

Dear Darrin,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You told us that you have been seeing the numbers 1, 2, 3 “everywhere” (on the scores you received on games, your work papers, on billboards, on clocks, etc.). You wanted to know if there was some meaning connected with this occurrence.

We see no meaning to the numbers 1, 2 and 3 popping up repeatedly. We believe it is only coincidence. You must remember that there are only ten digits in the numerical system so that the numbers 1, 2, and 3 turn up about 30% of the time. On a clock, you may observe these numbers more often. For example, 1:23 comes up twice a day in the morning and the afternoon. You will see 12:30 and 11:23 twice a day as well. You should also note that humans are excellent at pattern recognition, even when the pattern is a coincidence. Try proving this to yourself by choosing to notice the numbers 7, 8, and 9.

However, numbers are an integral part of the Bible. For example, the number three appears frequently. Jesus was three days in the grave, the price of his betrayal was thirty pieces of silver, he was anointed for his death with 300 pence worth of spikenard, and at Pentecost when his sacrifice was applied to the church, the number of believers swelled to 3,000 persons.

There are several examples in the Old Testament where the number three is significant. Abraham viewed Mount Moriah afar off where his son, Isaac, was to be offered on “the third day” (Genesis 22:4). The Letter of the Law, symbolic of the later Spirit of the Law, was received by Israel on “the third day” and even on “the third month” (Exodus 19:11, 1). Offerings under the Law were to be fully consumed by “the third day” (Leviticus 7:17; 19:6). Defiled ones were sprinkled on “the third day” (Numbers 19:19). All these examples have something to do with atonement or reconciliation. But why the number three? It is good to recognize a common theme in the use of a number, but the deeper question is why a particular number is appropriate for the theme. In this case, perhaps three is used because there are three parties to the atonement: God, man, and Jesus our redeemer. “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

There are many numerical symbols God uses throughout the Scriptures. We have only touched lightly on the number three. To do proper justice to this fascinating study of all the numbers and their combinations, we are attaching a file entitled, “Symbolic Numbers.” We hope you find this article as interesting as we did.

Is there some meaning or reason connected with the repetition of the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in daily life? No, we believe their occurrence is only coincidence. We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio