

"FORTY"

PROBATION PERIOD AND/OR TESTING

Because of the frequency of its occurrence and the uniformity of its association with a period of probation or testing, this number has long been recognized as significant in Scripture.

FORTY YEARS OF TESTING UNDER GOOD LEADERSHIP & DELIVERANCE:

Israel in the Wilderness. (Deut. 8:2-5: Psalm 95:10: Acts 13:18)
Under Othniel. (Judges 3:11)
Under Barak, (Judges 5:31)
Under Gideon. (Judges 8:28)

FORTY YEARS OF TESTING THROUGH PROSPERITY

Under David. (II Samuel 5:4)
Under Solomon. (I Kings 11:42)
Under Jeroboam II. (II Kings 12:17-18; 13:3, 5, 22, 25)
Under Jehoash. (II Kings 12:1)
Under Joash. (II Chronicles 24:1)

FORTY YEARS PROBATION BY HUMILIATION AND SERVITUDE:

Israel under the Philistines. (Judges 13:1)
Israel in the time of Eli. (I Samuel 4:18)
Israel under Saul. (Acts 13:21)

FORTY YEARS PROBATION BY WAITING:

Moses in Egypt. (Acts 7:23)
Moses in Midian. (Acts 7:30)

There are 8 great periods of testings given in the Word of God.

1. Moses was on Mt. Sinai FORTY days and nights receiving the LAW (Exodus 24:18). While he was away these FORTY days, the people became impatient and said to Aaron: "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him." (Exodus 32:1)
2. This led to the making of the golden calf (Exodus 32:2-7). Thus, Israel fell under another FORTY day period of testing. (Deuteronomy 9:18,25)
3. After this they were tried FORTY years in the wilderness: "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even FORTY days, each day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even FORTY years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." (Numbers 14:34)
4. FORTY days Elijah spent in Horeb after his experience on Mt. Carmel: "and he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat FORTY days and FORTY nights unto Horeb the mount of God." (I Kings 19:8)
5. FORTY days Jonah preached that judgment would come to the city of Nineveh: "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet FORTY days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." (Jonah 3:4)
6. FORTY days Ezekiel laid on his right side to symbolize the FORTY years of Judah's transgression: "... lie again on thy right side, and thou shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah FORTY days I have appointed thee each day for a year." (Ezekiel 4:6)

7. Our Savior was tempted by Satan FORTY days and nights: "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being FORTY days tempted of the Devil." (Luke 4:1-2)
8. During a FORTY day period after the resurrection, Jesus was seen of His disciples: "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them FORTY days," (Acts 1:3)

MOSES ENDURED 3 PERIODS OF FORTY YEARS OF TESTING/TRIALS:

FORTY years in Egypt (Acts 7:23)

FORTY years in the desert of Midian (Exodus 2:16)

FORTY years with Israel in the wilderness. (Num. 14:33-34; Acts 7:36)

The 12 spies were sent to search out Canaan to see if the inhabitants were strong or weak, few or many, and whether the land it was good or bad (Numbers 13:18-20). The Bible adds: "And they returned from searching of the land after FORTY days." (Numbers 13:25)

MOREOVER:

The reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon each lasted FORTY years.

Goliath challenged Israel to send forth a champion to meet him for FORTY days.

Nineveh was given FORTY days to repent and turn to the true God. (Jonah 3:4)

Elijah fastened FORTY days and FORTY nights. (I Kings 19:8)

Moses twice fasted FORTY days and FORTY nights.

Jesus was tempted FORTY days and FORTY nights

Our Lord appeared to His disciples over a FORTY day span after His Resurrection.

Punishment by flogging was limited to FORTY stripes (Deu.25:3).

All these examples show that God was neither hasty nor rash in executing His judgments, but gave ample time for man to do that which was just and right.

Now consider: (1) This researcher is absolutely not into numerology. Nevertheless, in view of all the preceding, it is deemed reasonable to suppose that God gave Israel a 40-year period from the crucifixion/resurrection to reconsider, repent, and accept the Lord Jesus as their long awaited Messiah before bringing the judgment under Titus down upon them. Is it not logical to conclude that our Lord forever ended the efficaciousness of the animal sacrifice system by the *willing* sacrifice of Himself 40 years prior to this historic event? (2) As Titus' destruction of the Temple is firmly fixed at AD 70, Eusebius places our Lord's death in AD 30 by writing: "For forty whole years it (i.e., God's Providence) suspended their (the Jews) destruction, after their crime against the Christ" [*Ecclesiastical History*, Loeb Classical Library, Volume 1, Bk. III, vii, 8; parentheses mine]. (3) The Jerusalem (Yoma 43c) and Babylonian (Yoma 39b) Talmuds tell us that every night for 40 years before the destruction of the Temple the middle or chief light on the Golden Candlestick would simply go out and that the great brass Temple-gates which were closed each night were seen to swing open every night of their own accord. Josephus tells us these doors were so massive that it took 20 men to close them (*Wars*, vi, 5, 3.). (4) The 40 years of Judah's iniquity and its association to a siege of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 4:4-7 is offered as a double reference prophecy with its second fulfillment being at this selfsame span (after all, the OT is about Christ, Luk.24:27, 44-45). (5) Titus began the siege on 14 Nisan AD 70 (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, *op. cit.*, V, 13, 7) – forty years to the very day from an AD 30 crucifixion! When these considerations are added to my detailed thesis already presented (*Chronology*, pp. 234-251, 281-283), the year AD 30 should be seen as the actual date of our Lord's crucifixion and thereby settle this issue.