan that God had multiplied them and that they were now as the stars of heaven for multitude. Then he said that "The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!" This was not wishful thinking of Moses that Israel be multiplied a thousand times so many more, but it was according to the promise that God had made. This promise had been made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God promised Abraham and subsequently his son and grandson that he would multiply the seed of Abraham as follows:

1. Gen. 26:4 "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;"
2. Gen. 13:16 "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."
3. Gen. 22:17 "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;"

These metaphors of "stars of heaven," "dust of the earth," and "sand upon the sea shore" are not to be taken literally, but as it represents a number of great size that cannot be numbered by man. Likewise, the use of the term "thousand times" indicates an exceeding great number according to the promise of God. This exceeding great number of God's children that make up the multiplied seed of Abraham, which seed is Christ, is set forth for us in Rev. 7:9, 10: "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."

The numbers of God's covenant elect children numbers a great multitude, which no man could number. This number is not limited to natural Israel, but is found in all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues. God always keeps his promises. Election is not

a doctrine of "us four and no more" but a doctrine of immense size and exceeding broadness. Thanks be to God for his covenant promise and his grace and mercy.