

FORTY DAYS

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A lot can happen in a single day. And certainly a lot goes on within the confines of any forty day period. In the Scriptures we find several important events that occurred within the forty days time frame. Let us consider a few.

The first rain. There is no indication of rain prior to the flood (Gen. 2:5, 6). The people had become so morally rotten, that they rejected the preaching of Noah. His warnings fell on deaf ears. God told Noah that the rain would fall for forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:4). Finally this six hundred year old man entered the ark with his family. Moses tells us that the water came from below and from above. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened (Gen. 7:11). “And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights” (v. 12). That is, it rained for that many days and nights. All in all the water remained on the earth for one hundred and fifty days (Gen. 8:3). Hundreds of years later, our Lord in commenting on the sad scene gives us all warning, “And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man” (Matt. 24:37-39).

The first covenant. The law of Moses is described by the writer of *Hebrews* in several different ways. It is simply “the law” (Heb. 7:5). It is “the law of a carnal commandment” (7:16). It is a “foregoing commandment” (7:18). It is an inferior covenant (7:22; 8:6). It had its faults (8:7, 8) which Paul describes as being “weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). It became an old covenant (Heb. 8:13). It was the “first” covenant and it was replaced by the “second” (10:9). The initial installment of the law of Moses was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20). The two tables of stone inscribed with ten commandments were what constituted the beginning of that first covenant. But as we read in Exodus 21, we learn that even on Mt. Sinai, God gave more law to Moses than simply those first ten commandments. In time the whole of that covenant would be comprised of all that God’s prophets wrote down by inspiration. That would become the totality of Jewish law, and it would become our Old Covenant or Old Testament, the first part of our Bible. It was the law for the Jewish nation. But on Mt. Sinai, it was a frightening scene that engulfed Moses as he received the original precepts from God (Ex. 19:16-25; 20:18-21; cf. Heb. 12:18-21). “And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” (Ex. 34:28). Later in some of Moses’ final words, he reminds the people of that scene, and he tells them that the Lord gave him those two tables of commandments written with the finger of God. And he tells them that he received these commandments at the end of the forty day and forty night period. He also reminds them that while he was up on the mountain receiving commandments from God, that the people corrupted themselves in the making of a molten image. When he reached the congregation, Moses broke the tables of stone. He ascended the mountain again for another forty day and forty night period, in which he pled for Aaron and the congregation who came close to destruction (Deut. 9). During this period, God dictated the ten commandments to Moses who wrote them down himself

(Deut. 10:1-4; Ex. 34:1, 27, 28).

First resurrection. Jesus Christ was not the first person to be raised from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; Mark 5:35-43; John 11:1-44). However, he was the first one to have the authority within himself to come back from the grave (John 10:17, 18). If you check your footnote or the Greek word for “power,” you will find that it is the power of authority rather than the power of force. Too, he became “the firstfruits of them that are asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). That is, he was and is to be followed by others in a general resurrection. Also, it is clear from the words of Paul that Jesus’ own resurrection was different from the few others that had already in history occurred in that while each of the others had to die again following his resurrection, Jesus’ situation was different since he was raised “no more to return to corruption” (Acts 13:34). Luke tells us that the period of time between the Lord’s resurrection and his ascension was forty days. During this time he gave commandment to the apostles as well as many proofs of his deity, and he spoke “the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:2, 3).