

Nothing

Hebrews 11:1-3 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Noah Webster: "Faith is firm belief in something for which there is no proof."

Warren Wiersbe: "True Bible faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences."

Tim Rutledge: "Faith is the willingness to look foolish!"

F.A.I.T.H. = "Forsaking All I Trust Him"

But Hebrews gives, not so much a DEFINITION of faith (what it IS), but a DESCRIPTION of faith (how it WORKS).

Faith is the SUBSTANCE ("support") of things hoped for.
Faith is the EVIDENCE ("proof") of things not seen.

v.3 – creation teaches us that everything that can be seen was made from things that can't be seen – and God's kingdom still works that way!

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

We interpret this verse rightly to mean "with God anything is possible" ... but for a moment, look at it this way – "with God, ending up with nothing is impossible!" When your faith is in God, you always get something!

Ivan Panin was born in Russia on December 12, 1855. Having participated in plots against the Czar at an early age, he was exiled and, after some years spent studying in Germany, he came to the United States and entered Harvard University. After graduation in 1882, he converted from agnosticism to Christianity. Then in 1890 he discovered the incredible mathematical designs underlying both the Greek text of the New Testament and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. This painstaking study of God's Word would become his life's work.

For some months preceding Sunday, November 19th, 1899, the New York Sun had been devoting the better part of a page of its Sunday edition to the discussion of the truth of Christianity. On this date it printed a letter from a writer identified only as W.R.L., in which he denounced Christianity and challenged 'some champion of orthodoxy to come into the arena of the Sun,' and give its readers some 'facts' in defense of the Christian religion.

Ivan Panin had not seen a copy of the New York Sun for years; but on his way from South Farmingham to Grafton, Massachusetts that particular issue of the Sun, left on a vacant seat in the train, fell into his hands. He wrote a response titled "Inspiration of the Scriptures Scientifically Demonstrated" in which he demonstrated phenomenal features of the number seven in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew one, and then began to expand from there:

"There is not, however, a single paragraph of the scores in Matthew that is not constructed in exactly the same manner. Only with each additional paragraph the difficulty of constructing it increases not in arithmetical, but in geometrical progression. For he contrives to write his paragraphs so as to develop constantly fixed numeric relations to what goes before and after. Thus in his last chapter he contrives to use just 7 words not used by him before. It would thus be easy to show that Mr. L. would require some centuries to write a book like Matthew's. How long it took Matthew the writer does not know. But how he contrived to do it between the Crucifixion, AD 30 (and his Gospel could not have been written earlier), and the destruction of Jerusalem, AD 70 (and the Gospel could not have been written later), let Mr. L. and his like-minded explain. Anyhow, Matthew did it, and we thus have a miracle - an unheard-of literary, mathematical artist, unequaled, hardly even conceivable. This is the first fact for Mr. L. to contemplate ...

A second fact is yet more important: In his very first section, the genealogy discussed above, the words found nowhere else in the New Testament occur 42 times, 7 x 6; and have 126 letters, 7 x 6 x 3, each number a multiple not only of seven, but of 6 sevens, to name only two of the many numeric features of these words. But how did Matthew know, when designing this scheme for these words (whose sole characteristic is that they are found nowhere else in the New Testament) that they would not be found in the other 26 books? That they would not be used by the other 7 New Testament writers? Unless we assume the impossible hypothesis that he had an agreement with them to that effect, he must have had the rest of the New Testament before him when he wrote his book. The Gospel of Matthew, then, was written last ...

It so happens, however, that the Gospel of Mark shows the very same phenomena. Mark then, is another miracle, another unparalleled literary genius. And in the same way in which it was shown that Matthew wrote last it is also shown that Mark, too, wrote last. We have thus established before us this third fact for Mr. L. to contemplate: Matthew surely wrote after Mark, and Mark just as surely wrote after Matthew. It happens, however, to be a fourth fact that Luke presents the same phenomena as Matthew and Mark, and so does John, and James, and Peter, and Jude, and Paul. And we have thus no longer two great unheard-of mathematical literati, but eight of them and each wrote after the other ...

And not only this: As Luke and Peter wrote each 2 books, John 5, and Paul 14, it can in the same way be shown that each of the 27 New Testament books was written last. The phenomena are there and there is no human way of explaining them. Eight men cannot each write last, 27 books, some 500 pages, cannot each be written last. But let's assume that one Mind directed the whole, and the problem is solved simply enough: by this Verbal Inspiration - of every jot and tittle of the New Testament. There remains only to be added that by precisely the same kind of evidence the Old Testament is proved to be equally inspired."□

Ivan Panin was to devote over 50 years of his life painstakingly exploring the numerical structure of the Scriptures, generating over 43,000 detailed, hand-penned pages of analysis (and exhausting his health in the process). He went on to be with the Lord in his 87th year, on October 30, 1942. We are indebted to him for his amazing work!

NOW, LET'S COMBINE GOD'S PERFECT NUMBER SEVEN AND WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT FAITH IN THE FACE OF NOTHING ...

1 Kings 18:41-45 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

2 Kings 5:9-14 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Joshua 6:1-5 Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

Psalms 12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Proverbs 24:16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

WE'RE NOT JUST TALKING STRICTLY ABOUT A NUMBER OF TIMES HERE, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT AN ATTITUDE ...

Matthew 18:21-22 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Luke 11:5-10 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.