

What's With Forty?



Most of the numbers in the Bible are simply random. Some are related. Some are symbolic. And some are significant yet (frustratingly!) their significance is not explained.

These numbers are often significant in the Bible. **3, 7, 12, and 40**

God apparently chose to make 40 significant when he assigned a YEAR in the wilderness for each DAY the Israelite spies had spent in Canaan. They had observed great possibilities and great risks. Everyone then had the opportunity to choose fear or faith.

Your children will be shepherds here for 40 years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For 40 years – one year for each of the 40 days you explored the land – you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you!

*(Num. 14:34)*

## Fun Facts

In medieval times the port of Venice required foreign ships to sit at anchor 40 days before unloading. Hopefully any diseases on board would die off during this time.

Italian word for 40 = quarantina

English = quarantine

**40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS**

**Moses** > intense trip back up on Mt. Horeb  
(Sinai) (*Exodus 34*)

**Elijah** > intense trip across desert to Mt.  
Horeb (*1 Kings 19*)

**Jesus** > intense retreat into isolation  
(*Mt. 4, Mark 1, Luke 4*)

Jesus **identified** his COMING with Elijah  
and his MISSION with Moses!



This period of time was quite intentional for Jesus. He wanted it to make a connection with the great law giver and the great prophet.

Part of the common experience was that God **sustained** their body and being while they intensely **sought** God's presence and God's will. Other issues dropped away during this time. Only **after** the 40 days did Jesus begin to feel hungry.

The MOST IMPORTANT NUMBER OF ALL!  
There is **one** body and **one** spirit, just as  
you were called to **one** hope. There is **one**  
Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and  
Father of all, who is over all and through all  
and in all. (*Eph. 4:4-6*)