

THE DOWNRIVER DISCIPLES PROJECT
explores
SCRIPTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER 40

As indicated by references offered herein, 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 and fasted the entire time ([Exodus 24:18](#) & [Exodus 34:28](#)); Elijah walked "40 days and 40 nights to the mountain of God, Horeb" ([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](#)).

Page 2 offers Old Testament references.

Page 3 offers New Testament references.

Modifications are welcome at goodnews@downriverdisciples.com.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES

- ◆ In the days of Noah, the rains fell for 40 days and 40 nights ([Genesis 7:4, 12, 17 & 8:6](#)).
- ◆ Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah ([Genesis 25:20](#)).
- ◆ Esau was 40 years old when he married Judith ([Genesis 26:34](#)).
- ◆ Joseph directed the physicians to embalm his father, Israel, for 40 days ([Genesis 50:2-4](#)).
- ◆ Daily for 40 years in the desert, God provided His people with manna & quail ([Exodus 16:8, 35](#)).
- ◆ Moses spends 40 days & nights with the LORD on the mountain ([Exodus 24:18](#); [Deuteronomy 9:9-11](#)).
- ◆ The north & south sides of the Tabernacle were constructed with 40 bases ([Exodus 26:19-21](#)).
- ◆ Moses spends another 40 days and nights with the LORD ([Exodus 34:28](#); [Deuteronomy 9:18, 25, 10:10](#)).
- ◆ The 12 scouts/spies searched the land of Canaan for 40 days ([Numbers 13:1-33](#)).
- ◆ Due to their disobedience, God sentences His people to suffer for 40 years ([Numbers 14:33-34](#)).
- ◆ The LORD's anger burned against Israel as they wander in the wilderness for 40 years ([Numbers 32:13-14](#)).
- ◆ The LORD watched over His people during their 40 years of wandering ([Deuteronomy 2:7, 8:1-4, 29:5](#); [Joshua 5:6, Nehemiah 9:21](#)).
- ◆ 40 lashes was the maximum whipping penalty ([Deuteronomy 25:3](#)).
- ◆ Caleb was 40 years old when sent by the LORD to explore Canaan ([Joshua 14:6-8](#)) (ref [Numbers 13:1-33](#)).
- ◆ After doing evil in the LORD's eyes, Israel repents and God allows them 40 years' rest ([Judges 3:7-11](#)).
- ◆ After doing evil in the LORD's eyes, Israel repents and God allows them 40 years' rest ([Judges 5:31](#)).
- ◆ After doing evil in the LORD's eyes, the land had peace for 40 years ([Judges 8:28](#)).
- ◆ Abdon, who led Israel for eight years, had 40 sons ([Judges 12:13-14](#)).
- ◆ The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so He delivered them unto Philistines for 40 years ([Judges 13:1](#)).
- ◆ Eli died of a broken neck after leading/judging Israel for 40 years ([1 Samuel 4:18](#)).
- ◆ For 40 days, the Philistine (Goliath) took his stand every morning and evening ([1 Samuel 17:16](#)).
- ◆ Ish-Bosheth, son of Saul, was 40 years old when he became king over Israel ([2 Samuel 2:10](#)).
- ◆ David reigned as king over Israel for 40 years ([2 Samuel 5:4, 1 Kings 2:11, 1 Chronicles 29:27](#)).
- ◆ The Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) in the Temple was 40 cubits long ([1 Kings 6:17](#)).
- ◆ Construction of Solomon's Temple included 10 bronze basins, each holding 40 baths ([1 Kings 7:38-39](#)).
- ◆ Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years ([1 Kings 11:42](#)).
- ◆ Elijah walked 40 days and 40 nights to the mountain of God ([1 Kings 19:8](#)).
- ◆ Hazael went to meet Elisha with a gift 40 camel-loads of all the finest wares of Damascus ([2 Kings 8:9](#)).
- ◆ Joash reigned in Jerusalem as king of Israel for 40 years ([2 Kings 12:1, 2 Chronicles 24:1](#)).
- ◆ Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years ([2 Chronicles 9:30](#)).
- ◆ Governors prior to Nehemiah extorted 40 shekels of silver from their people ([Nehemiah 5:15](#)).
- ◆ The psalmist sings of God's frustration: "For 40 years, I was angry with that generation" ([Psalm 95:10](#)).
- ◆ Ezekiel bore the sins of the house of Judah for 40 days ([Ezekiel 4:6](#)).
- ◆ Ezekiel prophesies that the land of Egypt will be a desolate wasteland for 40 years ([Ezekiel 29:11](#)).
- ◆ In a vision, Ezekiel is shown the restored Temple, in which the main hall measures 40 cubits long ([Ezekiel 41:2](#)).
- ◆ Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple shows enclosed outer courts measuring 40 cubits long ([Ezekiel 46:22](#)).
- ◆ The LORD's judgment upon Israel is recorded as He recounts the 40 years in the desert ([Amos 2:6-16](#)).
- ◆ "Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings 40 years in the wilderness, people of Israel?" ([Amos 5:25](#)).
- ◆ Jonah proclaimed, "40 more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." But they repent and God forgives ([Jonah 3:4](#)).

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES

- ◆ Jesus fasted for 40 days & 40 nights as Satan tempted Him ([Matthew 4:2](#); [Mark 1:13](#); [Luke 4:2](#)).
- ◆ Period between Christ's Resurrection and His Ascension was 40 days ([Acts 1:3](#)).
- ◆ Stephen recounts the relationship between God and His people ([Acts 7:23, 30, 36 & 42](#)).
- ◆ Paul preaches about how God endured His peoples' conduct for 40 years ([Acts 13:18](#)) (ref [Numbers 32:13-14](#)).
- ◆ Saul ruled over Israel for 40 years ([Acts 13:21](#)) (ref [1 Samuel 13:1](#) states 42 years).
- ◆ [Psalm 95:10](#) is referenced, where God was angry with His stiff-necked children for 40 years ([Hebrews 3:9, 17](#)).