

Seven in the Bible

What is the significance of the number "seven" in the Bible?

The Hebrew word for "oath-swearing" is *sheba*, which is based on the word for seven. Of course oath-swearing is the means of entering a covenant in the biblical world--such as, in our experience, the exchange of "vows" when entering the marriage covenant. In Hebrew, then, to swear an oath literally means to "seven oneself." So "seven" has a significance in the Bible beyond the mere number.

In fact, salvation history may be understood as a progression of covenants, beginning with creation, as God "sevened Himself" to the cosmos in creating the world in six days and resting on the Sabbath, or seventh day, which in a sense perfected His work of creation.

From there we see in the Bible a series of covenants--with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and eventually Christ Himself, the mediator of a new and eternal covenant--through which He progressively accomplishes the work of salvation.

This is a big subject. Perhaps the best commentary on this particular subject may be found in Scott Hahn's book, [*Swear to God*](#), especially chapter eight, entitled "The Engine of History."