

The 7+4=11 Pattern in the Pentateuch

The Primeval History in Genesis 1–11

In the survey given above we came across an example of the 7+4=11 pattern in the series of eleven introductory formulas in Genesis 31–32 (31:3, 11, 12, 24, 29; 32:10, 13, 27, 28, 29, 30). I have also drawn attention to the ten stereotyped introductory formulas in Genesis 1 and in 6–9, where I referred to a 7+3=10 pattern. However, a more attentive study of the context revealed that the latter pattern, which is there all the same, is really the major part of the longer, more frequently occurring 7+3+1=11 or 7+4=11 pattern.

I became aware of the existence of this pattern when I surveyed and charted the divine speech formulas in the whole of the so-called Primeval History, Genesis 1–11. There appeared to be no less than six instances of this pattern in these eleven chapters: three in the structure of the divine speech formulas, and three in the genealogies in Genesis 4, 5 and 10. Let us examine those pertaining to the divine speeches first.

The Primeval History can be divided into three distinct parts:

- a) the *Story of Creation* in Gen 1:1 – 2:3;
- b) the *Story of Adam and Eve* in Gen 2:4 – 4:26;
- c) the *Story of Humanity* in Genesis 5–11, including the Story of the Flood in 6–9.

The chart I made of the introductory divine speech formulas convinced me that they not only give structure to the material, but they also tie the diverse elements together to give them unity. Let me illustrate what I mean, starting with the eleven divine speeches pertaining to creation, which can be divided into three categories.

- a) heaven and earth with all their living creatures
- b) humanity
- c) womankind

a) The creation of the cosmos and all its living creatures

- 1. And God said: *command regarding light* 1:3
- 2. And God said: *command regarding the firmament* 1:6
- 3. And God said: *command regarding the sea and earth* 1:9
- 4. And God said: command regarding vegetation 1:11**
- 5. And God said: *command regarding heavenly bodies* 1:14
- 6. And God said: *command regarding creatures/birds* 1:20
- 7. And God said: *command regarding cattle/beasts* 1:24¹

b) The creation of humanity

- 8. And God said: *deliberation to create human beings* 1:26
- 9. And God said: *blessing for human beings* 1:28
- 10. And God said: *providing food for human beings* 1:29²

c) The creation of womankind

- 11. And the Lord God said: *decision to create Eve* 2:18

The author clearly wanted to attain the pattern he intended: $7+3+1=11$.

In Genesis 1–2, two additional divine speeches are cited: the blessing of the living creatures and birds in 1:22 and the command regarding the trees in the garden in 2:16. Both of them clearly fall outside the series of eleven utterances introduced by stereotyped formulas using the finite verb “to say.” God’s blessing in 1:22 is simply introduced by the words “And God blessed them, saying,” without the use of the finite verb “he said.” Likewise God’s command in 2:16 is introduced by the phrase “And God commanded the man, saying.”

On the other hand, however, the blessing for mankind in 1:28, being on a higher level than the low-key blessing in 1:22,

is introduced by the crucial stereotyped formula “and God said” used throughout the series.³ The seven divine utterances in category a) are clearly commands, distinguishing them from those in categories b) and c), which have quite a different character, being divine deliberations or decisions expressing God’s thoughts (numbers 8 and 11), and divine addresses expressing his blessing of mankind and his measures regarding food (numbers 9 and 10). This means that not only formally but also as regards contents the first seven utterances belong together. This string of seven divine utterances in Gen 1:1–25 is inextricably linked to the next three utterances in 1:26–30.

In the first of these, in 1:26, God does not create through his commanding word, but deliberates and reflects on his plan to create human beings. God’s thoughts are expressed in words in the form of a soliloquy or interior monologue. In the second utterance, in 1:28, God is presented as giving his blessing to mankind, addressing them directly. Finally, in the third, God expresses the measures he has taken to provide food for mankind and all other creatures.

The way in which the author speaks about the creation of mankind as an act that does not fit into the previous seven acts of creation, shows that it was considered to belong to a different category, being on a higher level. Therefore it is presented as the result of a separate and special act of divine deliberation and reflection. This observation shows once again how the form and structure of a text can give us information about its contents. Strictly speaking, there are not ten “words of creation”—an often used, but incorrect term—but seven. However, these seven utterances and the following three belong both structurally and with respect to contents inseparably together in a fixed pattern: $7+3=10$.

This coherence is found also in the eleventh divine utterance in 2:18—God’s decision to create Eve; for it is a deliberation just like that in 1:26 regarding the creation of human beings. From the perspective of creation, God’s decision to create Eve cannot be separated from the preceding acts of

creation. The chain of creative acts that runs through Genesis 1 does not cease before it comes to an end in Gen 2:18. God's creation attains its completion only in the creation of "the mother of all living beings" (3:20).

From a literary point of view, the story about the creation of Eve does not actually belong to the Story of Creation, since it is part of the Story of Adam and Eve in Gen 2:4 – 4:26. This is also attested by the use of the divine designation "The Lord God" in the introductory formula in 2:18, which is the name that is currently used in this story. However, the Story of Creation and the Story of Adam and Eve were composed as inseparably connected links of the narrative chain that stretches from the creation of the world to the Babylonian Exile, and were intended to be read as one continuous story.⁴

What we have said about the creation of mankind on the basis of a special divine deliberation applies *mutatis mutandis* to the creation of Eve, as a "partner suited to him"—not "helper to fit him"—who represents *womankind*, as Adam represents *mankind*. In light of this, the creation of the female human being is thus placed on a different, and incontestably higher level than the creation of the male. This is also expressed by the idea that she was created uniquely from a rib of the male, who was considered to have been "formed of dust from the ground" (2:7).

Let us now survey and chart the divine speech formulas in the rest of the Story of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3–4). It will show that the $7+4=11$ pattern was used here too, linking the Story of the Fall (Genesis 3) with that of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). In chapter 3, we find three references to a divine saying, which fall outside the series of introductory formulas:

- ▶ in 3:1 the snake cites God's command: "*Did God not say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'*"
- ▶ in 3:3 the woman refers to God's command: ". . . *but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden . . .'*"
- ▶ in 3:17 God refers to what he had commanded: ". . . *the tree of which I commanded you, saying: 'You shall not eat of it . . .'*"

There are eleven formulas introducing the divine speeches in the discourse between God and the other characters in the story.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 1. | The Lord God <i>called</i> to the man and said to him | 3:9 |
| 2. | And he said | 3:11 |
| 3. | And the Lord said to the woman | 3:13 |
| 4. | And the Lord God said to the snake | 3:14 |
| 5. | To the woman he said | 3:16 |
| 6. | To the man he said | 3:17 |
| 7. | Then the Lord God said (deliberation) | 3:22 |
| 8. | And the Lord said to Cain | 4:6 |
| 9. | And the Lord said to Cain | 4:9 |
| 10. | And he said | 4:10 |
| 11. | And the Lord said to him | 4:15 |

The series of eleven introductory formulas begin with God's *calling* to man, which is in fact calling him to account. This not only concerns Adam and Eve but also Cain. A closer examination of the use of the verb "to call" with God as subject brings some interesting facts to light. First, it occurs exactly seven times in the Primeval History (1:5a, 5b, 8, 10a, 10b; 3:9; 5:2). Second, in 5:2 the verb seems to open the series of eleven divine speeches in chapters 6–11 (see further below). Third, it appears to have the same function at the beginning of the series of divine speeches in Exod 3:4 onwards; Exod 19:3 onwards; Exod 24:16 onwards and in Lev 1:1 onwards, which I will not discuss further in detail here.⁵

There are no divine speeches in Genesis 5. The only reference to God's speaking is what is said in verse 2: "He created the male and female and he blessed them and *called* them man." By the way, this is the seventh and last occurrence of the verb "to call" with God as subject in the Primeval History. In the Story of the Flood, Genesis 6–9, I have detected a series of seven divine utterances from the beginning up to God's blessing of Noah and his sons after the flood (6:3 – 9:7). This series is followed by three divine speeches dealing with God's covenant with Noah and his offspring, in 9:8–17. In the rest of the Primeval History, there occurs only one divine speech: in the

Story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:6–7. The $7+3+1=11$ pattern speaks for itself in the following survey:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. And the Lord said (<i>deliberation</i>) | 6:3 |
| 2. And the Lord said (<i>deliberation</i>) | 6:7 |
| 3. And God said to Noah (command to build the ark) | 6:13 |
| 4. And the Lord said to Noah (command to enter it) | 7:1 |
| 5. And the Lord spoke to Noah (command to leave it) | 8:15 |
| 6. And the Lord said in his heart (<i>deliberation</i>) | 8:21 |
| 7. And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them | 9:1 |
| 8. Then God said to Noah and his sons (covenant) | 9:8 |
| 9. And God said (about the sign of the covenant) | 9:12 |
| 10. And God said to Noah (once again about the sign) | 9:17 |
| 11. And the Lord said (<i>deliberation</i>) | 11:6 |

There is a close correspondence between the $7+3=10$ pattern here in Gen 6:3 – 9:7 and that in Genesis 1, which must have been used as an archetype. Moreover, in my mind there is no doubt at all that the $7+3+1=11$ pattern we detected in Genesis 1–2, and in Genesis 3–4, was copied here to give structure to the whole text of Genesis 6–11.

The remarkable, obviously redundant introductory formulas in 9:12 and 17, in the middle of God’s address to Noah and his sons, shows that the author took pains to achieve ten formulas. This observation underscores what we have said above in connection with the extra, apparently redundant, introductory formula in Gen 15:5b—that it served to achieve a specific number of formulas, seven in that case. Of course, the “redundant” formulas have a distinct literary function: to mark the change of perspective in the divine speech.

The Eleven Divine Monologues In the Pentateuch

There are eleven instances in the Pentateuch in which God is presented as talking to himself. These private divine deliberations have the form of soliloquies, also called interior monologues, in which God expresses his thoughts, intentions, and

decisions: he “speaks in his heart” (Gen 8:21). It appears that this particular form of God’s speaking is used in the Pentateuch, and probably elsewhere, when it concerns crucial matters. In such cardinal matters, God does not act spontaneously, but ponders and reflects before making a decision.⁶ We have already encountered seven of these monologues in the Primeval History. However, there are three more in the Tetrateuch—one in Genesis 18 and two in the book of Exodus (chapters 3 and 13)—and one in Deuteronomy 32, bringing the total to eleven. The numbers at the end of the lines give the amount of words in the introductory formulas and in the speeches respectively.

1. Decision to create human beings (1:26)	2 + 17
2. Decision to create Eve (2:18)	3 + 9/26
3. Decision to banish Adam and Eve (3:22)	3 + 19
4. Decision to limit human life span (6:3)	2 + 13
5. Decision to wipe out the human race (6:7)	2 + 20
6. Decision to spare the earth (8:21–22)	4 + 23
7. Decision to confuse Babel’s language (11:6–7)	2 + 28
8. Decision to inform Abraham (18:17–19)	2 + 42
9. Decision to lead Israel from Egypt (Exod 3:17)	1 + 17
10. Decision to alter Israel’s route (Exod 13:17)	3 + 7
11. Decision to hide his face (Deut 32:20–27) ⁷	2 + 94

Total number of words: 26 + 289

289 = 17 × 17!

It should be noted that the limitation of the human life span occupies fourth place, at the center of the seven monologues in the Primeval History, the dispersion of the human race over the face of the earth being in seventh place.

Hans Nobel has studied the divine monologues particularly with regard to their numerical aspects in his dissertation on the eleven divine thoughts in Genesis–2 Kings.⁸ In this meticulous study, he criticizes my view that there are eleven monologues in the Pentateuch and insists that Exod 3:17 should not be considered a monologue. In his view, Judg 2:20–22, God’s decision not to help Israel drive out the other nations from Canaan but to test Israel through them, is the eleventh instance. Without

going into the arguments for maintaining my own position, I would call attention to the fact that my view is underscored by an important numerical consideration. The two divine name numbers 17 and 26 significantly govern the eleven monologues in the Pentateuch. The total number of words in the introductory formulas amounts to 26, while there are exactly 289 (17×17) words in the monologues themselves. Can this be mere coincidence?⁹

The examples given above must suffice to illustrate the numerical patterns of 7 and $7+3+1=11$ in the structure of the divine speeches in the Pentateuch.¹⁰ The numerical aspects of the divine speeches are not limited, however, to the use of the structuring numbers 7 and 11. On the contrary, there is much more to these speeches, as we shall see in the next chapter. We have not finished with them yet. As a matter of fact, it was the study of the divine addresses that opened my eyes to the function of the numbers 17 and 26 and to their exceedingly high frequency of occurrence in these speeches.

Before we address this fascinating issue, let me conclude the present chapter by giving some examples of the use of the $7+4=11$ pattern outside the divine speeches.

Three Genealogies in Genesis 1–11

I detected this pattern also in three genealogies in Genesis 1–11 and in the so-called *toledoth*-formulas, “this is the history/offspring of . . .” occurring eleven times in Genesis.

Let us examine the three genealogies first, namely the lineage:

- I. from **Adam** to the offspring of Lamech in Gen 4:1–22
- II. from **Adam** to the offspring of Noah in Gen 5:1–32
- III. from **Shem** to the offspring of Terah in Gen 11:10–27

	I—Gen 4:1–22	II—Gen 5:1–32	III—Gen 11:10–27
1	Adam	Adam	Shem
2	Cain	Seth	Arpaxad
3	Enoch	Enosh	Shelah
4	Irad	Kenan	Eber
5	Mehujael	Mahalalel	Peleg
6	Methushael	Jared	Reu
7	Lamech	Enoch	Serug
8	Jabal	Methuselah	Nahor
9	Jubal	Lamech	Terah
10	Tubal-Cain	Noah	Abram/Nahor/ Haran
11	Naamah	Shem/Ham/ Japhet	Lot

I would make two observations: first, in the genealogy of Adam via Seth, the *three sons* of Noah represent one generation, which also goes for the *three sons* of Terah in the genealogy of Shem. The *three sons* of Lamech, however, in the genealogy of Adam via Cain, represent three different social groups and should therefore be listed separately. Second, it is significant to notice that the seventh descendant in the first genealogy of Adam, Lamech, is not simply listed like his predecessors without further ado, but appears to receive special attention by the author, who tells something more about him. The prominence of Lamech is stressed not only by this but also by the fact that he occupies the seventh place. Significantly enough, the same is true for Enoch in the second genealogy of Adam, emphasizing his prominence as well. This pattern suggests that the person in seventh position in the genealogy of Shem, Serug, has also been endowed with a special status. What seems to be significant about him is that he concludes the line of Shem's descendants *before* the emergence of the Abraham-group, starting with Abraham's grand-

father Nahor. Lot, the son of Haran, owes his mention in the genealogy to the fact that he plays a specific role in the history of Abraham.¹¹

The Eleven *Toledoth*-Formulas in Genesis

The words *’elleh toledoth*, literally “these are the begettings/procreations of . . .” should be translated either: “these are the descendants of . . .” or “this is the (hi)story/offspring of . . .” or “this is the (hi)story of the descendants of . . .” Since a genealogy itself was regarded as “history,” it is difficult to decide which rendering to choose in each instance, but since it is not relevant in the present context, I shall translate consistently “this is the history of . . .” without implying of course that they deal with history in the modern sense of the word.

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| 1. | This is the history of heaven and earth | 2:4 |
| 2. | This is the history of Adam | 5:1 |
| 3. | This is the history of Noah | 6:9 |
| 4. | This is the history of Noah’s sons | 10:1 |
| 1/5. | This is the history of Shem | 11:10 |
| 2/6. | This is the history of Terah (Abraham!) | 11:27 |
| 3/7. | This is the history of Ishmael | 25:12 |
| 4/1. | This is the history of Isaac (Jacob and Esau!) | 25:19 |
| 5/2. | This is the history of Esau | 36:1 |
| 6/3. | This is the history of Esau, father of Edom | 36:9 |
| 7/4. | This is the history of Jacob (Joseph!) ¹² | 37:2 |

The survey shows that the book of Genesis is structured by these eleven “headings” phrased with the stereotyped formula *’elleh toledoth*, introducing eleven narrative blocks. At first glance, the familiar $7+4=11$ pattern seems to occur here in reverse order: $4+7=11$ —that is, if we take the flood as a turning point, which seems to be the most important caesura in the Genesis narrative. It is still possible, however, that the current order of $7+4=11$ was intended. In that case the turning point is the death of Abraham (Gen 25:1–11) and the “history of Ishmael” in Gen 25:12–18, which concludes the Abraham cycle (Gen 11:27 – 25:11). After this caesura,

we find the story of Jacob and Esau, introduced in 25:19 by the formula, “this is the history of Isaac.”

The Role of 7 in the Life Spans Of the Patriarchs

In passing, I would call attention to the function of 7 in the rather baffling exceptionally high life spans attributed to the antediluvian ancestors of humanity in Genesis 5. In light of Gen 6:3, where it is said that God limited the life span of humans to 120 years, it is clear that the high life spans here, and in the genealogy of Shem in Gen 11:10–32, and those mentioned elsewhere, should not be taken in a fundamentalistic/rationalistic way as real historical data. These numbers were intended to be symbolic, whether or not we are able to recover their precise meaning.

The Austrian orientalist and biblical scholar Claus Schedl has suggested a plausible explanation for the life spans of five of the ten antediluvian patriarchs: Mahalalel (895 years), Jared (962 years), Enoch (365 years), Methuselah (969 years) and Lamech (777 years). The life span of 365 years, the number of days in a solar year, attributed to Enoch suggests a connection with the planets. According to Schedl, who refers to the calculations of the French scholar M. Barnouin, the life spans of the four others should be interpreted as representing the orbital times (in days) of two planets in conjunction:¹³

Mercury + Mars	$116 + 780 = 896(5)$	Mahalalel
Venus + Saturn	$584 + 378 = 962$	Jared
Jupiter + Saturn	$399 + 378 = 777$	Lamech.

The highest life span of all, the 969 years of Methuselah, is interpreted by Schedl as 840 (7×120) plus the sum of the digits in the years mentioned with respect to these three: their age at the begetting of a successor, the rest of their years, and their total life span:

	Begetting-age	Remaining Years	Total life span	Sum of digits
Mahalalel	65	830	895	44
Jared	162	800	862	34
Lamech	182	595	777	51

Methuselah's life span can be explained as $129 (= 44 + 34 + 51) = + 840 = 969$. A comparable procedure is used in regards the life span of Joseph, whose 110 years are made up of the sum of numbers featuring in the life spans of his predecessors—see chapter 5 under “The Divine Name Numbers Signifying God's Presence.”

K. Th. Eisses has drawn attention to the fact that the sum of the begetting ages of all ten patriarchs (1556) and the sum of their remaining years (7019) have special significance: the sum of their digits is 17. He presents several rather complicated calculations to show that there are more instances of the presence of the numbers 17 and 26 in this genealogy. See his article cited in note 13.

The life spans of the five remaining patriarchs have not yet been explained satisfactorily—that of Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, and Noah. Schedl's interpretation of the life span of Methuselah, taking 840 as the basic number to which another number has been added, could provide the key to solve the riddle of the remaining life spans. The number 840 should be interpreted as representing a supermaximum life span: 7 times the maximum of 120 years according to Gen 6:3. Could these five life spans have been constructed by the addition of particular numbers to the supermaximum of 840 years? If we deduct 840 from the life spans attributed to the remaining patriarchs, we get five reasonable, normal life spans.

Adam	$930 - 840 = 90$ years
Seth	$912 - 840 = 72$ years
Enosh	$905 - 840 = 65$ years
Kenan	$910 - 840 = 70$ years
Noah	$950 - 840 = 110$ years

How these numbers should be interpreted is not certain, but I would suggest that they might have had a particular function in connection with the ways of dividing the time span between Creation and the flood into periods. As I cannot go into this fascinating material here any further, it must suffice to refer to the literature on the subject.¹⁴

There is no evidence to support the idea that the symbolic number 7 played a role in the life spans of the patriarchs Abraham (175), Isaac (180), Jacob (147), and Joseph (110), and the matriarch Sarah (127). The suggestion that Sarah's 127 years = $2 \times 60 + 7$, Isaac's 180 years = 3×60 , and Jacob's 147 years = $2 \times 70 + 7$, is too facile to be taken seriously. Moreover, it does not explain the life spans of Abraham and Joseph. We shall return later to the life span of Sarah. I have discovered that the life spans of these four patriarchs have nothing to do with the number 7, since they were derived schematically from the divine number 17, as shown in the next chapter.¹⁵

How Did 7 Acquire Its Symbolic Meaning?

The extreme popularity of the number 7 as a structuring device in the Bible calls for an explanation of its symbolic significance expressing fullness, completeness, abundance, and the maximum, the highest possible attainable amount or number. In the previous chapter, we have referred to this number when we studied the origin of the symbolism of closely related number 12, signifying completeness, perfection, and totality. Both numbers derive their symbolic meaning from the combination of 3 and 4, 12 being the product of these factors and 7 their sum.

As we have seen, 3 represents the three vertical dimensions of the cosmos: the vault of heaven, the earth and the nether world, and 4 the horizontal dimensions: the four quarters. Thus 12 was used particularly to express the idea of the perfect, harmonious totality, while 7 was employed to signify more specifically the cosmic totality, being the sum of 3, representing

the heavenly totality, and 4 representing the terrestrial totality. This made 7 an extremely holy number, not only in ancient Israel but also in Egypt, Mesopotamia and among other peoples in the ancient Near East and elsewhere in the world.¹⁶

In Israel, the popularity of 7 as a structuring device was considerably enhanced by its use in the Story of Creation and, as we have shown above, by imitating the shape of the Menorah, with its unmistakable focal point flanked by six branches. The belief in antiquity that there were seven planets certainly contributed to the popularity of 7, linking it once again with the heavens. In addition to this, 7 played a crucial role in time reckoning and in fixing religious festivals. The lunar month of 28 days consisted of 4 cycles of 7 days, determined by the 4 phases of the moon.

The combination of 4 and 7 brings us to the symbolism of their sum, 11, the less known but nevertheless important symbolic number, which we have already encountered in Luke's genealogy of Jesus.

The Number of Fulfillment, 11

The number eleven, the sum of 4 as the number of extensiveness and 7 as the number of fullness seems to have developed in the course of time a separate status and its own characteristic symbolism. The fact that we have encountered the number 11 several times and in diverse respects in the Primeval History in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, could be an indication of its symbolic function: to express the idea of fulfillment. The divine blessing in Gen 1:28 explicitly encourages male and female human beings to be fruitful and increase, "and to fill the earth." Significantly enough verse 28 is composed of exactly 22 (2×11) words and 88 (8×11) letters (in the Hebrew text). That there are 11 chapters in the Primeval History according to the chapter division we have in our translations may be a matter of coincidence, but it cannot be excluded that this division was partly based upon knowledge of the use of the number 11 in Genesis.

This goes for the first eleven chapters of Deuteronomy too. When I wrote my commentary on Deuteronomy 1–11, I found several instances of the use of the $7+4=11$ pattern giving structure to the “larger” and “smaller” literary units.¹⁷

A glance at the table of contents will give the reader an impression of the use of the pattern in the structure of the eleven “larger literary units” in chapters 1–3 and the seven “larger literary units” in chapters 4–11. In the survey on the following page, the “larger units” are printed bold and numbered I, II, etc.; the “smaller units” are numbered 1, 2, etc.

We shall examine more closely the intriguing menorah-structure of Deuteronomy 4–11 in chapter 5—and its fascinating central chapter 7 having its own menorah-structure—see under the heading “Counting Verses in Deuteronomy.” It must suffice here to say that not only the “larger literary units” 4:1–43 and 5:1 – 6:3 but also 10:12 – 11:32 are structured by the $7+4=11$ pattern, and that the two passages that flank the central chapter, 6:4–25 and 8:1 – 9:6, together form the pattern $4+7=11$.¹⁹

In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we find the story of the increase and expansion of the human race over the face of the earth and the development of different nations. It is therefore not surprising to see how the three genealogies are structured by the $7+4=11$ pattern. Neither did it surprise me when I examined Gen 11:1–9, the Story of the Tower of Babel, and discovered that the passage consists of exactly 121 (11×11) words, and found that verse 8, telling how God dispersed the people from there all over the earth, comprises 11 words.

One could shrug all this off as a matter of pure chance, but there is more evidence of the use of the number 11 in passages dealing with the idea of fulfillment and filling. One of the aims of the stories in Genesis 12–50 about the wanderings of the landless patriarchs is to give substance to the belief that God promised to increase their numbers and to give them land to settle. As we know, the books of Exodus through Joshua tell the story of the fulfillment of these promises: how

Deuteronomy 1-3 + 4:44-49¹⁸

I	1:1-5	Preface introducing the whole book
II	1:6-18	Horeb, starting point for the journey 1. 1:6-8 2. 1:9-15 3. 1:16-18.
III	1:19 - 2:1	From Kadesh to the promised land 4. 1:19-22 5. 1:23-28 6. 1:29-33 7. 1:34-40 8. 1:41-45 9. 1:46 - 2:1.
IV	2:2-15	From Seir to the Zared 10. 2:2-8a 11. 2:8b-15;
V	2:16-25	Crossing the Arnon 12. 2:16-19 13. 2:20-23 14. 2:24-25.
VI	2:26-37	Conquest of the land of Sihon 15. 2:26-30 16. 2:31-35 17. 2:36-37.
VII	3:1-10	Conquest of the land of Og 18. 3:1-4 19. 3:5-7 20. 3:8-10.
VIII	3:11-17	Occupation of the conquered land 21. 3:11-14 22. 3:15-17.
IX	3:18-22	Moses commands the conquest of Canaan 23. 3:18-20 24. 3:21-22.
X	3:23-29	Entrance refused to Moses 25. 3:23-25 26. 3:26-29.
XI	4:44-49	Epilogue

the Israelites increased and ultimately settled in Canaan and “filled” the promised land.

My interpretation of the symbolic significance of 11 as the number expressing fulfillment was convincingly underscored by the results of my study of the numerical aspects of Deuteronomy 1–3. These chapters deal with preparations to continue the journey from Horeb to Canaan and the initial fulfillment of the promise of land to the patriarchs and their descendants: the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Israelites. What I discovered astounded me. I found a unique and unprecedented accumulation of the number 11 and its multiples, which I encountered nowhere else. The following survey shows the number of words in these passages:

1:19–22	The promised land in sight	77 (7×11)
2:2–6	God’s speech: land for Esau/Edom	55 (5×11)
2:7	Moses’ address	22 (2×11)
2:9–13b	God’s speech: land for Lot/Moab	66 (6×11)
2:2–13b	Both divine speeches together	121 (11×11)
2:18–25	God’s speech: land for Lot/Ammon	121 (11×11)
2:16 – 3:29	Total number of words	770 (70×11)
3:2	God’s speech: land for Israel	22 (2×11)
3:1, 3–7	Narrative: the march to Bashan	88 (8×11)
3:18–20	Quotation by Moses	55 (5×11)
3:23–29	Moses’ request to enter the land	99 (9×11)
3:26–28	God’s speech: no land for Moses	44 (4×11)

A significant detail is that the 110 words in 3:1–7 are evenly divided: 55 in the main clauses and 55 in the subordinate clauses; the 99 words in 3:23–29 are likewise divided into 55 + 44.

These data can be checked in the appendix to my commentary, volume IA, where the reader will find a transcription of the Hebrew text and the numerical structural analysis of 1–11.

It would be worthwhile to carry out a more comprehensive investigation into the use of this almost forgotten intriguing number, which has not yet received the attention it deserves. But let us now address a still more fascinating numerical aspect of the biblical texts: the use of the numbers 17 and 26.

