



God's Math and Dante's wall

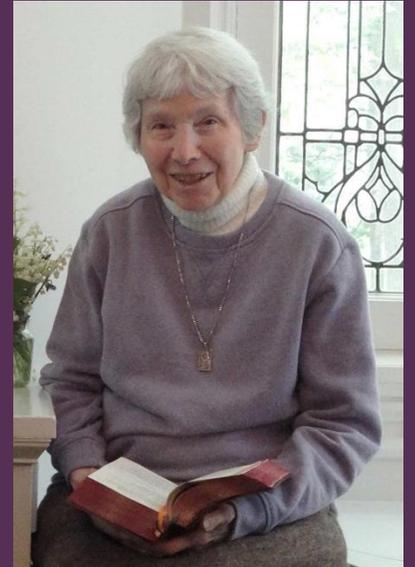
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Carmelite Retreat
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Psalm 90 Preoccupied with God's arithmetic

- Contrast between God – “from everlasting to everlasting.”
- and brief human life.

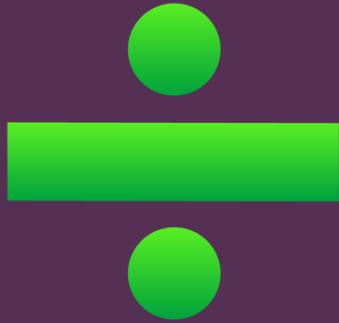


“The days of our life are seventy years or perhaps eighty if we are strong.....”



An honest awareness of that
“uncrossable limitation”
is an act of wisdom.





In the end the
psalmist
submits to
Divine
Arithmetic!

Three instances of Divine arithmetic
confounding our normal calculations!

1. Judges 7



**GIDEON'S
ARMY**

- *The troops with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand. Israel would only take the credit away from me saying: “My own hand has delivered me.”*
- Sent 22,000 home
- Kept 10,000





300 were
enough
when
they
were the
right 300!

- There was no need for a bigger number even though conventional wisdom may have thought differently.

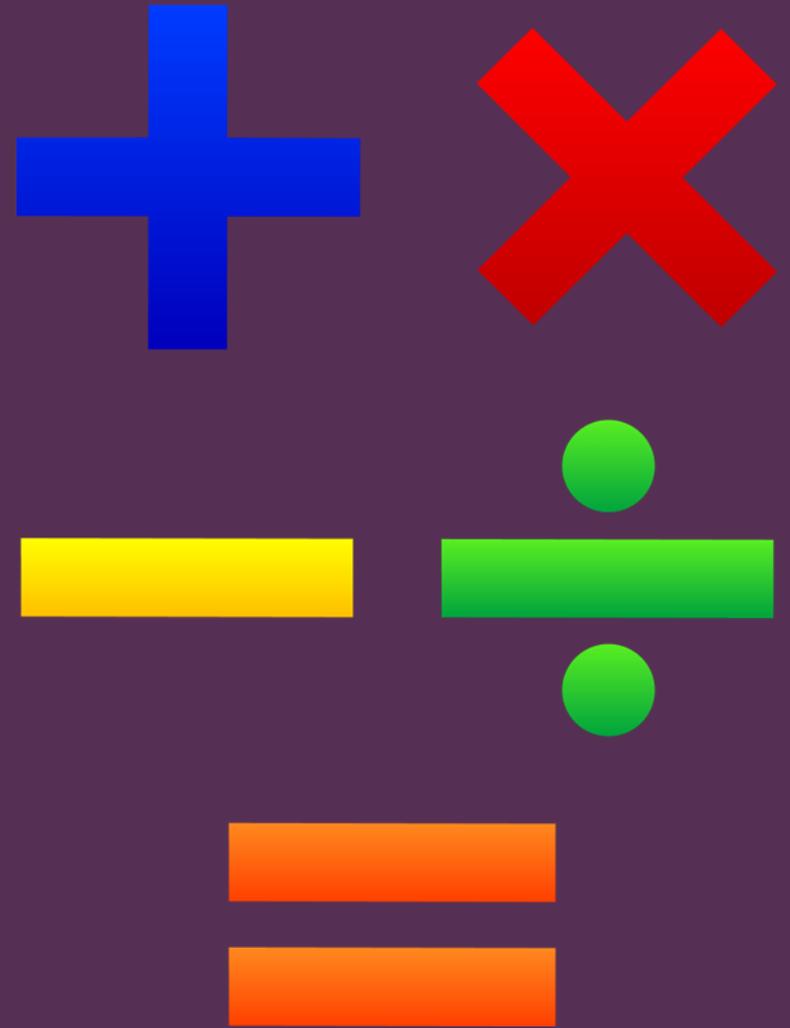


#2. 2 Kings 6:8-23 (Israel Vs Syria)



- "Do not be afraid for there are more with us than there are with them."

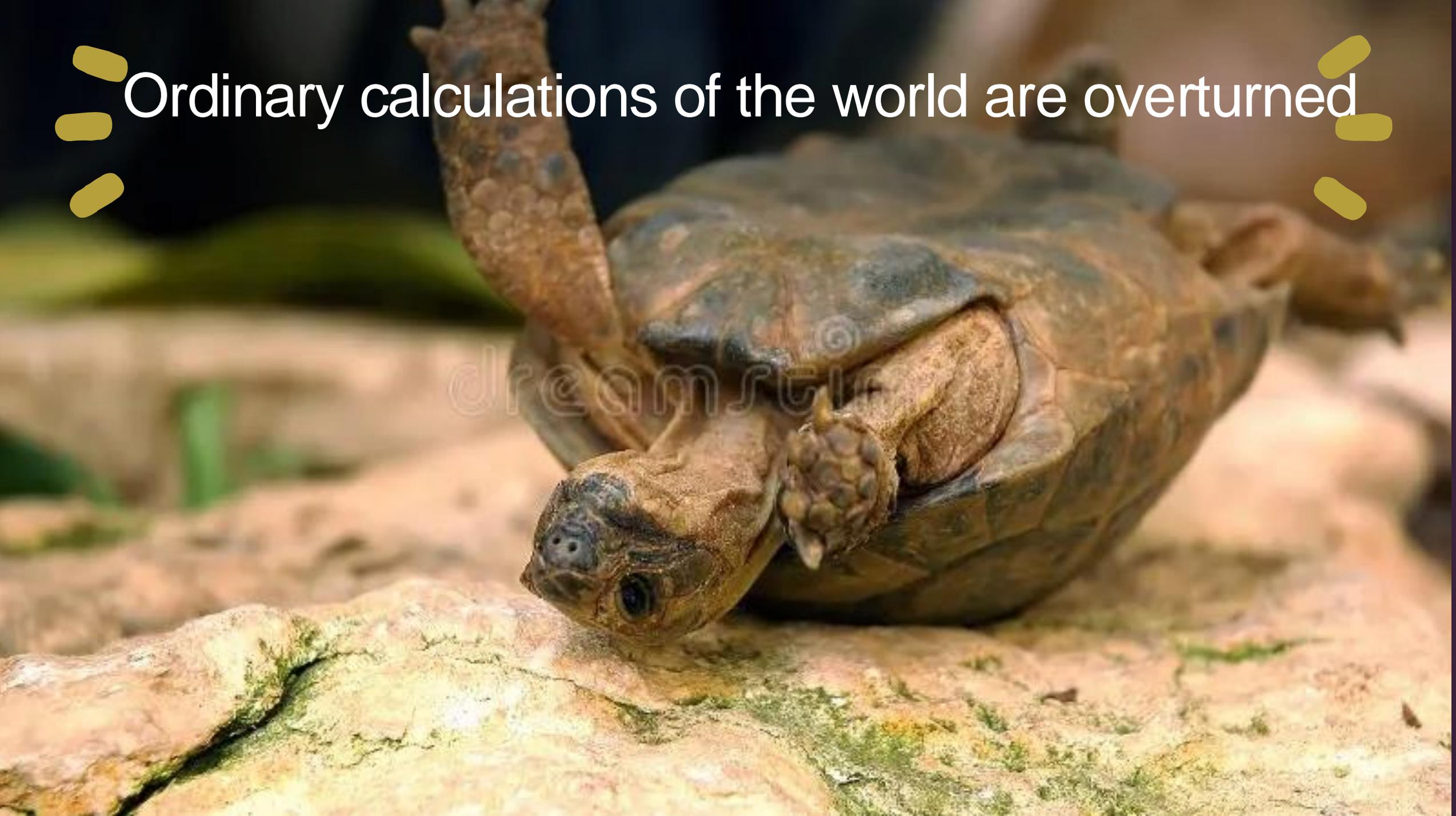
Everything it
turns out,
depended on
Divine
arithmetic!



#3. Jesus' parable: workers in the vineyard.

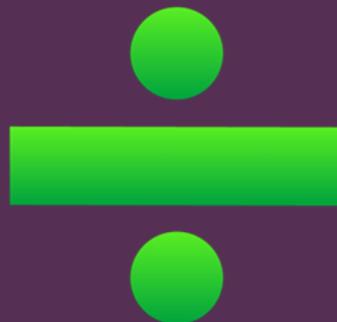
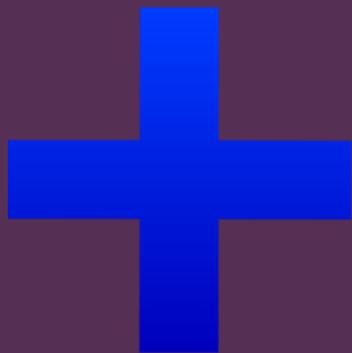


Ordinary calculations of the world are overturned



In every
case

Divine
arithmetic
outruns



human
calculation



- A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by...

- Psalm 90:4

Productivity

Wealth

Best
Grades

Intelligence

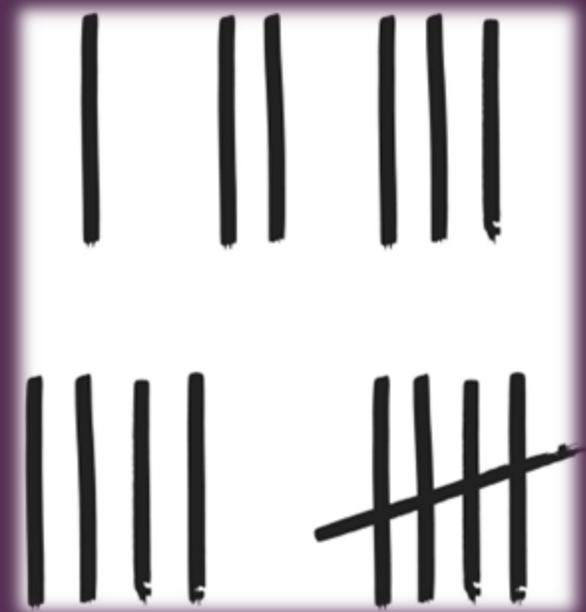
Military Power

GNP

Winning sport
season

We have our own calculations

- How many entered this year
- How many members?
- How many deaths?
- Number of possible leaders?
- Financial resources?



PAUSE



Of the three stories of God's arithmetic, which one speaks most clearly to you about the realities facing the Association and your ability to trust in the emerging future? (Why? How?)





Dante's Wall of Fire

"It is the fire
that will burn.
But not
consume. You
must go
through it."





- Virgil tells Dante he will meet Dante on the other side.



Dante summons his courage then
dives through the wall of fire.



Dante has been transformed....

He has become his own guide.



Being dropped into the depth of life is meeting the wall of fire – no matter how it appears.



Describe a “wall of fire” you are facing.

Explore what is calling you to cross this wall and what is holding you back.

How are you being asked to grow?

Your responses might be on a personal level or that of your local house.

The life after tears: - Mark Nepo

In the life before tears,

there are endless plans

and we avoid the difficult

feelings at all cost, as if grief,

pain, and loss are canyons we'll never be able to

climb out of.

But, then, one day, while not looking, someone dear dies, or a dream breaks like a plate, and our world, as we've known it is blown apart.



Then, we discover that
falling in the canyon is
our invitation,
and the river at the bottom
is the only water that
will keep us alive.



I wish it were different
but the reward for being
hallowed out is that the
song then sings us.



A woman with her eyes closed, standing in a forest. She is wearing a light-colored t-shirt with a graphic design and a backpack. The background is filled with trees and foliage, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

Said, "Check the oil and call me please."