

SCRIPTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: THE NUMBER 40

As indicated by many references contained below, the Holy Scriptures disclose to us that the number 40 is used by God to represent a period of testing, preparation and/or judgment. For instance, the Old Testament shares that Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights with the LORD on Mount Sinai and fasted the entire time ([Exodus 24:18](#) & [Exodus 34:28](#)); Elijah walked "40 days and 40 nights to the mountain of God, Horeb" -another name for Sinai ([1 Kings 19:8](#)).

In the New Testament ([Matthew 4:1-11](#), [Mark 1:12-13](#), [Luke 4:1-13](#)), Jesus was driven by the Holy Spirit into the Judean Desert after His baptism. He spent 40 days and 40 nights praying and fasting there, being tempted by the evil one as He prepared for His three year Ministry. 40 days also marks the time between Christ's Resurrection and Ascension ([Acts 1:3](#)).

CANONICAL ORDER—THE NUMBER 40 IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

- In the days of Noah, the rains fell for 40 days and 40 nights (Genesis 7:4).
- Moses led Israel from Egypt at age 80— 40 x 2 (Exodus 7:7).
- Israel ate Manna for 40 years (Exodus 16:35).
- Moses was with God on the mount 40 days and nights (Exodus 24:18).
- The sockets of silver are in groups of 40 (Exodus 26:19 & 21).
- Moses was again with God 40 days and 40 nights (Exodus 34:28).
- The scouts searched the land of Canaan for 40 days (Numbers 13:25).
- God made Israel wander for 40 years (Numbers 14:33-34).
- 40 lashes was the maximum whipping penalty (Deuteronomy 25:3).
- Moses died at 120—40 x 3— after 40 years in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 34:7).
- God allowed the land to rest for 40 years (Judges 3:11),
- God allowed the land to rest for 80 years—40 x 2 (Judges 3:30).
- God allowed the land to rest for 40 years (Judges 5:31).
- God allowed the land to rest for 40 years (Judges 8:28).
- Abdon, a judge in Israel, had 40 sons (Judges 12:14).
- Israel did evil; God delivered them to an enemy for 40 years (Judges 13:1).
- Eli died of a broken neck after judging Israel for 40 years (1 Samuel 4:18).
- Goliath presented himself to Israel for 40 days (1 Samuel 17:16).
- Ishbaal (Saul's son) was 40 when he became King of Israel (2 Samuel 2:10).
- David reigned over Israel for 40 years (2 Samuel 5:4, 1 Kings 2:11).
- The nave of the temple was 40 cubits long (1 Kings 6:17).
- 40 baths (measurement) was the size of basins in the Temple (1 Kings 7:38).
- Solomon was King of Israel for 40 years, as was his father (1 Kings 11:42).
- Elijah walked 40 days and 40 nights to the mountain of God (1 Kings 19:8).
- Joash became King at age 7 and reigned 40 years in Jerusalem (2 Kings 12:1-2).
- Ezekiel bore the iniquity of the house of Judah for 40 days (Ezekiel 4:6).
- Egypt to be laid desolate for 40 years (Ezekiel 29:11-12).
- Ezekiel's Temple nave was 40 cubits long (Ezekiel 41:2).
- The courts in Ezekiel's temple were 40 cubits long (Ezekiel 46:22).
- God gave Nineveh 40 days to repent (Jonah 3:4).
- Jesus fasted 40 days & nights as Satan tempted Him (Mt 4:2; Mk 1:13; Lk 4:1-2).
- Period between Christ's Resurrection and Ascension was 40 days (Acts 1:3).
- Saul reigned for 40 years (Acts 13:21— see 1 Samuel 10:1).