

Forty Years

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The number forty (40) occurs a good number of times throughout the pages of divine inspiration. The Bible often talks about forty years. Thus, we study.

1) ***Isaac Was Forty Years Old When He Took Rebekah To Wife.*** Genesis 24 finds Abraham sending his eldest servant to take a wife for his son, Isaac. It's a great scene to learn about a father's care for his son, the importance of who one marries, hospitality and God's providence, among other things. Verse 67 reports that Isaac "...took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her..." "And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife..." (Gen. 25:20). This forty years story is a good time to remind us of the fact that marriage is of God (Gen. 2:18-24), is a male and female relationship (Mt. 19:4), is life-long in duration (Mt. 19:6; Rom. 7:2-3) and is designed to keep the human race morally pure (1 Cor. 7:1-2).

2) ***The Life Of Moses Is Divided Into Three Periods Of Forty Years.*** Moses is one of the great men of God of the Old Testament. He "...was an hundred and twenty years old

when he died..." (Dt. 34:7). His life is the story of deliverance. Moses was delivered as a babe. He delivered his brethren from the smiting Egyptian. He delivered the priest's daughters from the shepherds. He would ultimately deliver Israel out of Egypt. A good way to study his life is in three forty year periods: the first forty years in Egypt (Ex. 2:1-10), the second forty years in Midian (Ex. 2:11-4:30; Acts 7:23), and the third forty years leading Israel (Ex. 4:18-Dt. 34:7; Acts 7:30-36; Ex. 7:7). Moses is remembered for the great choice he made in life when he was about forty years old. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" (Heb. 11:24-26).

3) ***The Children Of Israel Ate Manna Forty Years.*** We are first introduced to manna in Exodus 16. It was bread the Lord rained from heaven to satisfy His people's hunger. It is described in verse 31 as "...like

coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." Psalm 78:25 refers to it as "...angels' food..." Exodus 16:35 records, "And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited..." This bread from heaven looked forward to the coming of Christ, the soul-satisfying bread of life, who came down from heaven above, of which we can eat and never hunger again (Jn. 6:31-58).

4) ***Israel Wandered In The Wilderness Forty Years.*** Remember the spy story? Twelve spies were sent to search Canaan's land. The majority came back with a negative attitude and evil report. Murmuring ensued. God doesn't like complaining! He sentenced Israel to a forty year wilderness wandering period, a year for each day they searched the land, until those twenty years old and upward died. "And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness" (Num. 14:33). This forty years story reminds us to, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Phil. 2:14). Such reflects a dissatisfied and ungrateful spirit!

5) ***Caleb Was Forty Years Old When Sent To Spy The Land.*** Another spy story involves a man with another spirit, who the Lord said, "... hath followed me fully..." (Num. 14:24). His name is Caleb. The book of possession finds the man saying, "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart" (Josh. 14:7). If you had been Caleb, would you have been sent to espy out the land, had the spirit he did, and followed the Lord fully?

6) ***Forty Years In The Judges.*** The period of the judges may be summed up in these words: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). It's a cycle of one apostasy after another. The people of God would go into idolatry. God let other nations enslave them. They would cry to the Lord. God would send a judge to deliver them. They would be faithful for a short time. Then, the cycle would repeat. There are several

occasions where forty years are mentioned throughout the book of Judges. There are three instances when the land had rest forty years (Judg. 3:11; 5:31; 8:28), and chapter 13 finds Israel in the hand of the Philistines, one of their arch-enemies, forty years (v. 1). This whole period teaches us, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes..." (Prov. 12:15).

7) ***Eli Judged Israel Forty Years.*** Remember Eli? What do you think of when you hear the name, Eli? You may recall him being a priest and a judge of Israel. He also stands out as one judged by the Lord. The Lord said, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (1 Sam. 3:13). "...it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died...And he had judged Israel forty years" (1 Sam. 4:18). Like it or not, children need some restraints. The wisdom book teaches, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth

him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24). Again, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15).

8) ***David And Solomon Reigned Over Israel Forty Years.*** The period of the united kingdom was ushered in with King Saul and went out with David and his son, Solomon. 1 Kings 2:11 says, "And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years..." He was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). His son, Solomon, "...reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years" (1 Ki. 11:42). He is remembered for his wealth, his wisdom, his wives, and his works.

Forty years provides us occasion to learn some valuable lessons. Thanks, dear Father, for forty years!

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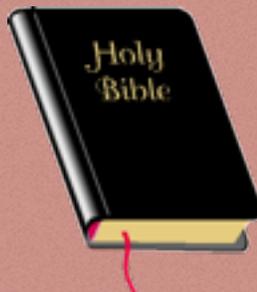
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