

# ARITHMETIC IN THE EARLY CHURCH

By Keith Greer

Did you know that you can learn some simple arithmetic facts by some examples in the early church? Here is a short "**scriptural arithmetic**" lesson:

**Addition.** "And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them." {Acts 2:40,41} Following the preaching of the gospel, on the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls were added to the church—the church's beginning! This addition would continue in Acts 4 and would now number about 5,000!

**Subtraction.** "Then Peter said to her, How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out. Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband." {Acts 5:9,10} The Lord took the lives of Ananias and Sapphira for lying about the proceeds of the land they sold. Two were subtracted from the number of the saints. Sadly, they did not have to give all of the proceeds from the sale of the land. While seeking to help the growing number of saints in Jerusalem they lied and misled the apostles.

**Multiplication.** "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying ... " {Acts 6:1} The preaching of the gospel and those obeying that teaching caused the number of saints to be multiplied. This is exactly how the saints can be multiplied in our day.

**Division.** "Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." {Acts 8:1} In the early church they were suffering great persecution. Instead of this causing the church to die, it was "scattered" - dividing all over the world and expanding the borders of the kingdom of God. God's people took the saving gospel of Christ and sought to give all men the opportunity to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Instead of allowing their difficulties to discourage them, they were more motivated to act to help others. **Class—your lesson is over! \*\*\***