

Triple Play

We are now in baseball season and the triple play is a rare feat on the field of play but there is something about “good things come in threes.” That phrase probably dates from the Middle Ages where there was a council meeting scheduled exactly three times a year and as a defendant you had three options to present yourself to the judges. However, if the defendant did not appear at the third meeting, the judge sentenced you. It was said in Old Germanic “All good things come in threes”, because “Thing” meant a court hearing.

We are used to important groupings of threes in society: The constitution talks about Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The three branches of the U.S. government. The three primary colors (Red, Green, Blue). Three little Pigs, Three blind Mice, The Three Stooges, The three Amigos, Rock, Paper, Scissors. Past, Present, Future, Beginning, Middle, End and on and on and on!

The Bible has some pretty significant threes –

The Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Body, Soul, Spirit.

The Tanack (the Old Testament: /Law Prophets and Writings)

1 Cor 13 Faith, Hope and Love.

Matt 22:38 You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, & with all your mind.

The Fruit of the Spirit is arranged in 3 groups of three characteristics.

Shem , Ham and Japheth

Biblical Examples:

Isaiah: “Holy Holy Holy” Isa 6

Gospel of Mark A common pattern is the author’s tendency to present events in triads, or groups of three. Most of these are related in some way to the failure of the disciples or to Jesus’ coming passion.

Three passion predictions (8:31–32; 9:31; 10:33–34)

3 boat scenes where the disciples fail to comprehend Jesus’ mission (4:35–41; 6:45–52; 8:14–21).

Three times the disciples fall asleep in Gethsemane (14:37, 40, 41),

three times Peter denies he knows Jesus (14:68, 70, 71).

The crucifixion scene is also divided into three, three-hour segments (14:25, 33, 34).

Matthew

Matthew 8–9 passage contains three sets of three miracles

Matt 21–22 three structural triads: three symbolic actions, three parables, and three questions posed to Jesus.

Luke

Luke 15: 3 parables Lost Coin, Lost Sheep and Lost Son

Jude

Jude is fond of triads, such as “called, beloved... and kept” (v 1); or groups of examples given in threes, (vv 5-7 and v 11).

So what’s:

- Force: Ecclesiastes 4:12 states that “a cord with three strands is not quickly broken.” For Greeks, triads were considered to be a particularly effective rhetorical device.
- Memory: triads are easily memorable. Winston Churchill’s famous line in a speech to parliament is often stated to be “I have nothing to offer but blood, sweat and tears” but toil is often left out “blood, toil, tears and sweat